

# THE RADICAL HUMANIST



ESTABLISHED : APRIL 1937

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

Founder  
M.N. ROY

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## CFD & PUCL APPEAL TO VOTERS SAVE DEMOCRACY, SAVE THE NATION

**The Pulwama Attack and its Fallout;  
Narendra Modi, the 'chowkidar' of the Elite  
Mahi Pal Singh**

**Post-Pulwama triumphalism spells disaster  
for Kashmiris – and Indian democracy  
Nandita Haksar**

**Our Fight Against Fascism  
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**Our Captured, Wounded Hearts: Arundhati  
Roy On Balakot, Kashmir And India  
Arundhati Roy**

**'Service Before Self' Is Clearly  
Not a Motto the BJP Upholds  
Badri Raina**

**589**

Cover page of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist', Volume I

Selections from

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December 2005

Selected, Compiled and Edited  
by  
**Mahi Pal Singh,**  
Editor, The Radical Humanist

An Indian Renaissance Institute Publication

## **Foreword to ‘Selections from The Radical Humanist’ Volume I**

The Radical Humanist monthly edited by Mr Mahi Pal Singh inherited the long historical and revolutionary role in India. The journal started by Manabendranath Roy during the Second World War faced an uphill task before and after the Independence of India. Outstanding writers, critics, contributed to the journal covering wide range of issues, which drew the attention of academics, politicians, statesmen and general readers. The journal can boast of the legacy of editors, after M. N. Roy and Ellen Roy, of the likes of Sib Narayan Ray, Vasant B. Karnik, Amritlal Bhikku Shah, Govind D. Parekh, V.M. Tarkunde, Justice R.A. Jahagirdar, G.R. Dalvi, R.M. Pal who ably continued the standards of the journal which drew the attention of one and all. Many other scholars joined as and when need demanded and sustained the journal.

One great thing about The Radical Humanist is that despite facing an uphill task and financial crisis, it has never stopped.

Now about four years ago Mr Mahi Pal undertook the editorship of the journal and is continuing the task. The selection of articles for publication indicates the wide scope, in-depth study and the attention paid to the critical issues. One thing must be emphasized that The Radical Humanist never compromised on human values, ethical norms, and above all freedom. Mr Mahi Pal selected the articles keeping in view the cultural crisis faced by the contemporary society in the world in general and in India in particular. This selection of articles will set norms and pave the way for future. As an associate with the journal since many years, I could visualize the great effort of Mr Mahi Pal Singh in selection which will definitely draw the attention of people in general and readers of this journal in particular. Mr Mahi Pal has done a yeoman service through this uphill task. He has covered very useful fields in choosing the articles. As a follower of The Radical Humanist journal since half a century I could see the task of Mr Mahi Pal.

Innaiah Narisetti (Dr.)

**Note: ‘Selections from The Radical Humanist’ Volume I, E-Version, will be released along with Volume II during the Biennial Conference of the Indian Renaissance Institute to be held on 6th-7th April 2019 at New Delhi and will be available at [www.lohiatoday.com](http://www.lohiatoday.com)**

**Note: An Excel file containing all the articles published in The Radical Humanist since 1970 and available with IRI is also being circulated to enable readers to get soft/photostat copies of various articles on demand. It has also been placed at [www.lohiatoday.com](http://www.lohiatoday.com)**

# THE RADICAL HUMANIST

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CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY & P.U.C.L. (Delhi)  
PRESS RELEASE 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2019  
APPEAL TO VOTERS

## **SAVE DEMOCRACY, SAVE THE NATION:**

Citizens For Democracy and P.U.C.L. (Delhi) view with grave concern 'a recent statement made on 14<sup>th</sup> March by Sakshi Maharaj, a BJP MP at Unnao that there is Modi tsunami and after this election of 2019, there would be no further election. This should not be viewed as a stray statement by a political leader but a belief which is widely shared by top leadership of the Sangh Parivar. Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and Amit Shah, President of BJP also declared last year that after BJP wins election in 2019, nobody will be able to remove them for the next fifty years. RSS and its off shoots already see the Indian Constitution as a major roadblock to achieving its main goal of establishing a Hindu Rashtra. There have been continuous attempts by it and its followers, overt and covert, to weaken and destroy the basic constitutional values viz. secularism, socialism, equality and tolerance. They give tacit support to the incidents of mass-lynching of the members of the minority and dalit communities who continue to remain in a state of fear and helplessness while un-employment and poverty

have grown more than before. The Sangh Parivar is trying to sway the masses by demagogic and promoting a wave of nationalist mass hysteria to regain power. Once BJP wins again, the periodical elections may be discarded for ever so that its totalitarian ambition of continuing to rule for fifty years may come true. This eventuality will mean the destruction of all our hopes and aspirations for freedom – social, economic and political. Periodical elections are powerful weapons in the hands of the people by which they can remove a corrupt or repressive government and elect another one of their choice. Once people are deprived of this weapon, they will be compelled to live in a realm of serfdom.

We therefore appeal to the voters to vote for such a candidate in their constituency who cherishes democratic and secular values and who is in a better position to ensure the defeat of BJP-RSS alliance. Defeat of BJP is the imperative need of the day if we wish to save our country, our democracy, our constitution and cherished values of our freedom struggle.

*S.R. Hiremath, N.D. Pancholi, Anil Sinha, Sumit Chakravarty, Arun Manjhi, Ramsharan, Manimala, Mahi Pal Singh, Thomas Mathew, Ramendra, Vijay Pratap, Dr. Sunilam, Prabhat, Ghanshyam, Putul, Shalu Nigam, Malathi Maithri, Sheoraj Singh, Radhey Shiam, Prem Chand, Sajjan Kumar, Rajindar Kumar Sharma, Dr. Ravi Kumar, Amit Srivastav, B.B.Thapa, Subhash Bharti, and others*

*For and on behalf of the Citizens For Democracy & P.U.C.L. (Delhi)*

## **Editorial :**

### **1. The Pulwama Attack and its Fallout**

**Mahi Pal Singh**

The terrorist attack on a CRPF convoy at Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir on 14th February in which forty personnel of the para-military force were killed was a brutal, barbarous and cowardly act by an activist of Jaish-e-Muhammad, a Pakistan-based terrorist organisation aided and abetted by the military and Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, needed and was rightly condemned throughout India by one and all as well as by the international community. The outrage was vociferously expressed by individuals as well as organisations including the political parties. The TV channels went out of all limits of jingoism adding dynamite day-in and day-out to the already raging fire with a war-cry of tit for tat against Pakistan. The passions were heightened to the extent that the Modi government thought it an opportune moment to take some military action against Pakistan so that it could well be used for garnering mass support a couple of months before the decisive Parliamentary elections due in April-May 2019. And it did exactly the same by sending a few Mirage-2000 fighter planes across the borders and attacking a JeM centre at Balakot because JeM had taken the responsibility for the Pulwama attack. Though there were doubts and questions regarding the number of people (terrorists) killed in the Balakot attack launched on 26th February, no party or individual questioned the retaliatory action of the country's armed forces. The happiness on the action of a Mig-21 Bison fighter plane flown by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman to counter an attack by an F-16 fighter jet of Pakistan, in which both the planes were destroyed, was to some extent marred by the arrest of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman by the Pakistani forces, who was,

however, released without any harm a few days later by Pakistan as a goodwill gesture.

The whole nation had paid their tributes to those killed in the Pulwama attack, praised our air force personnel and officers for their retaliatory action against Pakistan and welcomed the return of our brave soldier Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman unharmed. All the action and reaction should have left us a bit wiser and more vigilant in future so that Pulwama-like attacks do not get repeated and the country does not get pushed to the brink of another war like the earlier wars. This unfortunate array of events should have ended at that. But that was not to be, and that did not happen.

The way Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP President, Amit Shah, Home Minister Rajnath Singh, in fact all the leaders of the BJP have behaved, and are continuing to behave, in the aftermath of the Pulwama attack and the Balakot action that followed, it seems that they are treating the Pulwama attack as a golden opportunity to first react by some military action and then to encash it for their electoral benefit in the ensuing Parliamentary elections. In every election rally very elaborate reference is being made to the military action both by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. The action and bravery of our soldiers is being arrogated by Mr. Modi to himself, as if he himself went across the borders and attacked Balakot. He does not realize that by doing so, he is denying the credit that should rightly go to our soldiers exclusively. He is trying to portray himself as the strongest Prime Minister of the country by allowing the security forces to take necessary retaliatory action. He forgets that the most decisive action against Pakistan was taken in 1971 by the then

Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi which resulted in bifurcating Pakistan into Pakistan and Bangladesh and that the action taken by him does not even deserve a mention in comparison with that action. If he is so keen to take the responsibility of the success of the attack on Balakot, he cannot escape the responsibility of the three recent major terrorist attacks from across the border including the attacks at Pathankot airfield, Uri and Pulwama. His rule as the Prime Minister of the country has been that of continuous terrorist attacks from across the border as well as of almost everyday breach of cease-fire by Pakistani rangers from across the LoC in spite of the earlier surgical strike against the terrorist training camps based in Pakistan/PoK. During the last five years of his tenure as the Prime Minister of the country there have been more terrorist attacks by Pakistan trained terrorists in Kashmir and elsewhere and the security situation in Kashmir has also worsened. His declaration of bringing to book all the Pakistan based handlers of terrorist attacks in India made in 2014 as poll promises, like all his other promises, have proved mere bogus slogans.

Taking cue from the top leaders of the party, Manoj Tiwari, President, Delhi state BJP, led an electoral rally in military fatigue in an attempt to exploit the prevalent nationalist sentiments of the people for political benefits. The incident was widely condemned except by the BJP. At another place a big electoral hoarding with photos of BJP national and other leaders also had a photo of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, another condemnable attempt to exploit for narrow political benefits the brave act of the soldier who intercepted and destroyed the Pakistani F-16 fighter plane which Pakistan had sent in retaliation for the Balakot attack.

The Prime Minister himself is responsible for spreading the war-cry, politicising the army action and using it for electoral benefits. In fact, that is another way of avoiding and distracting

the attention of the people from the colossal failures of his government on almost all fronts. He portrays himself as the greatest defender of the country conveniently forgetting that the people of the country have been hit in greater numbers and more grievously by his move of demonetisation and introduction of GST resulting in massive unemployment, farmer woes including farming losses due to un-gainful prices of their farm produce, very high and massive corruption and free play of black money, absence of safety of children, women and other vulnerable sections of society, destruction or subversion of all the institutions of democratic governance including press and media, promotion of illogical and unscientific thoughts and education etc. Intellectuals and social activists are being targeted and framed in false cases as never before. Dissent is being labelled as anti-national and actual anti-national hoodlums belonging to the RSS ideology, including those terrorists who are being prosecuted for various terrorist activities including the Samjhauta train bomb blasts, are being defended or their actions connived at. Gangs of Hindutva goons have taken over law into their own hands and mob-lynching have become the order of the day. In the aftermath of the Pulwama attack, beatings of Kashmiris in various parts of the country by the Hindutva gangs wearing saffron *kurtas* have been added to the numbers of sufferings of ordinary peace loving people. By alienating more and more Kashmiris, the Hindutva forces led by Mr. Modi have made solution of the Kashmir problem even more difficult.

The Unnao BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj who is known for making controversial remarks, said during a party programme on Friday, 15th March 2019 that the upcoming Lok Sabha polls will be fought in the name of the country and there will be no elections after that. His statement is perfectly in consonance with the RSS ideology which does not believe in

democracy, diversity and dissent and has been opposing the present Constitution and advocating for Hindu Rashtra against which the Constitution and democracy are the greatest hindrance. It is not surprising, therefore, that no leader of the BJP including Narendra Modi and Amit Shah has condemned, criticised or even expressed disagreement with the statement. Sakshi Maharaj's statement is a pointer to the intent of the BJP/RSS to the kind of state they want to establish. Hitler is the role model of the RSS and Narendra Modi is another Hitler in the making, if only he can win the forthcoming election by hook or crook. And in the nationalistic fervour they have aroused in the wake of Pulwama attack by taking a little military action against Pakistan, they want to drown all other issues of Kashmir, the country and the *aam aadmi* and win the election once and for all, as they ostensibly plan. Democracy in this country is facing a real challenge, unforeseen before. We have to think whether we are prepared for that.

It is said that the people get the government they deserve – more so in a democracy where they elect their own destiny makers. In 2014

the people of this country chose to elect the present government. Therefore, they can only blame themselves for their present woes. But the time has come to get rid of the present hollow slogan-shouting, non-performing, divisive and repressive dispensation led by Narendra Modi. They must not get swayed by misleading words of the top leaders of the BJP, the thoroughly biased media barring a few honourable exceptions, and the influence of ill-gotten money which will be spent in thousands of crores to hide their failures behind the glamour of money power and nationalistic slogans. It is better to be vigilant and to act wisely today than to feel sorry during the next five years, maybe more. Even Mr. Modi knows that he has utterly failed to deliver and electoral defeat awaits his party and him. That is why he is desperately trying to ride the wave of fake nationalism which he himself is creating, the old trick of the communal, fascist forces. In his self-praise he has rendered even Narcissus look pigmy in comparison with him. It is time for him to come to reality or for the people to show him the mirror. They are capable of doing so, and they will surely do so. They are 'We the People' of India. 

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## 2. Narendra Modi, the '*chowkidar*' of the Elite

Mahi Pal Singh

When he contested the Parliamentary election in 2014 for the first time Narendra Modi claimed to be a '*chaiwala*', referring to his humble beginning as a child, so that ordinary people would identify with him and vote for him. He and his party did get 31% votes which were sufficient for them to come to power under the multi-cornered and the present system of election in which the candidate getting the highest number of votes amongst the contestants is declared a winner, however low percentage of votes he/she may get. His claim of being a '*chaiwala*' at that time was a blatant lie because just before that he had been the Chief Minister of Gujarat for 12 years and his status, standard of living and position in society had changed drastically from his childhood when he might have been a '*chaiwala*'. Most of the people in this country, and elsewhere, have come from very humble backgrounds and most of them remain in the same position throughout their lives while some rise from that position and acquire good positions but rarely flaunt their humble beginning as Mr. Modi has been doing – only for votes and retaining the position he has reached. However, he won the election in 2014 and became the Prime Minister of the country but primarily people had voted then against the corrupt Congress regime and the BJP won by default being the only visible and viable alternative at that time. Nobody knows how many sympathy votes he got through the '*chaiwala*' gimmick.

Before the 2019 elections Modi has invented another name for himself – *chowkidar* – in fact he has launched the '*main bhi chowkidar*', 'I am also a *chowkidar*', campaign, (called 'a hollow rhetoric' by the sitting BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha) - again with the purpose of identifying with the lowest strata of society and win the sympathies of ordinary people and get

their votes. This again is a blatant lie, even bigger than his earlier lie of being a '*chaiwala*' because this so claiming '*chowkidar*' has not only been a C.M. for 12 years but also the Prime Minister of the country for 5 years. He does not even know how an ordinary *chowkidar* makes both his ends meet with the meagre pittance he earns keeping awake all the night and crying repeatedly '*jagte raho*'. He wears rejected and worn out clothes people charitably offer to him and not the 10 lakh Rupee worth coat which Mr. Modi used to flaunt after becoming the Prime Minister; the poor man has to travel on foot or at most on a bicycle whereas his big brother has spent half his tenure as the Prime Minister travelling the whole world in VIP aeroplanes, more than any other earlier Prime Minister, and the other half, of course, addressing election rallies. His calling himself a '*chowkidar*' is an insult to all the *chowkidars* or ordinary people of this country because if at all he is a *chowkidar*, he is not the *chowkidar* or protector of the life, property and interests of the ordinary people but the '*chowkidar*' of the Adanies and Ambanies whose interests he has been protecting and promoting sincerely and arduously throughout his five year term. If being a '*chowkidar*' means being in a position in which he himself is today, a really envious position for anyone to be in, almost everyone in this country will envy him and wish to attain his position. I have said 'almost everyone' because there are still many honourable people who would not like even to become a Prime Minister only to act as the '*chowkidar*' of the interests of the top billionaires of the country, grossly neglecting the interests of the toiling masses.

He had come to power on the promise of fighting and controlling the menace of corruption and black money and bringing back the illegal money stashed in foreign banks. Every citizen

of the country except the votaries of the Hindutva ideology knows well that right from the clerical level, police, corporation offices etc. to the highest level the corruption has only increased. His move of demonetisation of high currency notes in the name of unearthing black money and controlling terrorism by drying up the coffers of those financing terrorism completely failed to achieve those goals, if they really were the goals. Most people are of the opinion that the introduction of Rs. 2000/- currency note only proved a facilitator for black marketers. Even the Prime Minister's office is under the shadow of corruption in the purchase of Rafale fighter jets from France. The Prime Minister and other important ministers in his ministry have been speaking and acting in a manner which leaves much for suspicion exactly in the same manner as the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and his ministers were acting when there were charges of corruption against them in the purchase of Bofors guns. At that time the Congress party was not accepting the demand of the opposition for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigation and now the BJP has scuttled every effort by the Congress and other opposition parties for a JPC probe into the Rafale purchase deal. Only the players have changed this time. The menace of black money has acquired gigantic proportions during the rule of the Modi regime as never before. Go for purchase of any property, say, for example, in Delhi and you will know that today you have to shell out more black money than white for it. And of course, the poll promise of bringing back black money from foreign banks has proved a complete fiasco in the same manner as the assurance of bringing in the culprits of terrorist attacks in India from across the borders and punishing them. In fact, this government's intention to fight terrorists, whether internal or external, invites serious doubts because on 22 March 2019 those accused of Samjhauta train bomb blasts including Swami Aseemanand, in

which 68 persons had been killed, a greater tragedy than even the Pulwama tragedy in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed in a terrorist attack, have been acquitted by a court merely because the prosecution which was under pressure of top political leaders as all of them belonged to the Hindutva outfits, did not present its case and evidence before the court seriously. Justice was expected to evade the victims of the Samjhauta train blast tragedy under the RSS/BJP rule because the top leadership of the BJP was sympathetic to them, and also the accused in the Malegaon and Ajmer bomb blasts, from the very beginning and used to visit the accused in jail. And now Rajnath Singh, the Union Home Minister, has come out with a statement that the government would not file an appeal against the acquittal of Aseemanand. That proves beyond any doubt on whose side the present BJP government is – on the side of the terrorists, of course if they happen to belong to the Hindutva outfits, or the ordinary citizens of the country.

The bogusness of Mr. Modi's poll promise of ending corruption also stands exposed, particularly corruption in high echelons of power, from the very fact that he has ensured that the Lokpal is not appointed at the centre during his tenure as the Prime Minister. It is the institution of Lokpal who could have enquired into complaints against top political functionaries like the central ministers and exposed corruption in the functioning of the government. Anyone who hinders the process of appointment of Lokpal or Lokayakta cannot rightfully claim to be against corruption. We cannot forget that cases of corruption against the BJP ministers, the Reddy brothers, and the Chief Minister, Mr. B.S. Yeddyurappa, had come to light in Karnataka through enquiries by the Lokayukta, Justice Santosh Hegde, there. The Lokpal has now been appointed at the fag end of the tenure of the present Lok Sabha and the government. There is no other authority which could have

enquired into cases of corruption against the Prime Minister and his ministers. So Mr. Modi's ministers have been saved from any enquiry of corruption against them. In the absence of any enquiry against them, they can all, including the Prime Minister himself, claim to be non-corrupt. Mr. Modi is an adept hand at ensuring that no enquiries can be held against him and his ministers. As the Chief Minister of Gujarat also he had ensured that the Lokayukta did not get appointed during his 12 year tenure as the Chief Minister. That should by itself speak volumes against his claim of being non-corrupt. The saying goes that Caesar's wife should also be above suspicion but the non-appointment of the Lokpal by the Modi government has failed to keep him and his ministerial colleagues above suspicion. By hindering an enquiry against a police officer on charges of corruption by the Delhi government led by Arvind Kejriwal, and taking away the control of the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of Delhi police from the Delhi government, which could enquire into cases of corruption against government officials, particularly police officials, the Modi government clearly appeared to be on the side of the corrupt by not letting the Delhi government act against the corrupt. Corruption in Delhi government offices is intact today because of the uncalled for interference of the Modi government for political reasons and people of Delhi hold the Modi government responsible for it. Public memory is said to be short, but not so if their everyday lives are affected seriously and adversely.

Only a few years ago the BJP used to call itself a 'party with a difference'. But in making promises and breaking or forgetting them after winning the elections it is no different from other parties. As per a report released on 15 March 2019 at Varanasi it has come to light that "Namami Gange- National Mission for Clean Ganga" project worth Rs 2000 Crore by Union Government to clean, conserve and rejuvenate

Ganga has failed and the quality of Ganga water has worsened in the last three years. According to data collected by an NGO, Sankat Mochan Foundation (SMF), there is a significant rise of coliform bacteria and Biological Oxygen Demand, which are important parameters to check the quality of water. It should not be difficult to imagine where all the money earmarked for the purpose has gone.

What is surprising is that the pre-election discourse has slid down from discussion on the 2014 poll promises of controlling corruption and black money, bringing in *achhe din, sabka saath, sabka vikas*, profitable price of the produce to the farmers, one crore employment every year to the unemployed, lifting the living condition of poor people and ensuring national as well as internal security of the people and for this slide the ruling party leaders, including the Prime Minister Mr. Modi, are mainly responsible. The reason is clear. The BJP and its poster-boy Mr. Modi have completely failed to fulfil any of those promises so they cannot remind the people of any of those promises at this crucial moment. We are not even referring to the promise of putting Rs. 15 lakh in every person's account out of the black money which was supposed to be brought in from foreign countries because Amit Shah, the BJP President, had himself declared after winning the election that it was an '*election jumla*', a mere election slogan.

The Prime Minister and his party know well that they are going to lose the 2019 Parliamentary elections. The simple mathematics of the combination of the percentage of votes and the pre-poll coalition of Akhilesh Yadav's Samajvadi Party (SP), Ms. Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Ajit Singh's Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) in Uttar Pradesh shows that the BJP is going to lose at least 50 seats from its 2014 tally of 73 seats in UP alone when Modi's popularity was at the top because at that time he seemed to epitomise

the fight against corruption which had become a trademark of the Congress. In Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka and Punjab the BJP had the highest number of seats which in any case is going to come down considerably. The combined effect is expected to be a loss of at least 100 seats which is an indicator of the shape of thing to come. Out of the frustration, desperation and fear of losing his Prime Ministership, Mr. Modi is trying to portray himself as a victim in an attempt to ensure sympathy vote. He no more refers to himself as a he-man with 56 Inch chest. That is why he is appealing to emotions by raising emotional issues like nationalism and calling himself a 'chowkidar'. He cannot appeal to reason and mind or refer to real problems of the people because then no thinking person with a reasonable mind will be impressed with his 'chowkidar' gimmick. Had he really acted as the 'chowkidar' of the Indian Constitution, the Constitutional values like freedom, liberties, equality of all irrespective of religion, sex and

caste, secularism, dignity of the person and protection and promotion of the interests of the poor and marginalised sections of society including employment and education, for which he was appointed and has been paid for by the people and not a dishonest one getting his salary and other perks from one master and protecting the interests of others with the intent of earning something more even if it is for funding the election campaign of his party, he would have won the forthcoming election with even a greater mandate than what he won in 2014. But only if he had been honest to the people, an honest 'chowkidar', as 'chowkidars' mostly are and also are supposed to be. But as an RSS man its Hindutva ideology and his party's political interests, and of course his own narrow personal interest of retaining the Prime Ministership of the country, are supreme and more important than the interests of the country and the people of this country. Perhaps he thinks that he can do so by being the 'chowkidar' of the elite few and not the 'chowkidar' of the ordinary, poor and suffering masses. 

*"Information is the currency that every citizen requires to participate in the life and governance of society." Justice A. P. Shah, former Chief Justice, Delhi and Madras High Courts, (2010)*

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF M.N.ROY (1987-1954)

# The spirit of Freedom and Revolt

When, as a schoolboy of fourteen, I began my political life, which may end in nothing, I wanted to be free. Independence, complete and absolute, is a new-fangled idea. The old-fashioned revolutionaries thought in terms of freedom. In those days, we had not read Marx. We did not know about the existence of the proletariat. Still, many spent their lives in jail and went to the gallows. There was no proletariat to propel them. They were not conscious of class struggle. They did not have the dream of Communism. But they had the human urge to revolt against the intolerable conditions of life. They did not know exactly how those conditions could be changed. But they tried to change them, anyhow. I began my political life with that spirit, and I still draw my inspiration rather from that spirit than from the three Volumes of Capital or three hundred volumes by Marx.

## Articles and Features:

### **Terrorism is the symptom; the root cause of the disease is the repression of the demand for the basic rights. – By Jayanti Patel**

*“.....India’s security doctrine under the BJP borrows from the United States’ War on Terror. The BJP does not seem to realise that despite fighting for nearly two decades now, the US and its allies have been unable to eliminate terrorists. Their endless war has only served to destabilise several countries.....”*

*- Nandita Haksar*

### **Post-Pulwama triumphalism spells disaster for Kashmiris – and Indian democracy**

**It will further alienate the people of Kashmir and polarise the Indian society.**

In dealing with the Pulwama attack of February 14, India has exhibited a degree of triumphalism that could spell disaster, for the Kashmiri people and for the future of Indian democracy.

India saw the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation’s invitation to be a guest of honour at the 46th session of its Council of Foreign Ministers Conference in Abu Dhabi as a triumph over Pakistan. An even bigger triumph was that the meeting passed a declaration without mentioning Kashmir.

The triumph was facilitated by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The Indian media did not question this solidarity. Why should it have? The Saudi regime stands internationally accused of murdering Jamal Khashoggi, a dissident, author, columnist for *The Washington Post* and editor of Al-Arab News Channel who was assassinated inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October last year.

India had warmly welcomed the very man accused of ordering the murder, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and now Riyadh was reciprocating by blocking any mention of Kashmir in the declaration.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, along

with Bahrain and Egypt, have blockaded Qatar since June 2017 for “supporting terrorism”, a claim Qatar denies. They have issued a 13-point list of demands which must be met for the land, air and sea embargo to be lifted. Point 6 demands that Al Jazeera network be shut down while Point 11 demands the shuttering of six other news outlets.

Media is the most important casualty of the war against terror. In India, a significant section of the media has been silenced by the Bharatiya Janata Party government, which has thrown in jail even bloggers with no link to terrorism.

On February 22, the governor’s administration in Jammu and Kashmir abruptly stopped advertisements to *Greater Kashmir*, the Valley’s largest English newspaper, which was already blacklisted from getting ads from the central government. Ads were also stopped to *Kashmir Reader*, a daily banned for around three months during the 2016 mass protests.

The administration did not provide a reason for stopping ads, but officials indicated it was done at the behest of the Indian government. It is thought the move is intended to stop the newspapers from publishing “highly radicalised content glamourising terrorists and anti-national elements”.

**Nandita Haksar**

### Closing space for debate

In the 1990s, the Kashmiri people were demonised by the Hindi film industry. Today the BJP has created an atmosphere in which ordinary Kashmiris working and studying in different parts of India are subjected to mob attacks. This would not have been possible without the triumphalism accompanying the war against terrorism.

The people of Kashmir are victims of many kinds of atrocities and their voices are silenced in a thousand ways. This time, they are being crushed by a discourse of triumphalism that is becoming ever harder to resist. It closes all democratic space for discussion and debate and prepares a ground ripe for recruitment by militant groups.

By putting national security on top of its agenda, the Narendra Modi government has closed any possibility of discussion on the underlying political causes of the Kashmir conflict.

In contrast, Modi willingly talked to Naga insurgents, even those who had blown up convoys like the one targeted in Pulwama.

The most distressing aspect of the Indian state's and the media's responses to the Pulwama attack is that they have worsened rather than addressed every single underlying

cause of the discontent of the Kashmiri people.

India's security doctrine under the BJP borrows from the United States' War on Terror. The BJP does not seem to realise that despite fighting for nearly two decades now, the US and its allies have been unable to eliminate terrorists. Their endless war has only served to destabilise several countries.

Analysing the impact of American triumphalism, the historian Andrew J Bacevich writes: "Post-cold war triumphalism produced consequences that are nothing less than disastrous. Historians will remember the past two decades not as a unipolar moment, but as an interval in which America succumbed to excessive self-regard. That moment is now ending with our economy in shambles and our country facing the prospect of permanent war."

Today, with India's economy in a shambles and unemployment rising, the BJP's policies on Pakistan and Kashmir could result in destabilising South Asia.

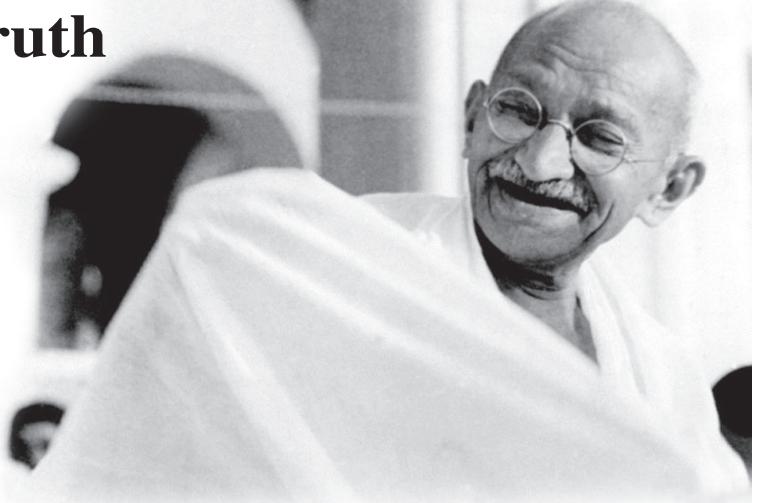
This is a very real danger if the BJP comes back to power on May 23 and is allowed to continue with its triumphalism, for it will only further alienate the people of Kashmir and polarise the Indian society.

*Nandita Haksar is a human rights lawyer, teacher, activist and writer.* 

## Search for Truth

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

**Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**



**Terrorism is the symptom; the root cause of the disease is the repression of the demand for the basic rights. – Jayanti Patel**

## **Our Fight Against Fascism**

**Jayanti Patel**

Comparison of public life and leadership during the initial decades after independence with current circumstances sends us into depression. What paradigm in our practices, values, and behaviours were erroneous enough to weaken our allegiance to unity, value system, honesty, activism, concerns for societal well-being and preparedness to fight for the same. Instead, we observe comprehensive strengthening of hatred, nepotism, power struggle, corruption, crookedness, ignoring the welfare of people, using public assets for personal gains, deceptions and cheating people with false promises.

Preaching and practices of thinkers, intellectuals as well as people in higher social strata play the pivotal role in grooming and uplifting of values in public life. In addition to this, as Marx puts it, the paradigm of economic and materialistic factors related to productivity also have an impact. Public processes during the last couple of decades indicate politicians taking control of these factors. This has decreased, or at times destroyed intellectual thought processes and political power has turned into the source of amassing wealth. Thus, the time has come to combat the polity of power-struggle through public awareness and strive for re-establishing a healthy public life.

The general public understands the importance of value system in public life. Thinkers need to define these values and suggest a collective public action for upholding them. Abridging relation between thinkers and the general public is a pre-requisite to achieving this. This can happen by supporting the demand of the people in getting their basic needs

satisfied while also advocating collective actions for the value-based polity. However, limiting only to awareness of values and their advocacy will not suffice. There is also a need to establish and develop centres focusing on ideology and preparedness to combat. Such centers might also ensure electing the candidates with qualities like support for democracy, honesty, and responsibility to people. It is possible that such centers may keep watch on the working of the elected members. Hence, activities of ideological aspects and that of constructive-combative shall have to go in hand to hand.

Our struggle is against fascist forces that are against human values, anti-democratic, dividing nation and society, nurturing and spreading hatred and nepotism and promoting violence-killings-massacre.

The movement supporting fascist ideology has been growing in India for about nine decades. Through its campaign centres, it has created Robopaths (humans having robot-like psyche) that are identical to key-operated toys. This movement has captured the political power by exercising aggressive-nationalist euphoria, capitalist dynamics, alluring promises full of falsehoods, intimidation, and treachery (manipulating Electronic Voting Machines and enticing members from other political parties). Their satanic face has surfaced in the last five years. Let us hope that the struggle does not become as difficult, bloody, destructive and painstaking as Civil War. Yes, we can hope for that because of more reasons than one.

India has many dynamics to look forward to dispersing of these gloomy-scary clouds for

dawn having human values, democratic lifestyle and system, unity, harmony, and peaceful environment.

Firstly, not the majority of the citizens are not converted or believers in fascist ideology. There are individuals, institutions and political parties having concerns and commitment to safeguarding democracy. Voting out party in power in an election is a viable non-violent option. Parties in a couple of states have entered into an understanding that anti-incumbency votes do not divide. Though, during Indira's Emergency, all opposition parties had formed an alliance under Janata Party. Such

understanding is needed this time; because it can muster more than sixty percent of total votes and push the ruling party out of power.

However, keeping fascist forces away from power is not enough. An important aspect is to eliminate fascist psyche and to achieve that a comprehensive ideological movement is required. Workshops and training camps may be conducted with a focus on human values; democratic system, lifestyle, and ideology; the right to freedom of expressions; inculcating rational, secular and scientific temper. It is essential to take up this challenge at the institutional level and the ideological front.

(This English version of my article written in Gujarati is prepared by Mr. Kiran Nanavati) 

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## Pulwama Attack Is A Reminder Of The Failed Promises Of Demonetisation

**PM Narendra Modi and several BJP leaders had said one of the objectives of note ban was to check terror financing.**

**Akshita Jain**



On 8 October 2017, finance minister Arun Jaitley said that terror funding had been squeezed after demonetisation, the Narendra Modi's government's biggest policy gambit till date.

This was just one among similar statements made by many BJP ministers, including the Prime Minister himself, in the two years since the shock move was unleashed on the country.

Days after the deadly Pulwama attack, in which at least 40 CRPF personnel were killed by a suicide bomber, opposition leaders, political commentators and ordinary observers are asking again whether the government's claims of demonetisation hitting terror financing actually hold up.

The verdict seems to be: probably not.

There is no clear data to suggest that terror funding was affected after the ban on Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in 2016.

According to *IndiaSpend*, terrorist incidents

in Jammu and Kashmir have increased 177% over the four years to 2018. There has also been a 94% rise in death toll of security forces in Jammu and Kashmir in four years.

An analysis of Home Ministry data (compiled by South Asia Terrorism Portal) from 10 months before note ban and 10 months after, cited by *NDTV*, showed that terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir rose 38% after demonetisation.

Happymon Jacob, who teaches disarmament studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, told *HuffPost India* that arguments by ministers that demonetisation helped crack down on terror funding should not be taken seriously.

"There was a small period when probably the agitation had gone down," he said.

Otherwise, he said, from a long-range point of view, demonetisation has not really had an impact on either the protests or violence in Kashmir.

In a comprehensive article published in *The Hindu* on Tuesday, Jacob had pointed out that, while Pakistan's reaction leaves much to be desired, New Delhi's Kashmir policy had also been a failure, leading to terrorist-related violence in the Valley spiking "drastically over the past five years".

#### **Conflicting views**

In the months since the note ban announcement, several conflicting news reports have been published on the possible impact on the agitations in Chhattisgarh and Kashmir.

In November 2017, *The Indian Express* reported that documents recovered from the site of an encounter in Abhujmaad showed that Maoists had successfully exchanged demonetised Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes. Some police officers also told *The Express* it was unlikely that Maoist finances had taken a huge hit after demonetisation.

An *Economic Times* report from July 2018, however, quoted sources as saying that *hawala* cash transfers to terrorists and separatists in Kashmir have come to an abrupt halt.

The sources also told the newspaper that Maoist groups were at pains to "convert" the extortion money that has been stocked as piles of cash into 'legal tender'.

Rammanohar Reddy, former editor of the *Economic and Political Weekly* and author of the book *Demonetisation and Black*

*Money*, wrote in *Mint* last year that "the less said the better about demonetisation ending terror financing."

When *HuffPost India* reached out to Reddy, he said that the *Mint* article and the afterword of his book encapsulated his views on the subject.

In the afterword, he writes, "It is in the nature of terrorism that it has an impact disproportionate to the resources put into it. To therefore argue that demonetisation would weaken the roots of terrorism made little sense. As events have subsequently shown, disaffection in different parts of the country did not end after *notebandi*. They could not have because the disaffection was not fuelled by money. Statements like 'Stone pelting (in Kashmir) has come down after demonetisation' were meaningless then and even thereafter."

On Monday, Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav questioned the BJP's claims that demonetisation had helped to contain terrorism and corruption.

Even as the Modi government faces tough questions over the alleged intelligence failure that led to the deadly Pulwama attack, it is worth asking once again, whether the pain and misery of demonetisation was worth it.

**Akshita Jain** is Editor, **HuffPost**.

Courtesy **HuffPost**, 19 February 2019. 

## **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**

## ‘Why blame all Kashmiris?’

‘I have only seen conflict since I was born. I want it to stop. I am longing for peace,’ a young Kashmiri woman in Delhi tells *Rediff.com*’s Archana Masih.



Illustration: Dominic Xavier/Rediff.com

The only Kashmiri student of the batch, Aafreen Sadiq\*, did not go to the institute where she is learning cinematography in Delhi, for three days.

Her parents called her from Srinagar and told her to stay indoors after hearing about Kashmiri students being threatened and attacked in different parts of India after a Jaish-e-Mohammad suicide bomber killed 41 CRPF personnel in Pulwama.

“I asked them, ‘Why? I haven’t done anything. This is not my fault, why should I not go to college?’”

“My parents said, ‘You haven’t done anything, but people might not listen to you’.”

“When the incident happened, I was in college and everyone started asking me questions. I said, ‘How do I know what happened? I am a Kashmiri that doesn’t mean that I am involved.’”

On Tuesday, Aafreen, a graduate from Kashmir University, did not make the customary morning call to her mother because she did not want her parents to know that she was resuming college.

“It is not about Hindu-Muslim; Kashmir-India. A particular group is involved and they are blaming the entire community, the whole of Kashmir and the Kashmiri people?” questions the 22 year old who lives with a friend’s family in the nation’s capital after she got admission 6 months ago.

How the Kashmiri Muslim became friends with a Hindu girl from Delhi is a beautiful happenstance that is testimony to the organic ethos of India — that

has brought Indians of different faith together and bound them into friendships which then go on to embrace the families of two individuals into that wondrous circle of fellowship.

That is what happened with these two friends too. They met in Kargil two years ago at an international youth festival with participants from all over the country. The girls hit it off, and when Aafreen got an interview call for a course in cinematography in Delhi, her friend’s mother called Aafreen’s mom, and told her that there was no way she was going to stay in Kashmir House or a hotel.

‘*Jab ghar hai yahan, kahin aur kyon rahegi?* (When there is a house here, why she should stay anywhere else?) said the mother of one young girl to another — removed in faith and geography, but united in that common space which is a mother’s heart.

After she secured admission, her friend's family offered that she continue to live in their home. They did not ask for a single rupee as rent.

"She is the first girl from our family to step out of Kashmir for an education. I was worried that if boys were being attacked, what if they raise a hand against a girl?" asks Aafreen's mother after the worrying news of attacks on Kashmiri students.

"This family is too nice, aunty treats me like her daughter," gushes Aafreen — but there are some in the neighbourhood who display prejudice.

A "neighbour aunty" came to her and asked if Kashmiri boys from a young age were told to join terrorism.

"I told her what answer can I give you aunty? They didn't ask me if they should join militancy. They did not even ask their parents. They don't ask for permission."

"In college students were asking me about the suicide bomber. It is very embarrassing. I felt a little nervous and unsafe."

That night, when she went to the market, there were people burning posters and asking for revenge. Her friend hurried her home, saying what if they found out she was Kashmiri.

"On the news, Kashmiris were being called anti-national. 'Throw them out', they said, and I thought there was also a Muslim from Rajouri, J&K, among the CRPF personnel who died in the attack."

"Was any Hindu blamed for the Naxal attack of 2010 (*that took the lives of 76 CRPF troopers*)? Then how can they blame all Muslims? They too are a part of this country," Aafreen points out.

As candles were being lit in memory of the martyrs, Aafreen also lit one in her window. Not for show, she says, but because she was pained that 41 men had been killed.

"If Kashmiri children are hit by pellets, I feel the pain. I felt the pain when I came to know 40 army men have been killed."

"In this India-Pakistan-Kashmir conflict — who is suffering? The local," she says and rues the absence of Kashmiri leadership.

The problem as perceived by her is that Kashmiri youth does not have a platform to express themselves.

"There is a communication gap between them and whosoever is on the other side. No one wants to hear the Kashmiri youth," she says, expressing disappointment that during his last visit to Srinagar, the prime minister did not make an effort to meet Kashmiri youth.

Instead, a curfew was imposed and Internet was suspended.

In Delhi's highly surcharged political environment, even prior to the CRPF carnage, batch-mates often ask her about stone pelters, and called them anti-nationals.

"My classmates have never been to Kashmir. I invite them, not as tourists, but as guests in my home so that they can get a sense of how caged one can feel when there is no Internet and there is curfew," says Aafreen, adding that in 2016, they were under virtual house arrest for 6 weeks without access to the Internet.

With the desire to work for the Discovery Channel one day, Aafreen is part of an NGO that works for peace which helps organise workshops in Delhi, Jammu and Chandigarh.

"I don't believe in religion. I believe in the religion of humanity."

In the last half year, she has grown to like Delhi, especially the opportunities it provides in meeting new people.

"And I like that there are no restrictions," she laughs. Especially, a non stop Internet connection.

As for her hometown, there is only one wish.

"I have only seen conflict since I was born. I want it to stop. I am longing for peace."

*\*Her name has been changed so that she does not encounter any problems in these surcharged times.*

**Archana Masih**, Rediff.com, February 20, 2019. 

# Our Captured, Wounded Hearts: Arundhati Roy On Balakot, Kashmir And India

*By deploying the IAF, Narendra Modi has ensured that Kashmir is conclusively internationalised.*

Arundhati Roy



NEW DELHI —With his reckless “pre-emptive” airstrike on Balakot in Pakistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inadvertently undone what previous Indian governments almost miraculously, succeeded in doing for decades. Since 1947 the Indian Government has bristled at any suggestion that the conflict in Kashmir could be resolved by international arbitration, insisting that it is an “internal matter.” By goading Pakistan into a counter-strike, and so making India and Pakistan the only two nuclear powers in history to have bombed each other, Modi has internationalised the Kashmir dispute. He has demonstrated to the world that Kashmir is potentially the most dangerous place on earth, the flash-point for nuclear war. Every person, country, and organisation that worries

about the prospect of nuclear war has the right to intervene and do everything in its power to prevent it.

On February 14, 2019, a convoy of 2,500 paramilitary soldiers was attacked in Pulwama (Kashmir) by Adil Ahmad Dar, a 20-year-old Kashmiri suicide-bomber who, it has been declared, belonged to the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad. The attack that killed at least 40 men was yet another hideous chapter in the unfolding tragedy of Kashmir. Since 1990, more than seventy thousand people have been killed in the conflict, thousands have “disappeared”, tens of thousands have been tortured and hundreds of young people maimed and blinded by pellet guns. The death toll over the last twelve months has been the highest since 2009.

*Associated Press* reports that almost 570 people have lost their lives, 260 of them militants, 160 civilians and 150 Indian armed personnel who died in the line of duty.

Depending on the lens through which this conflict is viewed, the rebel combatants are called “terrorists”, “militants”, “freedom fighters” or “mujahids”. Most Kashmiris call them ‘mujahids’ and when they are killed, hundreds of thousands of people—whether they agree with their methods or not—turn out for their funerals, to mourn for them and bid them farewell. Indeed, most of the civilians who were killed this past year, are those who put their

Valley like Adil Ahmed Dar who have been born into war, who have seen such horror that they have become inured to fear and are willing to sacrifice their lives for freedom. Any day there could be another attack, worse, or less-worse than the Pulwama attack. Is the Government of India willing to allow the actions of these young men to control the fate of this country and the whole subcontinent? By reacting in the empty, theatrical way that he did, this is exactly what Narendra Modi has done. He has actually bestowed upon them the power to direct our future. The young Pulwama bomber could not have asked for more.



*TAUSEEF MUSTAFA via Getty Images.*

*Most Kashmiris call these rebel combatants ‘mujahids’ and when they are killed, hundreds of thousands of people—whether they agree with their methods or not—turn out for their funerals, to mourn for them and bid them farewell.*

bodies in the way of harm to allow militants cornered by soldiers to escape.

In this long-drawn-out, blood-drenched saga, the Pulwama bombing is the deadliest, most gruesome attack of all. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of young men in the Kashmir

Indians who valorise their own struggle for Independence from British Rule and virtually worship those who led it are for the most part strangely opaque to Kashmiris who are fighting for the same thing. The armed struggle in Kashmir against what people think of as “Indian

Rule” is almost thirty years old. That Pakistan has (at one time officially and now mostly through non-government actors) supported the struggle with arms, men and logistics is hardly a secret. Nor is it a secret that no militant can operate in the war-zone that is Kashmir if they did not have the overt support of local people. Who in their right mind could imagine that this hellishly complicated, hellishly cruel war would be solved or even mitigated in any way by a one-off, hastily executed, theatrical “surgical-strike,” which turns out to have been not-so-surgical after all? A similar “strike” that took place after the 2016 attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri achieved little more than inspiring a Bollywood action film. The Balakot strikes in turn seem to have been inspired by the film. And now the media reports that Bollywood producers are already lining up to copyright “Balakot” as the name of their next film project. On the whole, it has to be said, this absurd waltz looks and smells more “pre-election” than “pre-emptive.”

For the Prime Minister of this country to press its formidable Air-force into performing dangerous theatrics is deeply disrespectful. And what an irony it is, that while this irresponsible nuclear brinkmanship is being played out in our subcontinent, the mighty United States of America is in talks with the Taliban forces who it has not managed to defeat or dislodge even after 17 years of straight-out war.

The spiralling conflict in the subcontinent is certainly as deadly as it appears to be. But is it as straightforward?

Kashmir is the most densely militarized zone in the world, with an estimated half a million Indian soldiers posted there. In addition to the Intelligence Bureau, the Research and Analysis Wing and the National Intelligence Agency, the uniformed forces – the Army, the Border Security Force, the Central Reserve Police Force (and of course the Jammu and Kashmir Police) each does its own intelligence

gathering. People live in terror of informers, double agents and triple agents who could be anybody from old school friends to family members. Under these circumstances, an attack on the scale of what happened in Pulwama is more than just shocking. As one pithy Twitter commentator put it, (she was referring to the increasingly popular Hindu vigilante practice in North India, of tracking down and lynching Muslims accused of killing cows), how is it that the BJP “can trace 3 kg of beef but cannot trace 350 kg of RDX”?

#### **Who knows?**

After the attack, the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir called it the result of “an intelligence failure”. A few intrepid media portals reported the fact that the Jammu and Kashmir Police *had* indeed raised an urgent alert about a possible attack. Nobody in the media seems overly worried about why the warning was ignored, and where, in the chain of command, the breach took place.

Tragic as it was, the Pulwama attack came as a perfect political opportunity for Narendra Modi to do what he does best—grandstand. Many of us who had predicted months ago that a BJP that was losing its political footing would call down a fireball from the skies just before elections, watched with horror as our prediction came true. And we watched the Ruling Party adroitly parley the Pulwama tragedy into petty, political advantage.

In the immediate aftermath of the Pulwama Attack, as enraged mobs attacked Kashmiris who worked and studied in mainland India, Modi kept dead quiet and reacted only after the Supreme Court said it was the Government’s duty to protect them. But after the air strikes he was quick to appear on TV to take credit, sounding for all the world as though he had personally flown the planes and dropped the bombs. Immediately India’s roughly four hundred 24/7 news channels, most of them unapologetically partisan, set about amplifying

this performance with their own personal “inputs”. Using old videos and fake facts, their screaming anchors masquerading as frontline commandos, orchestrated an orgy of crazed, triumphalist nationalism, in which they claimed the air strikes had destroyed a Jaish-e-Mohammad “terror factory” and killed more than three hundred “terrorists”. The next morning, even the most sober national newspapers followed suit with ridiculous, embarrassing headlines. *The Indian Express* said: ‘India Strikes Terror, Deep in Pakistan’. Meanwhile *Reuters*, which sent a journalist to the site in Pakistan where the bombs had actually fallen, reported only damage to trees and rocks and injuries sustained by one villager. *Associated Press* reported something similar. *The New York Times* said “Analysts and diplomats in New Delhi said the targets of the Indian airstrikes were unclear, as any terrorist groups operating along the border would have cleared out in recent days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India vowed retaliation over the Kashmir attack.”

The mainstream Indian media did not carry the *Reuters* report. So, for the bulk of India’s voting people who don’t read the *New York Times*, their Prime Minister—with his famous 56” chest—had dismantled terrorism forever.

For the moment at least, it looked as though Modi had completely out-manoeuvred his political opponents, who were reduced to tweeting in praise of India’s brave pilots. Meanwhile he and his men were out electioneering. Doubters and dissenters were terrorized by Hindutva trolls, charged with being anti-national, or just debilitated by the fear of the on-call lynch mob that seems to lurk at every street corner in North India.

But things can change in a day. The sheen of false victory faded quickly after Pakistan struck back, shot down a fighter plane and captured a pilot of the Indian Air Force—Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman. Once again, the BJP’s

see-sawing electoral prospects have begun to look distinctly less rosy.

Leaving aside the business of electoral politics and the question of who will win the next elections, Modi’s actions are unforgiveable. He has jeopardized the lives of more than a billion people and brought the war in Kashmir to the doorsteps of ordinary Indians. The madness on television, fed to people like an IV drip morning, noon and night, asks people to lay aside their woes, their joblessness, their hunger, the closing down of their small businesses, the looming threat of eviction from their homes, their demands that there be an enquiry into the mysterious deaths of judges, as well as into what looks like the biggest, most corrupt Defense deal in the history of India, their worries that if they are Muslim, Dalit or Christian they could be attacked or killed—and instead vote, in the name of national pride, for the very people that have brought about this devastation.

**“Leaving aside the business of electoral politics and the question of who will win the next elections, Modi’s actions are unforgiveable. He has jeopardized the lives of more than a billion people and brought the war in Kashmir to the doorsteps of ordinary Indians.”**

This government has wounded India’s soul so very deeply. It will take years for us to heal. For that process to even begin, we must vote to remove these dangerous, spectacle-hungry charlatans from office.

We cannot afford to have a Prime Minister who, on a whim has broken the back of the economy of a country of a billion people by declaring overnight, without consulting anybody that 80 percent of a country’s currency is no longer legal tender. Who in history has ever, done this? We cannot have a Prime Minister of a nuclear power who continues to shoot for a movie about himself in a National Park while a huge crisis befalls the country and then airily

declares that he has left the decision of what to do next to the “*Sena*”— the Army. Which democratically elected leader in history, has ever done this?

Modi has to go. The quarrelsome, divided, unstable Coalition government that might come in his place is not a problem. It is the very essence of democracy. It will be far more intelligent and far less foolhardy.

There remains the matter of the captured Wing Commander. Whatever anybody’s opinion of him, and whatever Pakistan’s role has been in the Kashmir conflict, Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan has acted with dignity and rectitude throughout this crisis. The Indian Government was right to demand that Varthaman be accorded all the rights that the Geneva Convention accords a Prisoner of War. It was right to demand that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) be given access to him while he was in Pakistan’s custody. Today Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced that, as a gesture of good will, the Wing Commander will be released (and has since been actually released – Ed.).

Perhaps India can offer the same courtesy to its political prisoners in Kashmir and the rest of the country: protection of their rights under

the Geneva Convention, and access to the ICRC?

**“Kashmir is the real theatre of unspeakable violence and moral corrosion that can spin us into violence and nuclear war at any moment. To prevent that from happening, the conflict in Kashmir has to be addressed and resolved.”**

The war, that we are in the middle of, is not a war between India and Pakistan. It is a war that is being fought in Kashmir which expanded into the beginnings of yet another war between India and Pakistan. Kashmir is the real theatre of unspeakable violence and moral corrosion that can spin us into violence and nuclear war at any moment. To prevent that from happening, the conflict in Kashmir has to be addressed and resolved. That can only be done if Kashmiris are given a chance to freely and fearlessly tell the world what they are fighting for and what they really want.

Dear World, find a way.

Courtesy **Huffpost**, 01/03/2019

**Arundhati Roy** the author of *The God of Small Things*, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, and the forthcoming collection of essays, *My Seditious Heart*. 

## Articles/Reports for The Radical Humanist

Dear Friends,

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

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

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

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

# ‘Service Before Self’ Is Clearly Not a Motto the BJP Upholds

**Badri Raina**

At a time when every loyal Indian ought to have been worrying about Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman (who is now thankfully back home after fulfilling his duties with honour), Bharatiya Janata Party’s Karnataka chief B.S. Yeddyurappa was triumphantly announcing how the Indian airstrike at Balakot would ensure that his party will bag 22 of the state’s 28 Lok Sabha seats. Not to mention the sweets that were distributed within hours of hostilities beginning.

The cat is out of the bag.

The dastardly attack at Pulwama and its aftermath are beginning to be seen as something of a boon to the fortunes of the ruling party, come the general elections.

The nation was witness to how the honourable prime minister used the occasion of the inauguration of the National War Memorial to launch a rather graceless assault on the Gandhi family, accusing it of having allegedly always placed its own political fortunes above national security. This at a time when the patriotic citizen may have hoped for a speech uniting the nation behind a war-like exigency.

Spokespersons of the BJP have been heard on primetime shows brazenly saying that they have every right to draw comparisons between the record of previous governments (whether or not these include the Atal Bihari Vajpeyi government is not clear) and the present one in the matter of defending the country against aggression from Pakistan, even in the heat of the current conflict. Inevitably, this bravado must bring to memory the wars of 1947, 1965 and the historic one of 1971, in none of which the BJP was a factor. Not to mention the martyrdom of two prime ministers from the

impugned family who lost their lives to two different sources of terrorism, both non-Muslim.

Nor has gone without notice that while the Congress party cancelled its scheduled Central Working Committee meeting proposed to be held at Ahmedabad, Modi went ahead with his address to BJP booth-level workers.

On Friday, Modi, addressing a public rally at Kanyakumari, launched a no-holds barred attack on the opposition, accusing it of being inimical to India’s armed forces. ”Sadly, a few parties, guided by Modi hatred, have started hating India. No wonder, while the entire nation supports our armed forces, they suspect the armed forces. The world is supporting India’s fight against terror but a few parties suspect our fight against terror,” he said.

A clear identification was made between Modi and India. While the infamous “India is Indira and Indira is India” slogan was floated by a loyal Congress satrap, Modi has taken that onus upon himself. In the same address, he has made the curiously contradictory statement that the whole country is united, but the opposition is carping. Clearly, the opposition then is not seen as part of the country, although their combined vote share in 2014 Lok Sabha elections was a whopping 69%.

While the ruling party thinks nothing of milking a national security situation for electoral purposes, it expects all opposition political forces to desist from “doing politics” and to unite behind its own proclaimed glory. Predictable media channels – and there is a plethora – do not tire of lambasting the opposition, should they make the slightest squeak – however germane and justified – as enemies of the nation. A heady cocktail

thus prevails to shut off any and all voices that have a question to ask, or advice to give, that runs counter to a monochromatic militarist voice.

The irony is that as the hours go by, both the objective factors between India and Pakistan and the weight of international opinion already underscore the need to de-escalate and find means other than war to address issues. It will remain to be seen whether or not the ruling party will yield to that conjunction while it sees, rightly or wrongly, a political advantage in continuing to beat the triumphalist drum. Nor may we in fairness expect that, two months from a general election, a united opposition will carry on quietly while the BJP, led by the prime minister himself rather than the party president, seeks to draw milk and

honey from a dire national moment.

One indication of how this was intended to be was the curious and worrying absence of the president of India as the supreme commander of the armed forces at the inauguration of the war memorial – clearly a first, and one about which all those loyal to the constitution may justly worry.

The republic seems to be at the cusp of a watershed configuration, and one may not lay blame the opposition forces for sensing that this is so. In fact, it may be conceded that it is the opposition rather than the ruling party which has thus far observed and upheld the motto of the armed forces – “Service Before Self”.

**Badri Raina** taught English literature at Delhi University.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 2 March 2019. 

## An Open Letter on Indo-Pak Conflict

Dear friends, (1) in the present condition of war like posturing the Election Commission should defer the Lok Sabha elections at least for six months and certify accordingly to the Authority concerned even if it calls for Proclamation of Emergency. In-spite of its today's (1-3-2019) notice that the Election will be held in time, it is mandatory for the E.C. to ensure a free playing field for all contestants. It seems, that will not be for months to come.

The BJP, especially P.M. Modi is shamelessly exploiting the PULWAMA attack for electoral gains. The Opposition Parties are also not far behind.

Certainly, P.M. Mody deserves high praise for authorizing the Air Force to cross Inter

National Border right into Paktunkhwa, notwithstanding whether our Mirage-2000 planes bombed empty decoy hide outs or real terrorist bases.

2) No amount of Supreme Court direction can ensure the safety of the Kashmiri Muslims out of the Valley. It is the people who are protecting Valley Muslims out of it. But they utterly failed to protect half a million Pandits there. This worst ethnic cleansing is fast hardening Hindu mind not only against the Valley Muslims but against the Muslims in general. It is, therefore, the obligation of all Muslims to look into and ensure the return of the Pandits to the Valley. Thanks.

**Ajit Bhattacharyya**, Life Trustee, IRI, founded by M.N. Roy.

*(The views expressed above are the personal views of the writer.*

*They do not necessarily represent the views of the Indian Renaissance Institute. – Editor)* 

## ***Sharm Inko Magar Nahin Aati : Yet They Do Not Feel Ashamed!***

### **‘Shameless’: Manoj Tiwari Faces Flak for Attending BJP Election Rally in Army Fatigues**

*Trinamool Congress leader Derek O’Brien accused Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari of insulting and politicising the country’s soldiers.*



**New Delhi:** Delhi BJP President Manoj Tiwari was on Sunday accused of politicising Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman’s capture and subsequent release after he wore military fatigues to a BJP rally in New Delhi.

Tiwari flagged off BJP’s ‘Vijay Sankalp Bike Rally’ in Yamuna Vihar in his North East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency on Saturday wearing military fatigues. He also recited a poem about Wing Commander Varthaman during the launch of the rally.

In a scathing tweet, Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Derek O’Brien said Tiwari was “insulting” and “politicising” the country’s soldiers. “Shameless. Shameless. Shameless. Manoj Tewari BJP MP and Delhi President

wearing Armed Forces uniform and seeking votes. BJP-Modi-Shah insulting and politicising our jawans. And then giving lectures on patriotism. Low life,” he wrote.

Tiwari also posted pictures of him addressing the gathering and riding a bike in military fatigues.

Drawing flak, Tiwari tweeted on Sunday, “I wore (it) simply because I felt proud of my Army. I am not in Indian army but I was expressing my feeling of solidarity. Why should it be treated like an insult? I have the highest regard for our Army. By (this) logic, tomorrow if I wear a Nehru Jacket, will it be an insult to Jawaharlal Nehru?”

Courtesy [News18.com](https://www.news18.com), March 3, 2019 

## Despite EC's Rules, Parties Found Politicising Armed Forces: **BJP Shamelessly Using a Brave Soldier's photo on an election hoarding**



### **NREGA Workers Want PM Narendra Modi Booked for 'Making False Promises'**

*Hundreds of workers attempted to lodge FIRs, saying they have been denied work and wages, that the Centre is violating the law and the prime minister is the 'principal violator'.*

**New Delhi:**  
Thousands of MGNREGA workers across the country on Thursday attempted to lodge FIRs against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for 'making false promises' and 'cheating' workers by not paying wages on time. The coordinated attempt



was made in 150 police stations in nine states across the country.

The police, however, did not register the FIR at any police station. At a few stations, they received the complaint and promised an 'inquiry'.

The workers argue that by not providing adequate work and delaying wages, the government of India had violated the law. And Modi, as the head of the government, is the 'principal violator'. Thus, the workers demanded, that Modi be booked under Sections 116 (Abetment of offence) and 420 (Cheating and dishonesty) of the Indian Penal code.

According to the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, in the last five years, the employment guarantee scheme has been 'deliberately undermined'. The organisation has argued that the government has allocated insufficient funds, not met the demand for additional funds on time, delayed wage payments and suppressed work demand.

In February, after the Union Budget was announced, *The Wire* highlighted that the

allocation for MGNREGA for 2019-20 was, in fact, lower than that for 2018-19.

In January, *The Wire* reported that 99% of the funds allocated for MGNREGA were exhausted with three months to go for the end of the financial year.

Subsequently, the Centre allocated an additional Rs 6,084 crore that took the total allocation to Rs 61,084 crore. In the 2018 Budget, the government had allocated Rs 55,000 crore to the rural employment scheme.

By announcing an allocation of Rs 60,000 crore for the financial year 2019-20, the government, in fact, reduced the funds set for MGNREGA.

"It is ironic that a government which seems to have plenty of money to fund bullet trains and to compensate banks for NPAs of corporates who looted the banks, has no money to pay workers who have done their fair share of work and are now awaiting their wages," the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha said in a press release.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 01/Mar/2019 



**The photo taken some time in the late forties or very early fifties shows M.N. Roy, Ellen Roy and others at their residence at 13, Mohini Road, Dehradun.**

# Today, Freedom From Fear Is Freedom From Mainstream Media

*The media has recognised the political supporter as the only kind of viewer there can be.*

Ravish Kumar



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*The following is an English translation of a speech by journalist Ravish Kumar, given at the latest iteration of The Wire Dialogues, held in New Delhi on February 24:*

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What was once considered unacceptable and unethical in the public domain has been made entirely acceptable and ethical by the mainstream media in the last five years. Not only is the media celebrating existing immorality, it is also scaling new heights of impropriety. Crudity is the new definition of refinement – the mainstream media's vulgarity has destroyed the norms of Indian democracy that once prevailed in the public domain.

To be vulgar and immoderate is no longer wrong – be it on the street or in the studios of news channels. This is not the work of one odd channel or anchor; hundreds of them are at it all the time. Sure, you are free to single one out as the leader of the pack – what I want to say is that they have all been flag-bearers of decline, glorifying falling standards.

This transformation has been made possible by the complete fusion of the mainstream media and politics. In the process, the media has

recognised the political supporter as the only kind of viewer there can be. Since the consumers and supporters of this media are adherents of a particular ideology and political party, the dividing line between viewer and party supporter has been erased. It is by ending the sheer diversity of information in news that this section of political supporters as viewers has been created. I think of them as the informationless horde, which has grown quite big. For that reason, I take it seriously, refraining from making fun of its follies. When ignorance takes the place of learning, it is no laughing matter.

Periodically, this horde is tested for its singular lack of information. For instance, following the Pulwama incident, the debate was not on the prime minister's silence but on why Sachin Tendulkar had not spoken out! We have made the cardinal mistake of presuming that the expansion of communication media implies the

expansion of information. But that is not so. The sharp erasure of the diversity of issues is what leads to a deprivation of information – a state of informationlessness. And that is what has happened across a proliferating mainstream media.

The ‘national curriculum’ project that mainstream news channels have been running for five years now has been crystal clear about its intent from day one: to snuff out the engaged viewer within you (who asks questions). Only then would the process of seizing democracy without killing it be complete. It is quite another matter that blood has flowed on the streets in the process – the crowd did not spare anyone, be it Subodh Kumar Singh or Akhlaq. That is the kind of impact the national curriculum launched by the present-day dispensation has had. I believe this project has succeeded, overwhelming our democracy and our consciousness of being citizens, of being the people.

The mainstream media launched its national curriculum as soon as the Modi government came to power in 2014. At its core was the idea of ensuring a continual process of Hindu-Muslim divide. For that, it was necessary to create a growing sense of division among citizens. So, the media has been trying to break the people’s very awareness of the idea of citizenship. Since information and questioning are the basis of citizenship, the possibility of either has been severely curtailed. Our mainstream media does not question the government; on the contrary, it interrogates the people on behalf of the government! The political line emerging from these channels in the wake of the Pulwama blast has shown that clearly.

Enemies are being manufactured from within the ranks of citizens. To that end, a sentiment of ‘Hindu frustration’ and ‘Muslim frustration’ – armed with half-baked information – has been generated within all of us. The frustration was there earlier too, but has been magnified several

times over and ‘installed’ in the media. For that reason, today’s mainstream media is not the people’s media – it is a media for Hindus. To be more accurate, it speaks for those playing politics in the name of Hindu religion, those professing Hindutva. Five years ago, who would have thought that this Hindutva media would occupy almost 90 % of the mainstream media space! Yet it has happened so.

The mainstream media, in its new Hindutva guise, is certainly not going to confront the dispensation or the establishment. On the contrary, it is their defender, for they too are of the same persuasion.

This is not to say that citizens did not perceive themselves as Hindus earlier. But that understanding has been replaced by a new perception of being Hindu – one who is shorn of courage and running scared of the people standing alongside him. One who looks at the person next to him with suspicion, seeing in him a Hindu who is anti-Hindu. And, by extension, anti-national.

It is for the first time that I am seeing a Hindu who is fearful of other Hindus. Put it down to the contribution of the present-day mainstream media. Its conduct goes completely against those Hindu conventions which are claimed to be superior and are constantly lauded. The *Gita* may say that anger destroys our powers of discrimination, but our news anchor who takes its name continues to rave and rant in the same breath, speaking only in anger.

The mainstream news media and the social media have forged a new kind of *bhakt*. Or maybe this new kind of *bhakt* has helped the media become what it is today. I feel that every citizen ought to be a Kabir or Ravidas – that is, be able to challenge the everyday practices of established religion or the government of the day. Without the example of Guru Ravidas, we would not have been able to comprehend what the purity of mind and heart is all about. A dip in the Ganga would have been the only way to

prove one's faith, and Tendulkar would have had to go to some news channel to prove his patriotism. Today's mainstream media is against all Indian traditions. What it seeks to do, and has done, is fashion a bhakt who is completely bereft of information. One who is informationless is loveless as well.

This is the baseline of our democratic system now. Its very basis has changed; so too its reference point. If you ask a question, you will be accused of being the following in that order – a Congress agent, a Naxal, urban Naxal, an opponent of Hindu unity, a supporter of Muslims, and, finally, an opponent of Modi, which is where the accusations come to rest. In reality, this final point of offensive defence – why do you oppose Modi? – happens to be the starting point for the end of our democratic system.

To forge a feeling of 'Hindu frustration', the media played up a fear of Muslims – in fact, the entire project of building Hindu anger has been centred on this idea. It is worth noting that the project ended up having the same impact on Muslims as it did on Hindus. Just as the Hindus stopped asking questions of the government, the Muslims, out of fear, did the same. In fact, the latter have not just stopped asking questions, they have been abandoning their political right of representation as well in a bid to stem further polarisation in society – they are withdrawing from public and political spaces. Political parties other than the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have also been affected by this build-up of fear – they too have withdrawn from asking questions on these issues for fear of losing out.

I see before me a craven India where everybody is putting their respective fears forward. It is imperative that we regain our consciousness of being citizens or else we stand to lose the India we attained after a century of struggle. Both Hindus and Muslims need to liberate themselves from fear. For that, they will have to free themselves of the mainstream

media.

If one studies the speeches of politicians, the angry demeanour of news anchors, the slogans gracing TV screens and the language of WhatsApp messages, a certain mental complex becomes apparent. A Tendulkar whose language does not reflect that complex can be an anti-national; so too lieutenant-general Syed Ata Hasnain. Today's mainstream media has shown that stupidity, vulgarity and immoderation can provide a revenue model for good business.

It is not that this process is not being challenged. Members of the public are posing questions to the government through YouTube. A new kind of media is emerging, such as *The Wire*, *Scroll*, *The Caravan*. Then there are newspapers like *The Telegraph*. We too have been making an effort. The numbers of those who understand what the media ought to be are on the rise. Intrepid female journalists who are fighting the system also provide hope. In terms of the scale of what they are up against, all these efforts are small. But I have faith that these signs of hope will grow with time.

For now, what can be said is that our present-day mainstream media is no longer the fourth estate of democracy, it is the first estate of a political party. Thanks are due to the BJP and Modi *ji* for bestowing such a spineless mainstream media on India. Really, Modi *ji*, I am tempted to ask: from where have you got the temperament of a *fakir*? Only an unworldly fakir can give his blessings to a media such as this.

I often wonder what the prime minister feels when he sees himself on news channels broadcasting their pure devotion to him 24/7. But then he is a fakir. Why should a fakir bother himself with all this?

**Ravish Kumar** is an anchor with NDTV India

Translated from the Hindi original by Chitra Padmanabhan

Courtesy *The Wire*, 28 February, 2019. 

# House panel members lament stalled demonetisation report

**Committee's majority BJP members objected to the draft report's critical tone**

With the 16th Lok Sabha nearing the end of its term, the contentious report of the Standing Committee on Finance on the impact of demonetisation is most likely going to end up never seeing the light of day. Several of the panel's members are unhappy that the report is not being released despite the amount of time, effort and resources spent on preparing it.

Though the committee finalised a draft way back in March last year, the report could not be finalised due to objections from the BJP members who are in a majority in the committee headed by Congress leader M. Veerappa Moily. The Congress and other Opposition parties were outnumbered on the panel, with the BJP having 17 MPs in the 31-member committee. The draft report had been critical of the government's decision and concluded that demonetisation had contributed to derailing the economy. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is among the members on the committee.

## 'Very unfortunate'

"It is very unfortunate that we spared so much of the country's resources deliberating effects of demonetisation, called the Governor [of the RBI] and several high-ranking officials several times," Trinamool Congress MP Dinesh Trivedi told *The Hindu*. "We had the draft report also ready but unfortunately it did not see the light of the day which as committee we were duty-

bound to present to people through Parliament," Mr. Trivedi said. The RBI Governor had been called at least twice to discuss the impact of demonetisation.

AIADMK member T.G. Venkatesh Babu said that it was unfortunate that the report could not be tabled. "The report should have been tabled and it is sad that it could not be. But I hope the next government is able to use the work done by our committee," he added.

The day the elections are notified, the Lok Sabha is considered dissolved and with it the existing committees too. Also, even though the Lok Sabha is not sitting, the committee can send the report to the Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan, and it can be considered tabled if she accepts the report.

The panel has a few weeks before the Election Commission announces the election schedule. While sources said there was only a slim chance of the report being made public, Mr. Moily remained optimistic. "Hopefully, we will be able to finalise it," he said.

Courtesy **The Hindu**, New Delhi, February 16, 2019



**Sobhana K. Nair**

*"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)**

# Hindutva and exclusion connected: Amartya Sen

Special Correspondent



## Expresses grave concern over inherent social inequality

Expressing grave concern at the exclusionary thought guiding the ruling establishment, Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen said that “there is a connection between Hindutva psychology and exclusion.”

He was speaking at the launch of a book — whose title is borrowed from his own phrase ‘*A Quantum Leap in the Wrong Direction?*’ — which aims to evaluate the promises and policies of the current BJP-led government.

Professor Sen argued that the social inequality inherent in Hindutva translates into an acceptance of economic inequality also. “This idea of progress being progress for some, but not for others — there’s an element of religiosity in it. This basic belief that some people’s progress is like everyone’s progress is something that can be rooted way back in our thinking,” he said.

### **Tolerance of inequality**

“There is a kind of tolerance of inequality and tolerance of judging progress by what is

happening to the most successful,” he added, pointing out that the richest 10% of the country are faring better than ever.

The book argues that the government has failed to fulfil its poll slogan of “*sabka saath, sabka vikas*”, and has also suppressed the data which shows this failure.

Professor Sen posited that the government’s dependence on a few success stories as opposed to wider statistics was also linked to Hindutva philosophy. “The numbers game is really important. That’s why Hindutva is important in this context ... There’s a connection between [Hindutva, and the idea that] ‘numbers don’t matter’, and worse than that, [the idea that] ‘some people don’t matter’,” he said. “The most problematic aspect of Hindutva is the issue of the treatment of lower castes and tribes. It’s not only that you can ignore some people, but that you identify who it is that you can ignore.”

Courtesy **The Hindu**, 27 February 2019. 

## CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE: ‘SAVE DEMOCRACY, SAVE THE NATION’



Prabhat Kumar, N.D.Pancholi, Justice Jaspal Singh (Retd.), S. R. Hiremath, Ramendra, Ram Dhiraj.

A VERY SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE OF THE Citizens For Democracy, in association with PUCL (Delhi) was held at Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi on 2nd and 3rd March, 2019 on the subject “Save Democracy, Save the Nation”. Justice Jaspal Singh, former judge of the Delhi High Court inaugurated it. He said that it is a very crucial time when we all should rise untidily to save the democracy. There is no rule of law and we should work for its restoration. A large amount of false propaganda is being spread and it is our prime task to expose it and place true facts before the people. We have to combat intolerance and communalism. He said that one candle can lighten millions of candles and each one of us should become a candle. He ended his note with what

Faiz Ahmed Faiz had said:

“*SAB TAAJ UCHHALE JAYENGE, SAB TAKHT GIRAYE JAYENGE*

“*JAB ZULMO SITAM KE KOHI-E-GIRAN, RUI KI TARAH UD JAYENGE*

“*LAZIM HAI KE HUM BHI DEKHENGE.....”*

He also released the first edition of the Hindi Bulletin “JANTANTRA SAMAJ”. Meeting was presided over by Mr. S.R. Hiremath, President of the CFD. Shri Prabhat Kumar conducted the proceedings. Others who spoke included Ramendra, Arun Majhi, Mani Mala, Ashok Arora, Jaishankar Gupta, Prashant Bhushan, Dr. Sunilam, Ravindra Tripathi, Sugata Srinivasaraju, Shalu Nigam and others.

## Press Statement: 04.03.2019

### ‘NO TO WAR’: APPEAL TO MAINTAIN PEACE

RESOLUTION PASSED IN THE ‘SAVE DEMOCRACY, SAVE THE NATION’ CONFERENCE OF ‘CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY’ ON 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2019 AT GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION, NEW DELHI.

‘Citizens For Democracy’, set up by Loknayak Jaiprakash Narayan in 1974, views with grave concern the recent growing tension between India and Pakistan and the rise of jingoistic slogans in the country. It is further disturbing to note that the major part of media – print, television, radio, digital, social media, instead of presenting saner voices, have involved themselves in presenting irresponsible views and discussions which help in promoting a mood of war mongering in the country. The public on both sides are sick and tired of being enemies. They want to live in peace so that their children and grand children can grow up in an environment of security and confidence. Going to ‘war’ means that governments have to divert funds meant for education, health & hunger towards military expenditure. Such a scenario thwarts progress in all fields – social, economic and cultural. In the midst of widespread poverty and unemployment existing in the both countries, the foremost responsibility of both the governments is to work for promotion of economic prosperity

of their people and resolve their differences by peaceful negotiations. The lessons of history are that ‘WAR’ is not the ultimate solution. All problems or disputes between the nations can be resolved in negotiations in peace. We remind the governments and the people the oft repeated statement made by the veteran journalist late Shri Kuldip Nayar (who was President of the Citizens For Democracy for many years till his demise last year) that “When Great Britain and France could be friends after fighting wars for more than hundred years, why not India & Pakistan?”

We therefore appeal to the rulers of both the countries not to precipitate any step which may lead ‘war’ which can result in no fruitful consequence but only in destruction and suffering for the people on both sides.

**S.R. Hiremath**, President; **N.D. Pancholi**, General Secretary; **Anil Sinha**, Secretary; **Manimala, Ram Sharan, Ramendra, Arun Majhi, Prabhat** – Executive council members. 

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

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

## PUCL Convention: Resolutions on Kashmir Issue, FRA and Elgar Parishad Arrests Passed

*The convention also recognised the failure of the criminal justice system in the country, and talked about various draconian laws that are still being used to silence the voices of dissent.*

**Yogesh S**

People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) organised its 15th national convention in Bengaluru. The three-day convention, which started on February 28, and concluded on March 2, was attended by 150 people from eleven states. In the light of the ongoing onslaught on the rights of various communities, attack on freedom of expression, and speech and growing intolerance in the country, the theme of the convention was 'Threats and challenges to the idea of pluralism, democracy and the constitution'.

The press statement issued by the PUCL noted that the discussions over the three days examined the politics based on hate, majoritarianism and the signs of approaching fascism. The convention also recognised the failure of the criminal justice system in the country, and talked about various draconian laws that are still being used to silence the voices of dissent. Some of the topics that were discussed included: the change in the nature and the structures of the labour market, government's contribution in diminishing labour rights, and the violations of the rights of the Dalits, women, LGBTQI+ communities and, sex workers.

Following are the three resolutions that were passed during the convention:

### **1. Resolution on release of those arrested in the Bhima Koregaon case:**

The convention demanded the release of its national secretary, Sudha Bharadwaj, along with the others arrested in the Bhima Koregaon violence case lodged by the Pune police in January 2018: Arun Ferreira, Vernon Gonsalves, Surendra Gadling, Varavara Rao, Sudhir

Dhawale, Shoma Sen, and Mahesh Raout.

A press release by the PUCL following the convention read: "[W]e condemn the Maharashtra State and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government Of India for having brazenly flouting all laws and fabricating the case, with trumped up charges and shielding the real culprits, which include Milind Ekbote and Sambhaji Bhide and their followers. Targeted lawyers, trade union activists and, writers and, poets and academics. It is our belief that this attempt is an attack on the right to dissent, the right to defense and the right to organise and the right to association. The PUCL will continue and step up the nationwide campaign for their release. We also demand that the Pune police stop forthwith the witch hunt of Data Analyst and Management Professional Anand Teltumbde and writer and thinker Gautam Navlakha."

It added that calling the Elgar Parishad an event of the Maoists, is "to delegitimise the history of the Dalit movement in Maharashtra".

### **2. Resolution for peace and stopping the human rights violation in Kashmir:**

The second resolution passed in the convention highlighted the extent to which the Indian state has gone in Kashmir to strip Kashmiris of their rights, in the light of the Pulwama tragedy on February 13, 2019. The statement said, "[A]part from removing security from the Hurriyat leaders who were pro dialogue from India, followed by arrests of more than 300 Kashmiri people and now the banning of the Jamaat Islami Kashmir for five years, along with the closure of more than 300 schools run

by them, tragically bringing on the road more than a hundred thousand students and 10,000 teachers just before their exams, shows the extent to which the Indian State can go.”

“Banning organizations is against the Right to Association as enshrined in the Constitution and in the case of Kashmir, Banning Jamaat Islami Kashmir, will bring out further alienation. From 2008 to 2018 there have been 4,059 deaths on all sides of the conflict, including civilians, militants and Indian security forces. [...] The continuous use of pellet guns, use of sexual violence, arbitrary detention, restrictions on use of internet, use of extraordinary laws like the PSA only furthers the alienation of the people of Kashmir.”

The PUCL demanded that the government address violations of human rights, rethink the policy of repression, begin a dialogue to redress

the alienation of the Kashmiri people, and prevent young people from taking up arms.

### **3. Eviction of Adivasis and forest dwellers from their lands in forest areas:**

The statement read: “The PUCL is shocked at the SC ruling which directed eviction of several lakhs of Adivasis and Forest dwellers from their lands in Forest Areas, thereby reinforcing the historic wrong that the Forest Rights Act, 2006 had tried to undo. We are glad that the order was stayed by Supreme Court when there was massive outrage by the Tribals and other groups. However, the PUCL demands of the GOI which had allowed the SC to pass that order by wilful absence of lawyers, now not only fight it tooth and nail in the SC but also bring in legal protective measures to prevent such evictions.”

Courtesy **News Click**, 4 March 2019. 

**Aharbal, a small hill-station, lies in the Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir and is located on the Veshaw river, a tributary of the Jhelum river in Kashmir.**



## Rare meeting of M N Roy- Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry

*(This is about the first visit of M N Roy and Ellen Roy to Visakhapatnam, Andhra during 1938. They visited at the invitation of Mr Abburi Ramakrishna Rao, who was teaching stage art, dramas in Andhra University and also librarian of the University. Mr Kattamanchi Ramalingareddi was the Vice Chancellor of the University and K. Gopalaswamy was the Registrar of the University. Later they became admirers of M N Roy. The material here has been collected by me and bringing to the public for the first time. Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry was a famous writer who became a friend of mine. Now his brother Dr Narasimha Sarma (92) gave me the material at my request. For the first time we are bringing this to the public)*



Rachakonda Viswatha sastry was a revolutionary Telugu writer from Visakhapatnam, India. He was born in 1922 and by his 16th year he met M N. Roy in Vizag. Mr Abburi Ramakrishna Rao, librarian and stage specialist in Andhra University at that time brought Roy to the university and introduced him to the Vice Chancellor Cattamanchi Ramalingareddy. Abbru Varadarajeswararao, son of Ramakrishnaraao and Viswanatha Sastry were friends and together they met Roy. They were students in A V N College, Vizag at that time.

Since the meeting of Viswanatha Sastry with M N Roy is important I was curious to know the details.

The brother of Viswanatha Sastry Dr Narasimha Sarma who lives in Visakhapatnam traced the dairies and sent me the details. The dairies were written in Telugu and hence Narasimha Sarma put it in English for me and sent to me

I am giving that historically important information here:

Aug,19 Thursday 1937

We went to meet M.N. Roy today. We were introduced as members of the executive committee of Youth League. He is very tall, His pronunciation is German. His wife is an American.

Aug. 22, 1937

M.N. Roy's lecture at the beach today. It seems he said that Socialism is not appropriate for

India at this time

27th August 1937 Friday

M.N. Roy presided over and delivered the “History Inaugural address”. We had a photo and Tea party. When we told our Principal about our inviting M N Roy, he asked us whether we were going to learn from him about making bombs. Someone seems to have informed M.N. Roy about this comment by the Principal. He spared no words in criticising the Principal in his speech.

18th (month?) Saturday 1937

Today he gave (me) our photo taken with M.N. Roy. It came out well.

19th Sunday July 1938

I began (reading) Letters to C S P. (M N ROY). (He is) writing sensibly and logically.

23rd July 1938

I am thinking of subscribing to “Independent India”.

24th Friday July 1938

I purchased a copy of “Independent India”. today. It contains articles by M N Roy on “Rights and Responsibilities” and “Mass Contact”.

Friday the 3rd inst. 1938 (I forgot to copy the month)

A person called Spratt wrote an article in the Indian Review in reply to M.N. Roy and Tagore, and supporting Gandhiji. It is an article worth reading.

29th August Monday 1938

A discussion took place today between Rajeswara Rao and N.V. Rama Rao on M N Roy. N.V. Rama Rao does not like M N Roy, whom Rajeswara Rao goes on praising. It seems that Rama Rao is not a Congress Socialist or Royist or Gandhiist. I am however a Gandhiist.

15th May 1941 (I have to verify this date again)

‘Gandhism, Nationalism, Socialism’ by M.N. Roy. I read this book. He wrote it critically. Some subjects (aspects?) have been clarified after my reading this book.

END OF ENTRIES FROM  
MY BROTHER’S DIARIES



Rare picture of Roy couple's first visit to Visakhapatnam in 1938

Posted by Innaiah Narisetty

# Foreword to ‘Selections from The Radical Humanist’ Volume II

*The Radical Humanist* journal founded by Manabendranath Roy (M.N. Roy) has historical, revolutionary, renaissance background. After India achieved independence, M N Roy started the journal. But he had long experience of journalism and renaissance since World War I. Roy commenced his journalistic career in Mexico and contributed articles in Spanish and English along with his first wife Evelyn Trent. Then Roy was compelled to start two journals from Europe to communicate his ideas, and instructions to comrades. The Masses and International press information correspondence from European countries gave ideal and practical guidelines to Indian and world communists. Of course, his wife Evelyn ably managed to run the journals while Roy was busy touring in the international communist movement. With such rich background M N Roy arrived and started *Independent India* journal. But above all M N Roy’s journal *The Marxian Way* helped the intellectuals in India and abroad. But soon Roy changed the journal into *The Humanist Way* which continued its theoretical and practical articles.

There are not many in the world arena to compare with Roy in journalistic field.

Great journals like *MINERVA* edited by Edward Shills from Chicago University stood as wonderful in deep study of issues and personalities.

In India Romila Thaper, P. Lal, A.B Shah, Abu Sayeed Ayub, Amlan Datta organised journals and contributed to intellectual field. Some of them are again inspired by M N Roy.

Now *Skeptical Inquirer* under the editorship of Kendrek Frazier and *Free Inquiry* edited by Tom Flynn in USA can be mentioned in the tradition of M N Roy.

*The Radical Humanist* journal started by M N Roy was ably assisted by his intellectual wife Ellen. After them several eminent intellectuals

continued the journal. Some of them: A.B Shah, Sib Narayan Ray, V M Tarkunde, V B Karnik, Sunil Bhattacharya, Justice Jahagirdar, G.D Parekh, Rekha Saraswat, and numerous others put all effort to sustain the renaissance trend. Persons like AGK (Avula Gopalakrishna Murthy, Malladi Ramamurthi, K.K. Sinha, A.K. Mukherjee, Maniben Kara, Jayanti Patel, Vinod Jain, N.D. Pancholi, Premnath Bazaz, Gauri Malik, Suyesh Malik, R M Pal, put in a lot of effort to sustain the journal from various angles.

*The Radical Humanist* journal is part of continuous history. It is an uphill task to sustain its spirit. Yet innumerable writers are contributing articles to the journal continuously.

At present Mr Mahi Pal Singh took the cudgels and is running the renaissance humanist uphill task. He is swimming against the current from several angles. One is to select the articles from *The Radical Humanist*. He could do it and is trying to bring out this volume after the first one. The selection is very encouraging to writers and readers.

A day will come when the journal will find place in all the university libraries and research centres.

I appreciate the sustained effort of Mr Mahi Pal in the selection of articles and writers. Such volumes will be very useful for research efforts of young scholars worldwide.

14 January 2019

**Narisetti Innaiah (Dr.)**  
(From USA)

Note: ‘Selections from The Radical Humanist’ Volume II, E-Version, will be released along with Volume I during the Biennial Conference of the Indian Renaissance Institute to be held on 6th-7th April 2019 at New Delhi and will be available at [www.lohiatoday.com](http://www.lohiatoday.com) 

Cover page of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist', Volume II

Selections from

# THE RADICAL HUMANIST



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Founder  
M.N. ROY

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

An Indian Renaissance Institute Publication



**Ravi Kiran Jain, President, PUCL (National) delivering  
inaugural address at the 15<sup>th</sup> National Convention of PUCL  
held at Bengaluru (Karnataka) on 28 February 2019.  
(Report inside)**