

# THE RADICAL HUMANIST



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More than What Meets the Eye**

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**Sh. Kumar Prashant, a Gandhian and Chairman, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, inaugurating the Conference.**



**Prof. Arun Kumar, a leading economist, delivering the Keynote address at the Conference.  
On his right is Sh. S.R. Hiremath, President, CFD and on his left is Sh. N.D. Pancholi,  
General Secretary, CFD**

# THE RADICAL HUMANIST

**Vol. 83 Number 8, November 2019**

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**Founder Editor:**

M.N. Roy

**Advisor:**

Dr. Narisetti Innaiah

**Editor:**

Mahi Pal Singh

**Editorial Board:**

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

**Printer and Publisher:**

Satish Chandra Varma

**Send articles and reports to:**

**Mahi Pal Singh** at E-21/5-6,  
Sector 3, Rohini, Delhi- 110085.  
(M) 09312206414, 08178491055, 07042548234

**or E-mail them to:**

**theradicalhumanist@gmail.com** or  
**mahipalsinghrh@gmail.com**

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

**The Radical Humanist to:**

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

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## **Editorial :**

# **Revocation of Article 370 Means More than What Meets the Eye**

**Mahi Pal Singh**

On August 5, 2019 a meeting of the Union cabinet was held at the Prime Minister's residence in the morning after which Amit Shah, the Union Home Minister and BJP President rushed to the Parliament house with a beaming face to address the Rajya Sabha. There he presented a resolution to abrogate Article 370 and removal of Article 35A of the Indian Constitution, which gave special status to the region of Jammu and Kashmir, and also to downgrade the state of Jammu & Kashmir to two Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh, the former with a Delhi like powerless Assembly and the latter without even that. Article 370 was incorporated into the Indian Constitution as a condition of accession of J&K to the Indian Union and it stipulated that the other articles of the Constitution that gave powers to the Central Government over Jammu and Kashmir would be applied to the state only with the concurrence of the State's Constituent Assembly. This was a "temporary provision" in that its applicability was intended to last till the formulation and adoption of the State's constitution. But the State's constituent assembly dissolved itself on 25 January 1957 without recommending either abrogation or amendment of the Article 370. Thus the Article has acquired a permanent nature in the Indian Constitution, as confirmed by various rulings of the Supreme Court of India and the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, the last one coming in April 2018.

A few days prior to August 5, the Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Satya Pal Malik, had met central leaders in New Delhi. A rumour was in the air that the central government had plans to abrogate Article 370 and Article 35A.

When asked about the subject of the talks with the central leaders by the journalists, Mr. Malik told them that no talks regarding these two articles took place in his meeting with the central leaders and there was no plan to remove these articles from the Constitution. Now we know that he was telling a blatant lie. A couple of days later, an advisory was issued by the central government to the tourists who had gone there to participate in the Amarnath *yatra* to visit the holy shrine, which was then in progress, and other non-Kashmiris residing there to leave the state immediately as there were definite inputs from the intelligence agencies about possible attacks by the terrorists to kill, maim and terrorize people and disturb normal life in the valley. The way all non-Kashmiris were asked to leave the valley, many people including journalists suspected that the whole exercise had something to do with the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution about which Amit Shah had been talking for quite some time. On 5th of August 2019 it became clear who those terrorists were who were out not only to destroy peace and normalcy in the valley but also to deprive people of the state of their civil liberties, democratic freedoms, and even the right to interact with each other and with the outside world.

The reasons given by the Home Minister for abrogating these articles were ridiculous to say the least – like: 'two-three political families of Kashmir had been looting the people of the state', as if elsewhere in the country politicians, including those belonging to the ruling BJP, had not been indulging in that loot and 'now it will be possible to undertake the development of the state which had been disregarded till now',



without explaining why this development had not been undertaken when in the state government led by Ms. Mahbooba Mufti the BJP was an equal coalition partner and even at the centre, there was also the Narendra Modi government of the BJP with a full-fledged majority. Who had stopped the all powerful BJP government from undertaking development of the state if it really had any such plans for the state's development. Even after removal of these two articles from the Constitution, more than two months and a half have passed and not even the talk of development seems to be present in the agenda of the government. The ploy of 'development' seems to be only an excuse to surreptitiously enslave the people of Kashmir by depriving them of all the democratic rights to govern themselves in accordance with their own wishes and hand over the state territory and its people to the friendly crony capitalists of the BJP to be exploited economically and physically by them. We only know that the state has been turned into a military camp, almost all leaders of political parties, except those belonging to the BJP, have been arrested, some of them including Ms. Mahbooba Mufti, Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah – all former chief ministers of the state – have been put under preventive detention, as Ms. Mahbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah or arrested under draconian laws like Public Safety Act (PSA), as Farooq Abdullah, as if they pose really great danger to the public safety of the state and the life of the people. All telephone lines, mobile telephone services and internet service have been disrupted. People have been confined forcibly to their homes. Even minor children, (at least 75 of them as reported to the Supreme Court of India by the Juvenile Justice Committee of the J&K High Court), some of them aged nine-ten years, have been lifted from their homes, tortured and interrogated although there is no provision under the JJ Act to detain juveniles under preventive detention.

People have been denied essential commodities including medicines and even reach to the hospitals. Leaders of various political parties who wanted to visit Kashmir to see for themselves the plight of the people there were turned back from the airport. Journalists have been barred from reporting anything. This seems to be the BJP's model of development and we can expect to see more of it in Kashmir and elsewhere in the country in the coming days.

Regarding the release of Ms. Mahbooba Mufti, Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah some central ministers have said that they would be released earlier than the expiry of 18 months. The question is that if they really pose a danger to the public safety and peace of the state, why are they not being prosecuted under relevant provisions of the law and punished at the earliest? If not, then why should they be deprived of their civil liberties even for a single day, not to say of a long period of 18 months. Not only these leaders, in fact, why should others who have been kept under preventive detention in various jails, including at Agra, should suffer loss of their civil liberties to satisfy the whims of Mr. Modi and Amit Shah?

The BJP government and its leaders have been claiming day in and day out that normalcy is fast returning to the valley but there is not even a semblance of normalcy there whatever may be the central government claim. There is no democracy and there is no freedom in Kashmir. If there is silence, it is the silence of the grave. If there is peace, this peace is not born out of the self-ordained discipline in the people there but the enforced peace born out of the fear of the gun. There is simmering anger and discontent in the minds of the people at having lost their democratic right to decide their future by themselves through their elected representatives and at having been deprived of their civil liberties for no fault of their own but by the greed of the powers that be to control their lives and dictate to them how they would

live, and, perhaps, die too. It is correct that other countries, including Pakistan in particular, which lost even the right to make a comment about Kashmir after usurping a part of the Jammu and Kashmir territory through military action in 1947, have no right to comment on the internal matters of the country. It is also correct that on the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) India has a greater claim than Pakistan itself as the whole of Kashmir had acceded to the Indian Union as per the Instrument of Accession signed between Maharaja Hari Singh of J&K and the Indian government. But at the same time it is also equally correct that Indian citizens, whether living out of Kashmir or those living there, have every right to comment upon and criticize the undemocratic action of abrogating parts of article 370 and removal of article 35A by the central government unilaterally without showing even the courtesy of taking into confidence the people of Kashmir if really the action of the central government was in the interest of and for the welfare of the people of Kashmir, as claimed by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. How could Satya Pal Malik, the Governor of the state, who is really a bureaucratic agent of the central government and who has nothing to do with Kashmir as he represents the central government and not the people of Kashmir, act as the representative of the people of Kashmir or of its dissolved Legislative Assembly, even supposing that it stood for the Constituent Assembly which dissolved itself in 1957, and recommend to the central government on its behalf abrogation of Article 370 which is patently undemocratic, illegal and immoral. This action of the central government is also a lethal attack on the federal character of our polity which is part of the basic edifice of our Constitution.


What is even more worrying is that even the higher judiciary which is the protector of our fundamental rights, civil liberties and democratic freedoms has taken the clampdown in Kashmir casually. Instead of exercising its power of

taking *suo motu* notice of the brazen denial of civil liberties to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and taking immediate and decisive action to protect their rights and liberties, it has chosen to defer hearing of the various Public Interest Litigations (PILs) in the matter to the middle of November 2019. It is as if allowing time to the central government to act arbitrarily and complete the damage to the democratic structure of the state as per its whims and designs. When people are persecuted by the state machinery they look towards the judiciary to provide relief and justice to them. Let us hope that the Supreme Court of India will preserve and protect the Constitution and the rights of the people when it takes up the case in November. But it must be said in all fairness that the civil liberties of the people of Kashmir could have been protected right from the beginning of the clampdown itself and the judiciary has so far only failed in doing so which has not set a good example.

For most of the people in other parts of India, the Kashmir situation is like fire in a neighbour's house and they are unconcerned while others see Prime Minister Modi as the general who has won over Kashmir for them. None of these people imagine putting themselves in place of the Kashmiri people who have been living as if in jail, under section 144 and worse than curfew-like conditions and facing guns all the time, without the right to speech and communication and free movement. Such denial of democratic and human rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir needs to be condemned strongly by all lovers of democratic freedoms. If we Indians do not do so, we will be leaving space for others in the world to do so. Then only we ourselves, and nobody else, will be to blame for that international criticism. If we really love our country and want to save its fair name from being tarnished, we must stand by the people of Kashmir and their right to live freely under a democratic system governed by them as we all

wish to. Death of democracy in Kashmir will mean death of democracy in the whole country which in any case is being eroded systematically by the BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. It is a further step towards imposing an authoritarian regime in the country by the Hindutva outfit of the RSS and the BJP as per its ideology.

All the great leaders of the country who had fought for the country's independence, like Mahatma Gandhi, Jayaprakash Narayan and M.N. Roy dreamt of making India a truly free and democratic polity and wanted democracy to reach the grass-roots level of the society so that even the last man in society would exercise his sovereign right to decide his future. Gandhiji called it *Gram-Swaraj* and Jayaprakash Narayan and M.N. Roy called it 'power to the

people' to be exercised through 'People's Committees' which would elect their legislative representatives from amongst themselves who would remain accountable to them. But that was the dream of those who had fought for the independence from the British yoke and who had made great sacrifices to make India independent and its people free. They also wanted India to remain a truly secular state where people belonging to all faiths would live freely and prosper together. Those who had no role in the independence movement of the country, like those belonging to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its political wing, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) cannot be expected to understand and honour the democratic values for which the war of independence was fought. 

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# In Srinagar, Journalists' Protest Ban on Internet, Mobile Service Across Kashmir

**The journalists condemned the communication clampdown, saying it was a deliberate attempt to stop the flow of information from Kashmir to the outside world and “suppress freedom of media in Kashmir”.**

**Mudasir Ahmad**

**Srinagar:** Journalists from the Valley staged a silent demonstration in Srinagar on Thursday to protest the ongoing communication blockade in Kashmir.

Holding placards and wearing black bands, scores of journalist working with different media organisations assembled inside the premises of Kashmir Press Club, demanding an end to the restrictions on internet and mobile services in the Valley.

“Stop criminalising journalism, rescues us from sub-jail what you call MFC (media facilitation centre), allow journalists to work freely in Kashmir, we are journalists not mouthpieces,” read some of the placards.

The protest comes after several demands to restore the internet facility and mobile phones for journalists failed. The Kashmir Press Club, an elected body of journalists in Kashmir, had taken up the issue with the state government and asked that the internet gag on newspaper houses end and that mobile facilities be restored for journalists.

On Wednesday, several journalist associations met at the club and took the decision to hold the protest.

“We have assembled here to highlight our plight,” said senior journalist Naseer A. Ganai. “In the absence of internet and mobile facilities, these two months have been very difficult for us to report the situation in Kashmir.”

The journalists condemned the communication clampdown, saying it was a deliberate attempt to stop the flow of information

from Kashmir to the outside world and “suppress freedom of media in Kashmir”.

The gag has drastically affected media operations in the Valley. Most newspapers published from Srinagar have slashed their page numbers and none have been able to update their online editions since August 4. Journalists stationed in different districts across Kashmir have been rendered jobless since the imposition of the communication gag.

New Delhi scrapped Article 370 of the Indian constitution and bifurcated the state into two union territories on August 5. The move stripped J&K of its separate flag and constitution. Fearing reprisals, the authorities imposed strict restrictions and a communication blockade across the Valley. Though restrictions were eased last month, the communication blockade is still in force.

Facing criticism, the government set up a make-shift media communication centre at a private hotel in Srinagar for journalists.

The centre has one internet connection and nine terminals where journalists working with international, national and local media houses have to wait in a queue for their turn to send reports and check mails.

The information department managing the centre has allotted 15 minutes for each journalist to access the internet.

“This (communication gag) is a deliberate attempt to control flow of information from J&K. The setting up of media centre is aimed at censoring journalists because it takes more time



to file a story while waiting in a queue than collecting facts from the ground,” said senior journalist Peerzada Ashiq. “The time you can spend on the ground is wasted at the centre in long queues.”

On Thursday, Kashmir completed two months under communication blockade. But officials are tight-lipped over the restoration of

as Kashmir itself.”

Anuradha Basin, the editor of reputed Jammu-based daily *Kashmir Times*, has already filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking that media should be allowed to work freely in Kashmir and the authorities should lift all restrictions on their working.

Hilal Mir, another senior journalist, said the



*Following the culmination of sit-in protest, journalists took out a peaceful march to city's Press Enclave.*

services in Kashmir.

In his last press conference on September 12, government spokesperson Rohit Kansal justified the ban, saying there were fears Pakistan might be exploiting the facilities to create disturbance in the Valley.

“This too shall pass,” he said, in response to a question about when the ban will be lifted.

“By enforcing the ban it seems the sole aim of the government is to not allow people outside know what is happening in Kashmir,” said senior journalist Muzaffar Raina. “In this situation, Kashmiri journalists have become as big a story

fact that it took journalists 60 days to protest against the communication gag “shows the fear they are working in” and how they have been “scared into silence”.

A joint statement issued by 11 Kashmir-based journalists’ associations has demanded that the communication ban be lifted.

“There have been no clear answers from the government why it has barricaded Kashmiri journalist fraternity under a communication blockade,” the statement said. “The government must come up with an answer on how long the crackdown on news will continue.” 🌈

*I never want to believe in what form to express a particular thought, the words themselves come to me along with the idea*  
- George Bernard Shaw

# Public Safety Act Order Accuses Farooq Abdullah Of Spreading “Secessionist Ideology”

**The PSA order against Farooq Abdullah cites seven instances from 2016 onwards when he spoke in favour of the separatist Hurriyat Conference and terror groups.**

## **Srinagar:**

Statements mobilising people against the state and the “tremendous potential” to create public disorder in the Valley are among the charges listed against former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah, who has been charged under the Public Safety Act.

The 81-year-old Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar, under detention since August 5 when the Centre revoked the state’s special status, has also been accused of making speeches glorifying terrorists and separatists.

The PSA order against Farooq Abdullah, accessed by PTI, cites seven instances from 2016 onwards when he spoke in favour of the separatist Hurriyat Conference and terror groups.

Farooq Abdullah, the first chief minister to be charged under the stringent PSA, was arrested on Monday under the PSA and his Gupkar Road residence declared a jail.

The National Conference chairman and three-term chief minister has been charged under the “public order” provision of the PSA under which a person can be kept in jail from three to six months without a trial, officials said.

On scrapping of the provisions of Article 370 and 35-A of the Constitution, which provided special status for people of the state on jobs and residency, the PSA order accuses Farooq Abdullah of issuing statements aimed at mobilising people against the state.

The PSA order says he could have debated the issue, instead of threatening the integrity of the country and glorifying terror.

The order also accuses him of propagating “secessionist ideology” besides posing a threat to life and liberty of the people.

Farooq Abdullah, the order states, “has tremendous potential for creating an environment of public disorder within the district (Srinagar) and other parts of the Valley”.

It accuses him of being a person seen as fanning the emotions of general masses against the country.

The order, which states that Farooq Abdullah’s residence “G-40 Gupkar Road” has been declared a subsidiary jail, has also been accused by the state administration of issuing statements in conflict with law that were aimed at disturbing public order.

The PSA has two sections — “public order” and “threat to security of the state”. The former allows detention without trial for three to six months and the latter for two years.

The PSA is applicable only in Jammu and Kashmir. Elsewhere in the country, the equivalent law is the National Security Act (NSA).

Separatists and Farooq Abdullah’s political opponents in the Valley have termed him a vehement supporter of state’s accession with India.

Courtesy **NDTV**, September 19, 2019. 

*“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)*

# Farooq Abdullah Detention: The Supreme Court Is Also on Trial

It remains to be seen if the court will uphold the fundamental right to life and liberty.

The most important case in India today is not the Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir dispute but the trial of the Supreme Court by the people of India. And a litmus test in this trial will be the court's behaviour in the case against the detention of Farooq Abdullah under the draconian J&K Public Safety Act.

The Supreme Court was created by the Constitution of India on January 26, 1950. A few months after the promulgation of the Constitution, a constitution bench of the apex court held in *Romesh Thapar vs State of Madras* that "the Supreme Court is constituted as the protector and guardian of the fundamental rights of the people."

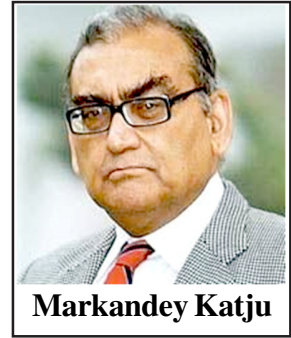
This view has been reiterated in several subsequent decisions of the court, for example in the nine-judge bench decision in *I.R .Coelho vs State of Tamil Nadu*.

The most precious of all the fundamental rights is the right to life and liberty, enshrined in Article 21. In *Md Sukur Ali vs State of Assam* the Supreme Court observed:

*"This is because liberty of a person is the most important feature of our Constitution. Article 21 which guarantees protection of life and personal liberty is the most important fundamental right of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Article 21 can be said to be the 'heart and soul' of the fundamental rights."*

Article 21 was enshrined in the Constitution

because the founding fathers were themselves freedom fighters who had seen the civil liberties of our people trampled under foreign rule. They had also been incarcerated for long periods under the formula 'No vakeel, no daleel, no appeal'. Hence they were determined that such arbitrariness does not recur in free India.



Former J&K chief minister. Photo: PTI

## Emergency erodes top court's duty

However, during the Emergency of 1975-77, arbitrary arrests became the order the day. Instead of declaring them illegal, the Supreme Court abandoned its solemn duty under the Constitution by rendering the disgraceful *ADM Jabalpur vs Shivkant Shukla* judgment holding that a citizen had no right to life and liberty once Emergency is declared. In other words, in an Emergency, citizens could be shot or jailed



without trial by the executive with impunity.

In recent days too, when fascist tendencies have emerged again, the performance of the Supreme Court and many high courts have been disappointing. For instance, bail was denied by the Supreme Court to Abhijit Iyer-Mitra who tweeted satirically about the Konark temple (for which he had soon apologised). This refusal was against the settled principles for granting bail laid down by the celebrated Justice Krishna Iyer in *State of Rajasthan vs Balchand*. While rejecting bail, CJI Ranjan Gogoi made a flippant and cruel remark, least expected of the *pater familias* of the judiciary, that if the petitioner 'is facing threats, there is no better place than jail'.

We may contrast this with the observation of the distinguished judge of England, Lord Denning, who in *Ghani vs Jones* (1970), observed:

*"A man's liberty of movement is regarded so highly by the laws of England that it is not to be hindered or prevented except on the surest ground."*

Lord Denning's decision was approved by the seven-judge constitution bench of the Indian Supreme Court in *Maneka Gandhi vs Union of India* (1978), and hence became the law of the land in India also.

In the case relating to the Bhima Koregaon accused (*Romila Thapar vs Union of India*) the Supreme Court should have quashed the entire prosecution, relying on the Brandenburg test, observing that there was no danger of any imminent lawless action by the acts of the accused, even if the allegations against them are assumed to be true (though they

appear to be on the basis of manufactured evidence).

### **Freedom of expression**

Coming to the arrest of Farooq Abdullah under the draconian Public Safety Act, the grounds given are that he incited violence. This is manifestly absurd, and the Supreme Court should forthwith quash the order of the government applying the Brandenburg test, which was followed by two decisions of the court viz *Sri Indra Das vs State of Assam* and *Arup Bhuyan vs State of Assam*.

Farooq Abdullah's record has always been that of an ardent Indian nationalist and he was never a secessionist. But he was deeply upset by the revocation of Article 370, which gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Even assuming he wanted *azaadi* for Kashmir, this is no crime. Many people such as Khalistanis, many Kashmiris, some Naga groups demand *azaadi*, and this demand is protected by the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

It is only if one goes beyond that and commits violence or incites imminent violence that it



**Kashmiri girls shout slogans as they attend a protest against scrapping of the special constitutional status for Kashmir. Photo: Adnan Abidi**

becomes a crime. There is nothing to show that Farooq Abdullah's statement incited imminent violence.

The J&K Public Safety Act, which permits detention up to two years without trial, has been declared 'a lawless law' by Amnesty International. It is similar to the Rowlatt Bill of 1919, against which Srinivas Shastri said these memorable words in the Imperial legislative assembly:

*"When the government undertakes a repressive policy the innocent are not safe. Men like me would not be considered innocent. The innocent then is he who forswears politics, who takes no part in the public movements of the time, who retires into his house, mumbles his prayers, and salaams the government officials all around. The man who interferes in politics, who addresses public meetings, becomes suspect. Possession in the hands of the Executive of powers of this drastic nature will not hurt the wicked alone, it will also hurt the good, and there will be such a lowering of public spirit that*

*all talk of responsible government will be a mere mockery. Much better that a few rascals should walk abroad than that the honest man should be obliged for fear of such a law to remain shut up in his house, to refrain from activities which it is in his nature to indulge in, to abstain from all political and public work, merely because there is a dreadful law in the land."*

These are times that try men's souls, to use Thomas Paine's words, and especially will they try the souls of our judiciary. If the judiciary fails in its duty to uphold civil liberties of citizens provided in the Constitution, as it did during the Emergency, then it will be said of it by the people of India, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting" (a passage from the Bible which was used by Winston Churchill to describe the Neville Chamberlain government on October 5, 1938 after the signing of the shameful Munich Pact with Adolf Hitler).

**Markandey Katju** is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 20/Sep 2019. 

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## **"Selections from The Radical Humanist" on the website**

*'Selections from The Radical Humanist' Volume I (1970 to 2005) and II (2006 to 2018) containing articles by all-time greats like M.N. Roy, (Justice) V.M. Tarkunde, Prof. Sib Narayan Ray, (Justice) Rajindar Sachar, (Justice) R.A. Jahagirdar, Kuldip Nayar and others on democratic freedoms, radical humanism, human rights, and emancipation of the downtrodden are now available at the website [www.lohiatoday.com](http://www.lohiatoday.com) on the periodicals page where 'The Radical Humanist' magazine is put every month. The two volumes are also available at [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) and have been accessed by more than 1750 people from various Indian cities and across the world from more than 41 countries. Readers may download these volumes from there and read whenever they like.*

**- Mahi Pal Singh**



# Not fair to Farooq

## Arrest under PSA enfeebles India's democracy

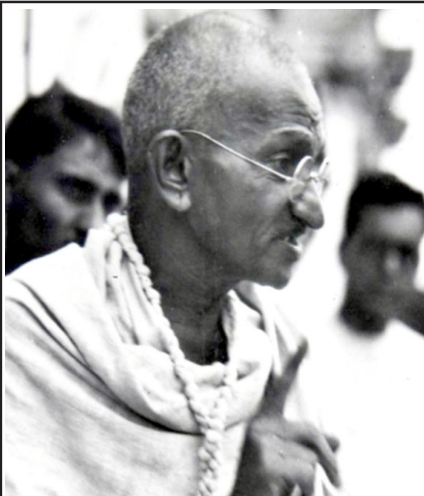
When Parliament debated the government's decision to scrap Article 370 of the Constitution, the speaker who should have had the greatest say — the Member of Parliament from Srinagar — was far away, locked up in his house in the Valley. This irony is getting worse by the day. Last Sunday, in the dead of night, Farooq Abdullah was arrested and his home turned into a jail under the draconian Public Safety Act, which entails detention up to two years, for 'posing a threat to state security and territorial integrity'. Farooq is not just the son of his father; he is a three-time Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, a former Union Cabinet minister and a politician who fought Pakistani propaganda in Geneva under team leader AB Vajpayee in 1994. No amount of muscular majoritarian triumphalism can diminish the larger-than-life role Farooq played in strengthening the political mainstream and reviving the democratic process in 1996, when the state was torn apart by terrorism. Even his electoral loss in 2002 was a victory for Indian democracy.

Now, those who celebrate Farooq's arrest

the most are Pakistani propagandists. The 'we-said-it-so' jibe from anti-India platforms goes deep like a sabre thrust into the soul of the sacred covenant that emotionally bound the Valley with the rest of the country. Can the government be so ungrateful to a politician who always stood by the Indian State, whoever be the Prime Minister and whatever be the colour of his party flag? If so, the 'we-said-it-so' propaganda would assume the gravity of truth.

Everybody knows that this 82-year-old man is no threat to Indian territorial integrity or state security. The most benign explanation for his arrest — that the government did not want to let him out as a consequence of the habeas corpus petition filed by Rajya Sabha MP Vaiko in the Supreme Court — flies in the face of logic. Every day Farooq, Omar, Mehbooba Mufti and other local leaders remain locked up, the Indian State loses its legitimacy in the Valley. They are no threat to public safety, but those who detain them are debilitating India's democracy and its image in the world.

Courtesy **Editorial Comment: The Tribune**, 24 September 2019. 🌈



*Carefully watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Manage and watch your words, for they will become your actions. Consider and judge your actions, for they have become your habits. Acknowledge and watch your habits, for they shall become your values. Understand and embrace your values, for they become your destiny.*

**- Mahatma Gandhi**

# Why We, as Hindu Americans, Are Opposed to Modi's Undeclared Emergency

*The war of attrition against the people of Kashmir and against minorities elsewhere poses a far greater danger to Indian democracy than Indira Gandhi's Emergency rule of 1975.*



**Photo: Alliance for Justice and Accountability**

“Democracy, beloved husband of Truth, loving father of Liberty, brother of Faith, Hope and Justice, expired on June 26.”

(<“ *Times of India* classified advertisement, inserted surreptitiously just as the 1975 Emergency went into effect).

Imagine for a moment that the US had a parliamentary system like in India, which permits the Feds to dismiss a state government, say in California, citing political instability and imminent threats to law and order. Say, thereafter, the state is ruled directly by a Washington bureaucrat, with all the powers of the state legislature purportedly vested in him/her.

Then imagine that in the stealth of night the Feds declare that henceforth the state of California shall be divided into three entities,

which may or may not get full statehood, and that the approval of that plan by the Washington bureaucrat shall be deemed to be the consent of California's elected lawmakers – most of whom are by then under house arrest and held incommunicado, with a complete shutdown of phones and internet across the state.

## **Sound preposterous?**

Yet, that is precisely what India did to the state of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5. Sadly, the other endangered democracy here in the US barely took notice, as President Trump meekly endorsed India's actions a few days later.

When Prime Minister Modi appeared at the UN General Assembly in New York yesterday, it had been more than 50 days of total isolation of Kashmir from the rest of India and the

world. There seems to be no end in sight to the collective punishment of its entire people.

### **From paradise to purgatory**

Official narratives of the situation in the Valley have been largely self-serving and often proven false. But heart-wrenching first-hand stories have emerged through the haze, and they paint a worsening humanitarian crisis, especially for women, children and the elderly, with shortages of medicines and other daily necessities.

There have been numerous reports of pellet gun injuries and even of deaths and torture. All avenues for citizens to express their views, including the right to assembly and worship, appear to have been blocked. And, the near-total travel ban has placed the Supreme Court of India in the embarrassing position of having to 'grant permission' to a few hardy souls to visit Kashmir to attend to family emergencies.

In the meantime, India's primary preoccupation in the last few weeks has been to 'manage' Western reactions, as diplomats gloat over the fact that the Kashmir issue has been successfully contained in international forums. So, as the people of Kashmir continue to suffocate, we should not be surprised if the honourable prime minister weaves an uplifting story of how Kashmiris will soon be out on the streets with roses for their 'liberators,' and the Valley will soon be brimming with jobs and industries – and will be transformed into a tourist paradise such as the world has never seen.

Such vainglory among Indian officials may sound cruel and even deliberate, considering that seven million citizens continue to be locked down, but they would be entirely normal in the populist world of Modi, just as President Trump wears his mistreatment of immigrant mothers and children as a badge of honour in front of his adoring crowds.

### **A plan gone awry?**

Perhaps the Indian government hoped for a

ground-swell of support from ordinary Kashmiris for its scrapping of Article 370, but initial attempts at opening public spaces appear to have backfired. While jingoistic supporters of the government continue to back its adventure vociferously, nearly eight weeks later, the state is now caught between a rock and a hard place: If it eases the restrictions on travel, worship and social media, Kashmir could very well explode. But if it prolongs the inhumanity, it will only compound the rage day after day, and Kashmir could reach a point of no return.

So, Delhi may very well resort to what repressive governments tend to do under pressure: Make a pretence of easing restrictions, while crushing dissent even further, not only in the Valley but also in the rest of India.

### **This crisis is different from 1975**

Indira Gandhi's Emergency rule lasted 21 harrowing months, and was brought down by a combination of outrage in the international community and fierce resistance by a few civil society leaders, some of whom fought from exile in the US (including the RSS, which ironically is the prime mover of today's march towards an authoritarian Hindu state).

More importantly, the judiciary played a major role in defending India's constitution every step of the way. But, at the end of the day, the Emergency ended not the least because of Indira Gandhi's own arrogant certainty that she would win handsomely in a new national election – in which both she and her son, who had launched the notorious forced sterilisation drive, lost.

Today's undeclared emergency by a populist government is vastly different. It has just been re-elected with a brute majority in the parliament and is inspired by a disciplined ideology united by hatred for the other. It has already done the hard work of co-opting many of the important national democratic institutions, and it has been very good at 'winking' at

numerous acts of violence against minorities and activists.

At first blush, it even seems to have the support of the Supreme Court for its actions in Kashmir as well as for its National Register of Citizens (NRC), which is unfairly targeting Muslims. This is a troubling combination, which should be of great concern to anyone who cares for India's democracy.

### **A Hindu perspective**

First-generation Hindu Americans like us consider ourselves very fortunate to have imbibed the notion of *ahimsa* (non-violence) from a very early age, even as we listened to the idea of *Rama Rajya* (a just and egalitarian society) at the feet of our parents and grandparents. But it is the US that taught us the critical importance of free speech and dissent in a democratic society.

So, it is doubly painful for us to behold how far the two nations that we dearly love are drifting away from their shared ideals. In India, spaces for dissent are shrinking at an alarming pace, with those who disagree with state policy often branded as *desh drohis* (betrayers).

Some prominent thinkers have even been assassinated.

The media is constantly facing threats from defamation cases to archaic sedition laws, leading dangerously towards increasing self-censorship. And most regrettably, Hindu seers and *acharyas*, who are supposed to be the moral compass of the majority religion, are largely missing in action, as violence against minorities goes on unabated and the state is determined to look the other way.

As Americans of Indian origin who idealise the idea of democracy, we are sounding the alarm bells loud and clear: It is high time that Hindus of conscience all across the world wake up to the reality that their faith has been hijacked by those who have completely rejected its inclusive and egalitarian heart. This is an emergency.

*Raju Rajagopal and Sunita Viswanath are co-founders of **Hindus for Human Rights USA**, an advocacy organisation that is committed to the ideals of multi-religious pluralism in the US, India, and beyond.*

*The Courtesy **The Wire**, 24/Sep/2019* 

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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**



# UP Police Goes After Eight Journalists in September Alone

*Across UP, journalists are struggling against the state apparatus to do their job.*

**Anoo Bhuyan**

It has been a heavy month for the UP police which has decided to go after journalists who have been reporting on administrative failures and law and order issues in the state.

After journalist Pawan Jaiswal was booked in August for reporting on children were being given just roti and salt in the government's midday meal scheme, the state administration and police have taken legal action against at least eight journalists in September alone.

Here is a list of journalists who are struggling against the state police for their reporting.

## **1. Pawan Jaiswal who exposed the “roti-namak” story**

A few days ago, Jaiswal had put out a video saying that an FIR had been lodged against him for two weeks and that he was worried about his future.

**Alok Pandey @alok\_pandey**

*This clip is from a @UPGovt school in east UP's #Mirzapur . These children are being served what should be a 'nutritious' mid day meal ,part of a flagship govt scheme .On the menu on Thursday was roti + salt !Parents say the meals alternate between roti + salt and rice + salt !*

Jaiswal broke a news story which was familiar yet important – children in a primary school in Mirzapur were being given just roti and salt as a part of the midday meal scheme which has been designed and run by the government to ensure that India's poorest children get at least one nutritious meal a day and have an incentive to go to school.

**Alok Pandey @alok\_pandey**

*A fresh statement from #PawanJaiswal ,*

*the reporter from #Mirzapur who broke the rotis + salt to kids story. Two weeks after an FIR against him for doing his job , the case has not been withdrawn . Pawan says he is very worried . We should all stand with him ! @IndEditorsGuild*

Parents of the children from the school said that children were always being served roti and salt or rice and salt. The woman who was tasked with cooking the meals in question also alleged that she was not given any supplies to cook and hence only roti, rice and salt were being served. She also said the journalist had not done anything wrong by reporting on this.

Journalists in UP have voiced their support for Jaiswal and have undertaken candlelight marches and sit-ins. The Editors Guild of India also released a statement in support of Jaiswal.

The police have reportedly charged



Jaiswal with criminal conspiracy, obstructing public servants from doing their job, giving false evidence and cheating.

## **2. Five journalists booked for reporting on an alleged caste altercation**

A few days later, on 7 September, police in Bijnor filed a criminal complaint against five



journalists who were reporting on cases of alleged caste discrimination. Two of the reporters – Ashish Tomar and Shakeel Ahmed – were from *Dainik Jagran* and *News18*.

The journalists had reported on a Valmiki family that had allegedly put its house on sale after the family was prohibited from collecting water from their village's hand pump. They had reportedly been barred from accessing the water by an influential Dalit family in the same village.

The police said that the journalists had themselves written on the house of the Valmiki's, that it was for sale and claimed that the issue had been resolved by the village head.

An inquiry by the district magistrate said that the journalists had spread "negative" and "false" news.

The police's FIR said that the journalists had concocted the story and were trying to vitiate the social amity of the area by circulating what the police called "fake news." The FIR booked them for promoting enmity, nuisance and criminal intimidation. The police accused them of making statements which were against "national integration."

Local journalists once again came together


in support of the five journalists. They claimed the police had, in fact, pressurised the villagers to come up with a different story.

### 3. Journalist booked for report on children mopping floors in a school

On September 7 again, the police in Azamgarh also arrested Santosh Jaiswal. He had also been reporting on conditions in government schools and about students were being made to clean the school. After he took photos of students mopping the floor, he got into an argument with the school's principal and Jaiswal himself called the police to inform them about what had been happening.

The school principal then allegedly told the police that Jaiswal used to visit the school and would misbehave with the staff and persuade them to buy his newspaper. The principal also said that Jaiswal had himself gotten the children to mop the floor so that he could take photos of them.

Jaiswal was arrested and later released by 11 September after the district magistrate intervened. The police's charges against him were for extortion and obstructing public servants from discharging their work.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 21 September 2019. 

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# Gandhi and the Cowardice of Hindutva

*At a time like this, when Hindutva has become dominant, it becomes especially relevant to ask: why does Gandhi consider Hindutva evil?*

Ajay Skaria

*This article provided the basis for briefer remarks made in a talk at the Indian Association of Minnesota on September 29, during celebrations of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.*

One of the dangers of an event like this is that we all come, pay homage to Gandhi, and go away with no change in our relation to ourselves or the world. Gandhi has become – like Martin Luther King here in the US – one of those figures whom everybody invokes, including those whose politics and everyday lives are opposed to everything that Gandhi stood for. Whenever I am asked to attend a Gandhi event, I worry that I might participate in this process of taming Gandhi, making him into a sweet old toothless man whom everybody loves to love. And we as people of Indian origin can go home, feeling good about having produced such a great man, sunning ourselves in his reflected glory. So I think it is important to ask: what is Gandhi's legacy, and how would we nourish and cultivate it? We often say that Gandhi's message was nonviolence. That is not wrong, but it is not enough. The challenge is to think with him, and ask: what is the nature of his nonviolence? Thinking with somebody involves not so much sticking to the letter of what they say as eliciting the potentialities of their concepts. If we think with Gandhi, it seems to me that we can come to nonviolence only after passing through two other terms first – courage and evil. An account of nonviolence that does not spring from an understanding first of courage and evil runs away from what is most thought-provoking in Gandhi.

Let me begin with the word courage. Let's go back to 1918, slightly more than 100 years back now. Gandhi has just finished the Kheda *satyagraha*. This is his third major *satyagraha*

since his return to India in 1915. Earlier, there had been the mill workers strike in Ahmedabad, and the one in Champaran in Bihar 1917, where he took up the grievances of the indigo cultivators. These three *satyagrahas* have made him a household name in India in just three or four years after his return from South Africa. In everybody's mind, he is associated with *ahimsa* or nonviolence.

And then, he declares that he is going to recruit soldiers for the British army. He goes on a recruitment tour of Kheda. Many nationalist leaders are baffled. So are ordinary Indians. Why is this man, who has been talking of *ahimsa*, now asking people to pick up arms? Gandhi is adamant, however. And in his later years too, he insists that he would have done exactly the same thing.

Without go into the details of his explanations, all I wish to stress is this: Gandhi sees no contradiction between his *ahimsa* and his recruitment drive. How is this possible? For our purposes today, Gandhi's explanation could be rephrased this way. *Satyagraha* requires a courage greater than that involved in picking up arms. If you have the courage for *ahimsa*, for confronting the British, then it is fine to not join the army. But most people do not join the army not because of a strong moral objection (if this was the case, they would have opposed the British vigorously in other ways) but because they do not have courage to even to take up arms, let alone to practice *ahimsa*. So the first step towards *ahimsa* must be to develop courage. Those who do not have courage can never take up *ahimsa*.

*Abhay*, the Gujarati word he translates as both courage and fearlessness, is a crucial term in Gandhi's vocabulary. When Gandhi says *ahimsa* requires greater courage than that required for

bearing arms, this does not mean it requires a greater amount of the same courage that those who bear arms have. It means a different kind of courage – not physical but moral courage. Above all, moral courage involves questioning oneself, reflecting on whether one's actions are right or wrong.

Moral courage installs an equality within oneself, so that one is internally divided. To be internally divided is to develop a conscience, to become capable of having an interminable conversation with oneself about right and wrong, beginning with the right and wrong of one's own actions. This internal division is also, paradoxically, the first requirement for integrity: those without moral courage cannot have the integrity necessary to recognise right and wrong – they are not capable of morality, ethics or religion. At best, they are capable of moralism, that weaponisation of morality which consists in unquestioningly accepting and defending the dominant values of one's social circle. They will just follow, both in their actions and their thinking, the path of least resistance. Such moralism is the opposite of moral courage; it is moral cowardice.

This brings to my second word, evil. To have moral courage means, amongst other things, recognising and naming evil when we see it. Gandhi is very liberal in his use of the word evil and other analogous words such as *adharma*, irreligion. (The Gujarati words he uses are *rakshashi*, which he usually translates as evil rather than demonic, and *adharma*.) His use of this cluster of words occurs most often in the context of three phenomena – 'modern civilisation', untouchability, and Muslim and Hindu nationalism.

So the second point I wish to stress is his willingness to use words such as evil. We usually shy away from a word like evil, because we think of it as too strong. To call something evil, we usually think, is to be intolerant. But Gandhi, whom we think of as a paragon of nonviolence,

is very free with this word. I think Gandhi's use of this word, and our reluctance to use it, is indicative of something. All too often we confuse non-violence with not rocking the boat, with refusing to take a strong stance, with not calling things wrong (actually, more precisely, not having the moral courage to recognise a wrong).

In such an understanding, nonviolence becomes an especially tame version of see no evil, hear no evil, and do no evil. That is to say, while we may not ourselves do injustice, we also avoid seeing the injustice around us. But in Gandhi's terms, to avoid seeing injustice is not merely to allow injustice to happen; it is to actually participate in injustice. If there is an injustice that we keep quiet about, or even do not have the moral courage to recognise, then we are guilty too. This is why he uses the word evil so frequently – to name injustice. This brings us to the question: what does he call evil? Or, put differently, what is injustice for Gandhi? Let us look at one of the phenomena for which he reserves the word evil—Hindu nationalism or communalism, or what we today call Hindutva (in his time, the word Hindutva has not yet come to be attributed exclusively to, or for that matter claimed exclusively by, Hindu nationalism). He criticised Hindutva repeatedly. And perhaps because his vision of Hinduism was so opposed to theirs, because he made the poverty of their conception of Hinduism so evident, the followers of Hindutva detested him, and it was one of them who finally assassinated him.

(These days, I am sometimes tempted to think that perhaps Gandhi's most important contribution to the life of post-independence India was the very manner of his death. His assassination by Godse, a figure so closely associated with Savarkar and Hindutva, likely played a crucial role in the eclipse of Hindutva for at least three generations. Those three generations provided the breathing space for the newly independent Indian state to create, within the limits of liberalism, institutions that affirmed the secularist

values of individual dignity, freedom of expression, separation of powers, and religious freedom. It also provided the space for the more complex Hinduism than Hindutva to develop ways of coexisting with a secularist state.)

At a time like this, when Hindutva has become dominant, it becomes especially relevant to ask: why does Gandhi consider Hindutva evil? And why, despite his many criticisms of liberal secularism, does he fight for a liberal secularist state in India?

The answer to these two questions is relatively straightforward. For Gandhi, justice involves the equality of all beings. The reason he is critical of liberal secularism is because even at its finest, it can only think the equality of humans abstractly, and it cannot at all think the equality of all beings. Because of this, liberal secularism's equality is premised on the domination of the world, on exploitation of other beings and of other humans. But precisely because liberal secularism is at least driven by an idea of equality, even if a flawed one, he has a respectful critique of it: he senses that it keeps open the possibility of a more unconditional equality, an equality that is more sensitive to difference.

By contrast Hindutva – like white nationalism, or contemporary Zionism and Islamism – is to its very core antithetical to equality. This is so in four cascading ways. One, it cannot allow for even the abstract equality of all humans. It is premised on the superiority and primacy of Hinduism, just as white nationalism is premised on the superiority and primacy of western civilisation. And Gandhi, while a passionate Hindu, is not insecure enough to say that Hinduism is in some objective sense superior to every other religion.

(To ask whether one religion is superior or inferior to another already requires understanding religion primarily sociologically rather than ethically, and this understanding Gandhi would have considered irreligious. Hinduism was the religion he loved most, but to love something or

someone most does not require considering them superior to other things or persons).

Two, there is the way it makes the claim that all Hindus are equal. (Its critics often do not recognise enough this ostensibly equalising aspect of Hindutva; they forget that Savarkar opposed caste discrimination). Hindutva makes this claim by confusing equality with identity. This is a completely wrong way of conceiving equality between sentient beings.

True, equality is identity in mathematics. ('Equality' is the first word in Gottlieb Frege's famous 'On Sense and Reference,' and it is asterisked with a footnote: 'I use this word in the sense of identity, and understand " $a=b$ " to have the sense " $a$  is the same as  $b$ " or " $a$  and  $b$  coincide."') But civil, political, or social equality is not mathematical equality. Equality between sentient beings is premised on difference: or rather, the equal must remain irreducibly different from each other.

Three, mistaking identity for equality, Hindutva tries to exterminate difference, or at least have only as much difference as is politically expedient. On the one side, this exterminatory politics involves trying to exterminate difference within what is posited as the putative Hindu community – only those differences are permitted to survive which submit to Hindutva, which do not disagree with it. But amongst sentient beings (as distinct from, say, rocks), diversity without disagreement cannot be called difference. An early moment in this exterminatory drive is Gandhi's assassination; today it continues with the assassination of M.M. Kalburgi, Gauri Lankesh, and so many others; it continues also in the vicious attacks that Hindutva's proponents mount on all those who criticise it.

On the other side, this exterminatory politics involves trying to exterminate all that cannot participate in this equality-as-identity of Hindus. Repeatedly, as we know, this side of exterminatory politics has turned genocidal, and will turn genocidal again. Indeed, because of its

striving for equality-as-identity, there can be no Hindutva – or white nationalism, Zionism or Islamism for that matter – that does not at least contemplate genocide.

Four, because it insists so much on identity, Hindutva cannot have moral courage; it becomes moral cowardice. Moral courage, as we saw, requires the ability to question oneself, to ask about right and wrong in dogged ways. And the insistence on thinking of oneself in terms of identity does not allow for this questioning, for this cultivation of difference within oneself. Such moral cowardice makes it possible for us to rest easy with depriving our fellow citizens of basic rights, as is happening currently in Kashmir with only few murmurs of protests from the rest of India. Maybe it is their deep and unspoken anxiety about their moral cowardice – about their lack of the deep and intense bravery that is moral courage – which makes proponents of Hindutva substitute for it talk of fist-sized chests, or righteously shout down, as not only internet trolls but some of our famous TV anchors do, those who show even the slightest moral courage.

For someone like Gandhi, this moral cowardice of phenomena like Hindutva was more troubling than its exterminatory politics. He would have seen it as the source of its exterminatory politics. The German-American thinker Hannah Arendt, who herself who barely escaped the German concentration camps, made a somewhat similar observation about Adolf Eichmann, one of those most responsible for overseeing the genocide of Jews. His evil, she observed, was not so much diabolical or radical as it was banal – springing out of thoughtlessness. One might add: thoughtlessness is the way moral cowardice manifests itself in everyday life – doing without reflection what is socially expected. This thoughtlessness modern society is particularly prone to, not least because of the way it reduces occasions for solitude.

I have already taken up too much time, so I will not say much about the term that has

shadowed this talk – nonviolence. Let me just note: why nonviolence? Very simply put, because evil must be fought in a way that recognises the equality and humanity of the actual bearer of evil. Nonviolence or satyagraha becomes thus a way of fighting evil that sacrifices the self rather than the other, and by doing so gives moral courage to the other. Sometimes, as Gandhi himself noted, nonviolence might itself require violence (controversially even at that time, he defends killing stray dogs under certain circumstances), and only moral courage can help one discern whether one is fooling oneself when one uses violence in the name of nonviolence. This is why nonviolence must begin with moral courage – without it, one cannot even distinguish between violence and nonviolence. This may also be why for Gandhi phenomena like Hindutva are evil and irreligious – they make a virtue of moral cowardice.

In concluding, let us ask: how to pay homage to Gandhi. It is usual at times like this to recall the exhortation attributed to Gandhi – Be the change you wish to see in the world. I have not found any such remark in Gandhi, but it is in principle possible he could have said something like it. Still, my sense is that by itself it is a little anodyne. To talk only of change is not faithful enough to Gandhi – one has to talk of a change that brings in questions of courage and evil, or in other words of social justice. So maybe a more meaningful way to pay homage to Gandhi would be to cultivate a conscience, to develop the moral courage to find an evil that we hold ourselves responsible for, and fight it nonviolently.

**Ajay Skaria** is professor of history at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi's Religion of Resistance and Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers, and Wildness in Western India*. He is currently working on two books, one tentatively titled *Ambedkar's Revolutions*, and the other on *Indian secularism*.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 02/Oct/2019 



## **The Daily Fix: Is Unnao case going to play out yet again with rape-accused BJP leader Chinmayanand?**

***What happens when a BJP leader is accused of rape?  
He gets watered-down charges, the woman is put behind bars.***

**Rohan Venkataramakrishanan**

The Unnao rape case should have set an example for the Bharatiya Janata Party-run government in Uttar Pradesh on what not to do when it comes to crimes against women allegedly committed by the organisation's own leaders. In Unnao, the authorities dragged their feet for months before taking action against influential BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, even as the party continued to support him – some senior leaders even visited him in jail. It was not until the Supreme Court picked up the matter following genuine threats to the lives of the woman and her family and transferred it to a court in Delhi that the BJP finally expelled Sengar.

Now, a similar script seems to be playing out with Chinmayanand, a former Union minister of state and three-time BJP Member of Parliament, who was accused of rape by a 23-year-old woman. As it stands, Chinmayanand has been booked under watered-down charges of sexual assault, not rape. He is currently in hospital rather than in jail, though doctors reportedly say his health is fine.

Instead, the woman who accused the Hindu monk of sexually exploiting her has been arrested and sent to jail after Chinmayanand filed a complaint accusing her of attempting to extort money from him. The police claims it has evidence against her, prompting a court to send her to judicial custody and deny her bail.


This seems to be the perfect encapsulation of what happens when BJP leaders are accused of crimes against women: the police treat the

politician with kid gloves, while the woman is dragged out of her home and thrown into jail.

In an ideal world, both complaints should be investigated separately and evaluated as such. Yet, it seems clear to most people that the Uttar Pradesh authorities will side with Chinmayanand, and that the police's efforts in the extortion case will be used to nullify the sexual assault case. None of the actions of the Uttar Pradesh authorities so far provide any confidence that they will treat the matter fairly.

Perhaps this is to be expected from a party that has the highest number of Union and state lawmakers charged with crimes against women and leaders who routinely dismiss rape charges as being the fault of the women. Yet it also stands at odds with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to protect women from social harm, such as the "*beti bachao, beti padhao*" campaign against female foeticide and the BJP's actions against triple talaq, "instant divorce" for Muslim women.

In the Unnao case, the Supreme Court finally stepped in after a lorry rammed into a car carrying the teenager, nearly killing her, one of a series of incidents that have left her family fearing for their lives. The Union government and the Supreme Court must pay close attention to the way Uttar Pradesh handles the Chinmayanand case as well. If not, the same series of tragic and outrageous developments from the Unnao case will repeat themselves.

Courtesy **Scroll.in**, Sep 27, 2019 

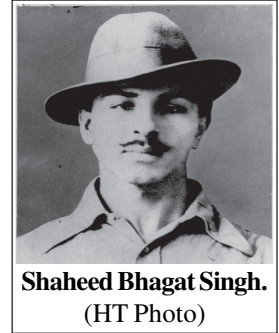
## Excerpt : Why I am an Atheist (1930) by Bhagat Singh

**This edited excerpt of Bhagat Singh's essay on his atheism reveals the young revolutionary's intellectual strength even in the face of death**

A new question has cropped up. Is it due to vanity that I do not believe in the existence of an omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God? I had never imagined that I would ever have to confront such a question. But conversation with some friends has given me a hint that certain of my friends - if I am not claiming too much in thinking them to be so - are inclined to conclude from the brief contact they have had with me, that it was too much on my part to deny the existence of God and that there was a certain amount of vanity that actuated my disbelief. Well, the problem is a serious one. I do not boast to be quite above these human traits. I am a man and nothing more. None can claim to be more. I also have this weakness in me. Vanity does form a part of my nature. Amongst my comrades I was called an autocrat. Even my friend Mr B.K. Dutt sometimes called me so. On certain occasions I was decried as a despot. Some friends do complain, and very seriously too, that I involuntarily thrust my opinions upon others and get my proposals accepted. That this is true up to a certain extent, I do not deny. This may amount to egotism. There is vanity in me in as much as our cult as opposed to other popular creeds is concerned. But that is not personal. It may be, it is only legitimate pride in our cult and does not amount to vanity. Vanity, or to be more precise "Ahankar", is the excess of undue pride in one's self. Whether it is such an undue pride that has led me to atheism or whether it is after very careful study of the subject and after much consideration that I have come to disbelieve in God, is a question that I intend to discuss here. Let me first make it clear that egotism and vanity are two different things.

... My atheism is not of so recent origin. I

had stopped believing in God when I was an obscure young man, of whose existence my above-mentioned friends were not even aware. At least a college student cannot cherish any short of undue pride which



may lead him to atheism. Thought a favourite with some professors and disliked by certain others. I was never an industrious or a studious boy. I could not get any chance of indulging in such feelings as vanity. I was rather a boy with a very shy nature, who had certain pessimistic dispositions about his future career. And in those days, I was not a perfect atheist. My grandfather under whose influence I was brought up is an orthodox Arya Samaji. An Arya Samaji is anything but an atheist. After finishing my primary education I joined the D.A.V. School of Lahore and stayed in its Boarding House for one full year. There, apart from morning and evening prayers, I used to recite 'Gayatri Mantra' for hours and hours. I was a perfect devotee in those days. Later on I began to live with my father. He is a liberal in as much as the orthodoxy of religions is concerned. It was through his teachings that I aspired to devote my life to the cause of freedom. But he is not an atheist. He is a firm believer. He used to encourage me to offer prayers daily. So this is how I was brought up. In the Non-Cooperation days I joined the National College. It was there that I began to think liberally and discuss and criticise all the religious problems, even God. But still I was a devout believer. By that time I had begun to preserve the unshorn

and unclipped long hair but I could never believe in the mythology and doctrines of Sikhism or any other religion. But I had a firm faith in God's existence.

Later on, I joined the Revolutionary Party. The first leader with whom I came in contact, though not convinced, could not dare to deny the existence of God. On my persistent inquiries about God, he used to say: "Pray whenever you want to." Now this is atheism less courage required for the adoption of that creed. The second leader with whom I came in contact with was a firm believer. Let me mention his name-respected Comrade Sachindra Nath Sanyal, now undergoing life transportation in connection with the Kakori Conspiracy Case. From the very first page of his famous and only book, *Bandi Jivan* (or *Incarcerated Life*), the Glory of God is sung vehemently. On the last page of the second part of that beautiful book, his mystic-because of vedantism-praises showered upon God form a very conspicuous part of his thoughts. The Revolutionary distributed throughout India on 28 January 1925, was according to the prosecution, the result of his intellectual labour. Now, as is inevitable in the secret work the prominent leader expresses his own views which are very dear to his person, and the rest of the workers have to acquiesce in them, in spite of differences which they might have. In that leaflet one full paragraph was devoted to praise the Almighty and His rejoicings and doing. That is all mysticism. What I wanted to point out was that the idea of disbelief had not even germinated in the Revolutionary Party. The famous Kakori martyrs-all four of them-passed their last days in prayers. Ram Prasad Bismil was an orthodox Arya Samaji. Despite his wide studies in the field of socialism and communism, Rajen Lahiri could not suppress his desire of reciting hymns of the Upanishads and the Gita. I saw only one man amongst them, who never prayed and used to say: "Philosophy is the outcome of human weakness or limitation

of knowledge. He is also undergoing a sentence of transportation for life. But he also never dared to deny the existence of God.

Up to that period I was only a romantic idealist revolutionary. Up till then we were to follow. Now came the time to shoulder the whole responsibility. .. That was a turning point in my revolutionary career. "Study" was the cry that reverberated in the corridors of my mind. Study to enable yourself with arguments in favour of your cult. I began to study. My previous faith and convictions underwent methods alone which was so prominent amongst our predecessors, was replaced by serious ideas. No more mysticism, no more blind faith. Realism became our cult. Use of force justifiable when resorted to as a matter of terrible necessity: non-violence as policy indispensable for all mass movements. So much about methods. The most important thing was the clear conception of the ideals for which we were to fight. As there were no important activities in the field of action I got ample opportunity to study various ideals of the world revolutions. I studied Bakunin, the anarchist leader, something of Marx, the father of communism, and much of Lenin, Trotsky and others-the men who had successfully carried out a revolution in their countries. They were all atheists. Bakunin's *God and State*, though only fragmentary, is an interesting study of the subject. Later still I came across a book entitled *Common Sense* by Nirlamba Swami, It was only a sort of mystic atheism. This subject became of utmost interest to me. By the end of 1926 I had been convinced of the baselessness of the theory of existence of an almighty supreme being who created, guided and controlled the universe. I had given out this disbelief of mine. I began discussion on the subjects with my friends. I had become a pronounced atheist. But what it meant will presently be discussed.

In May 1927 I was arrested at Lahore. The arrest was a surprise. I was quite unaware of the fact that the police wanted me. All of a

sudden, while passing through a garden, I found myself surrounded by the police. To my own surprise, I was very calm at that time. I did not feel any sensation, nor did I experience any excitement. I was taken into police custody. Next day I was taken to the Railway Police lock-up where I was to pass one full month. After many days of conversation with the police officials I guessed that they had some information regarding my connection with the Kakori party and my other activities in connection with the revolutionary movement. They told me that I had been to Lucknow while the trial was going on there, that I had negotiated a certain scheme about their rescue, that after obtaining their approval, we had procured some bombs, that by way of test one of the bombs was thrown into the crowd on the occasion of Dussehra in 1926. They further informed me, in my interest, that if I could give any statement throwing some light on the activities of the revolutionary party, I was not going to be imprisoned but on the contrary set free and rewarded, even without being produced as an approver in the court. I laughed at the proposal. It was all humbug. People holding ideas like ours do not throw their bombs on innocent people. One fine morning Mr Newman, the then Senior Superintendent of C.I.D., came to me. And after much sympathetic talk with me, imparted to him the extremely sad news that if I did not give any statement as demanded by them, they would be forced to send me up for trial for conspiracy to wage war in connection with Kakori Case and for brutal murders in connection with Dussehra bomb outrage. And he further informed me that they had enough evidence to get me convicted and hanged. In those days I believed - though I was quite innocent - the police could do it if they desired. That very day certain police officials began to persuade me to offer my prayers to God regularly, both the times. Now I was an atheist. I wanted to settle for myself whether it was in the days of peace and

enjoyment alone that I could boast of being an atheist or whether during such hard times as well; I could stick to those principles of mine. After great consideration I decided that I could not lead myself to believe and pray to God. No, I never did. That was the real test and I came out successful. Never for a moment did I desire to save my neck at the cost of certain other things. So I was a staunch disbeliever; and have been ever since. It was not an easy job to stand that test. 'Belief' softens the hardships, and can even make them pleasant. In God, man can find consolation and support. Without Him man has to depend upon himself. To stand upon one's own legs amid storms and hurricanes is not a child's play. At such testing moments, vanity-if-any-evaporates and man cannot dare to defy the general beliefs. If he does, then we must conclude that he has got certain other strengths than mere vanity. This is exactly the situation now. Judgment is already too well known. Within a week it is to be pronounced. What is the consolation with the exception of the idea that I am going to sacrifice my life for a cause? A God-believing Hindu might be expecting to be reborn as a king, a Muslim or a Christian might dream of the luxuries to be enjoyed in paradise and the reward he is to get for his suffering and sacrifices. But, what am I to expect? I know that the moment the rope is fitted around my neck and the rafters removed from under my feet, will be the final moment, the last moment. I, or to be more precise, my soul as interpreted in the metaphysical terminology shall all be finished there. Nothing further. A short life of struggle with no such magnificent end, shall in itself be the reward, if I have the courage to take it in that light. That is all...

Society has to fight out this belief as well as was fought the idol worship and the narrow conception of religion. Similarly, when man tries to stand on his own legs and become a realist, he shall have to throw the faith aside, and to face manfully all the distress, trouble, in which

the circumstances may throw him. That is exactly my state of affairs. It is not my vanity, my friends. It is my mode of thinking that has made me an atheist. I don't know whether in my case belief in God and offering of daily prayers which I consider to be most selfish and degraded act on the part of man, whether these prayers can prove to be helpful or they shall make my case worse still. I have read of atheists facing all troubles quite boldly; so am I trying to stand like a man with an erect head to the last, even on the gallows.

Let us see how I carry on. One friend asked me to pray. When informed of my atheism, he said: "During your last days you will begin to believe." I said: "No, dear Sir, it shall not be. I will think that to be an act of degradation and demoralisation on my part. For selfish motives I am not going to pray." Readers and friends: Is this "vanity"? If it is, I stand for it.

#### **Chaman Lal**

My interest in Bhagat Singh and other Indian revolutionaries began even before I was 20 years old. It was first aroused by Manmathnath Gupta, a convicted revolutionary in the Kakori case, who later turned into a historian of the Indian revolutionary movement during the freedom struggle and wrote *Bharat Ke Krantikari* (Revolutionaries of India). I translated it from the original Hindi into Punjabi in the early 1970s. From that point, my interest in revolutionary movements and the lives of revolutionaries grew even though I was a student of Hindi literature and worked mainly on literature and translation. In 1985-86, *Bhagat Singh aur Unke Sathiyon ke Dastavez*, which I co-edited and which was published by Rajkamal Prakashan, was an instant hit. It continues to do well today. Around this time, I narrowed my interest in India's revolutionaries and began focussing on Bhagat Singh's documents. Singh was the most organised in his thinking about the revolution and the means to achieve it. He went beyond earlier revolutionaries in giving an ideological direction to the movement.

After a profound study of revolutionary movements across the world, he concluded that the goal of the Indian revolution should be a socialist revolution which aimed at ending not just colonial rule but class rule as well.

Before Bhagat Singh, the movement was all about the bravery, fearlessness, and patriotism of revolutionaries. With him, it took an entirely different turn, becoming a study not just of the brave actions of revolutionaries but also of their ideas.

To study ideas, scholars need documents and physical records of thoughts and actions. Bhagat Singh was the first Indian revolutionary who, like other Socialist revolutionaries across the world, wrote down and recorded his thoughts. He was just 16 when he wrote the first essay available to readers, apart from the few letters earlier written to family members. The essay *The Problem of Language and Script in Punjab* was published 10 years later in the journal *Hindi Sandesh* in 1933. He wrote it for a competition and won the first prize of Rs 50 (equivalent to about Rs 5,000 today). None of Bhagat Singh's essays that have been discovered so far are in his own handwriting. Most are in print form and almost all are attributed to fictitious names. It is difficult to find any printed essay remotely associated with his real name. An essay in the Delhi-based Hindi journal *Maharathi* is credited to BS Sindhu. One can identify this as Bhagat Singh Sandhu, as his family's clan title was Sandhu. But he twisted the name to Sindhu, perhaps due to his strong patriotism, being a resident of 'Sindh', the ancient identity of India as 'the civilisation of Sindhu Valley'. Interestingly, when his niece, Virender took to writing the family biography and edited his documents, she chose the same title Sindhu and not Sandhu, as is prevalent. The only documents found in Bhagat Singh's own handwriting are either letters or *The Jail Notebook*. Though not all the letters were well preserved, quite a few, including the oldest ones, which he wrote to family members at the age of



14 in 1921, have been saved.

A note about the authenticity of these documents: whatever is available in Bhagat Singh's own handwriting – letters and *The Jail Notebook* – are indisputable. What has been available to us in a printed form needs some explanation. Few know that many of Bhagat Singh's documents were published during his lifetime; only the names he used were fictitious due to the fear of state oppression. His letters from jail were published in his real name. Between 1923 and 1928, the period before his arrest, Bhagat Singh worked on the staff of many journals and papers like the Punjabi and Urdu *Kirti*, the Hindi daily *Pratap*, and the Delhi-based Hindi journal *Arjun*. His writings in Hindi were published in *Arjun*, *Maharathi* and *Matwala*. His essays in Punjabi and Urdu *Kirti* were published under the name 'Virodhi'; in *Pratap* he used the pen name 'Balwant'. He wrote nearly 37 of the 48 sketches on the lives of the revolutionaries published in the *Phansi Ank* (Execution Issue) issue of the Allahabad-based Hindi monthly *Chand* in November 1928.

It is not only in recent times that Bhagat Singh has been described as a socialist or Marxist revolutionary. Contemporary newspapers also described him as one. There is an interesting true story relating to *Why I am an Atheist*, first published in the September 27, 1931 issue of *The People* weekly edited by Lala Feroze Chand from Lahore. The essay was later banned by the colonial government. As early as 1934, EV Ramaswamy Naicker, popularly known as Periyar, asked P Jeevanandam to translate this essay into Tamil. It was published in the Periyar-edited journal *Kudai Arsu*, with Periyar's own tribute to Bhagat Singh. After the Partition, files of issues of *The People* could not reach India for many years. Someone then retranslated the essay from Tamil to English. This continues to be in circulation on many websites and many further translations were done from this version! Websites like Marxist-Leninist.org continue with

the re-translated version. In Pakistan, some translations in Punjabi were done from the re-translated version. The original version of *The People* is now preserved at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi and was reproduced in a scanned format in my book *Understanding Bhagat Singh* (2013).

As followers of Bhagat Singh will know, his *The Jail Notebook* is not a personal diary or an account of his days in prison. It comprises notes taken from books that he read during his incarceration. Had time permitted perhaps he would have written a book.

During my teaching stint at JNU, when I met the late prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral on a social occasion, he complimented me: "*Aapne Bhagat Singh ko fir zinda kar dia.*" (You made Bhagat Singh live again.) I had earlier presented him a set of Bhagat Singh's collected writings in Hindi. Embarrassed, I had replied that Bhagat Singh remains alive due to his sacrifice and writings. Incidentally, IK Gujral, Bhagat Singh, and Faiz Ahmad Faiz were contemporaries at college in Lahore.

In those days, both the Lahore and the Delhi editions of *Hindustan Times* carried many stories on Bhagat Singh. In fact, the most popular hat-wearing photograph of Bhagat Singh, clicked by a Kashmere Gate photographer around April 3, 1929, a few days before Bhagat Singh and BK Dutt threw a bomb in the Central Assembly (Parliament of today) on April 8, 1929, appeared in the April 18 issue of the paper. A copy is preserved in the National Archives, New Delhi. *The Bhagat Singh Reader* also carries a *Hindustan Times* clipping featuring the court statement of Bhagat Singh and Dutt as the banner headline.

**Chaman Lal** is a retired Professor from JNU and Honorary Advisor of Bhagat Singh Archives and Resource Centre, Delhi Archives, New Delhi.

**Courtesy The Hindustan Times,**  
Sep 28, 2019. 

# M.N. Roy: Mahatma Gandhi's Weighty Opponent

*Few Indian revolutionaries matched Manabendra Nath Roy's international stature. Born Narendra Nath Bhatta-charya, he was feted both by Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin as founder of two communist parties—the Mexican Communist Party and the Indian Communist Party*

Pranay Sharma

In his engagement with a wide array of people, few had the ability or the temerity to unsettle Gandhiji. Manabendra Nath Roy was perhaps, an exception. “He strikes at my very roots” was Gandhiji’s response as he told his supporters to ignore and stay away from him.

Few Indian revolutionaries matched Roy’s international stature. Born Narendra Nath Bhatta-charya, he was feted both by Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin as founder of two communist parties—the Mexican Communist Party and the Indian Communist Party—as well as enjoying the respect and admiration of a host of leaders in the Soviet and international circle of communists and socialists.

For a man who had the intellect to present a supplement to Lenin’s draft theses on “National and Colonial Questions” and was elected to serve as member of the presidium of the Comintern (Communist International), Roy also had a wide range of admirers in India, Jawaharlal Nehru, who kept himself abreast of developments in the

outside world, being one of them.

Roy’s re-thinking of political methods began in earnest on his return to India and while serving a six-year term in jail. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1936 in a bid to “radicalise the party” and urged other communists to join it to strengthen the democratic liberation struggle.

His only meeting with Gandhi was on the eve of INC’s Faizpur Session in 1936. But though the two leaders had a lengthy 90 minute interaction, they differed on most issues apart from the need for India to be free. The unease of Gandhi about Roy’s views and opinions was clear when he suggested to him, “Since you are new to the organisation, I should say you would serve it best by mute service.”

Unable to be in an organisation where Gandhi and his coterie took all decisions without wider consultation, M.N. Roy left the INC after four years.

Courtesy **Outlook**, 5 October, 2019



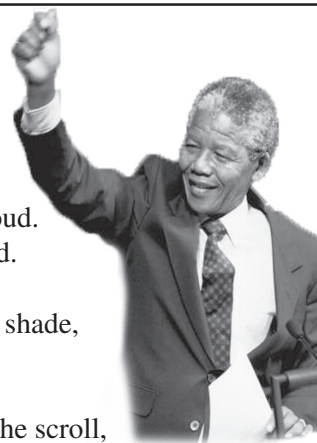
## I am the Captain fo my Soul

Out of the night that covers me, Black as the from pole to pole,  
I think whatever gods my be, for my unconquerable soul.

In the Fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance, My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears, Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years, Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate : I am the captain of my soul.



- : Nelson Mandela

## **Lok Sabha Election 2019: BJP's Victory: Challenge to Indian Secular Polity**

A seminar titled “Lok Sabha Election 2019: BJP's Victory: Challenge to Indian Secular Polity” has been jointly organized by Indian Renaissance Institute New Delhi and Radical Humanist Association, West Bengal on August 17, 2019 at Bharat Sabha Hall, Kolkata. Dignitaries from different fields have participated in the seminar and enriched the audience with their enlightening addresses in this pertinent theme.

Dr. Debastuti Dasgupta, Assistant Professor, Journalism and mass communication, attached to Asutosh College, Kolkata, at the very outset explain the backdrop of the seminar and introduced the speakers with the audience. She pointed out General elections in 2019 saw emergence of the right wing Bhartiya Janata Party with 303 seats in the lower house of the Parliament. This massive victory marks the end of the era of fractured mandates seen over the last three decades. A very scary offshoot to this rightwing majority is a spike in the Hindu extremism among the population. The BJP ran a campaign which was divisive and aimed at consolidating the Hindu votes around religious sentiments. This strikes squarely on the secular brand of politics practiced so far.

In this context, Mr. Jawhar Sircar, Ex Civil Servant and current Chairman of the Board of Governors of the prestigious Centre for Studies in Social Science, Kolkata had started his address. He very relevantly began his address by pointing out how 2019 elections had made an impact on us. He also noted the period between 2014-2019 as an open divisive and murderous regime. Sircar had given lot of

examples and draw historical evidences to come to the conclusion that 2019 elections represent reaffirmation of certain ideas which gave birth to this racist and fascist regime.

Professor Apurbo Kumar Mukhopadhyay, an eminent scholar in the field of Political Science and associated with Netaji Institute of Asian Studies, had pointed out many factors which worked behind the victory of BJP in this election. He mentioned that we are now in a very crucial position to meet the challenge posed by BJP in terms of destroying the very basic features of India like secularism and its democratic nature. He raised a very appropriate question of how the party is going to deal with inter religion differences. He emphasized on anti-democratic policies adopted by BJP and these policies are gradually taking shape which is alarming for us. He concluded by mentioning the fascist character of BJP and its reign.

Another speaker Mr. N..D. Pancholi, Vice President, Indian Renaissance Institute, New Delhi, mentioned vitally the role of great leaders who has taught us to be tolerant and accommodative in nature. At the end Dr. Miratun Nahar, educationist and social activist has summed up the session by posing a serious question whether are we, those who believe in secularism and democracy and also voted this time, not responsible to bring such Hindu fundamentalist party in power. This is a question to introspect on and find out remedies to meet this challenge thrown by current government.

Report by : **Apoorba Dasgupta**

## Second Session on **Party-less Democracy**

The second session of the Seminar on 17th August started at 2-30 pm. Sri Mahi Pal Singh (editor of *The Radical Humanist*) presided over the session. The topic was of the second session was “Party-less Democracy”. The organizers selected this topic confirming the need for serious thinking on present political situation of the country. This kind of discussion has been going on in various meetings & seminars.

Sri Pravin Patel was the 1st speaker. He, as an experienced social activist, pinned the failure of the political parties of India to establish government that is truly “of the people, by the people and for the people”.

Party-less Democracy is, as he perceived, a system where instead of voting for political parties, voters vote for individuals without any party label on the basis of their credentials, their ideas, policies and capabilities to deliver the promises they make to the voters. He reminded that the first government in Independent India was a party-less government consisting of indirectly elected representatives from the Congress party, the Muslim League, the Communists, the Hindu Mahasabha and minority communities. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar did not recognize the political parties to govern India. Only the enactment of The Representation of the People Act, 1951 paved the way for political parties to contest in elections. On the issue of party-less election contest, the speaker reminded us that in 2019, out of 542 seats, only four independent candidates could succeed as it happened in previous elections also. He cited the example of the renowned human rights activist like Irom Sharmila from Manipur who could not succeed to mobilize votes in her favour. He added that the idea of party-less governance in Panchayati raj institutions of India has been also turned into a farce as they are controlled by the political parties for financial gain. He noted the tendency of mushrooming

of political parties, e.g., 1200 political parties in India out of which about 250 parties take part in election. Instead of secular politics, there is polarization of votes on the basis of caste, creed and religion. He commented that no government, no political parties move for electoral reforms to plug the loopholes of abnormality in party politics; no government takes initiative for administrative and judicial reforms for coming out of criminalisation of politics - to loot the public money. The mockery of anti-defection law, the open flood gate of political parties to provide refuge to politicians with criminal records (i.e. almost half of the elected members of Parliament have criminal records in background), judicial delay and mockery of timely justice are some reflections of Indian politics. This scenario has blurred the ideology of Indian Constitution. So the thoughtful persons are worried about a remedy. Pravin Patel mentioned Jayprakash Narayan’s movement and hoped for the emergence of honest and dedicated political personality like Lal Bahadur Shastri to save India. Lastly, the speaker said that the discussion on party-less politics could not be completed without mentioning the name of M. N. Roy (1887-1954) who advocated ardently for party-less democracy.

Pravin Patel proposed for a joint adventure of all like-minded persons, associations to come to a common endeavour for promotion of democratic values.

Next speaker was Dr. Anjali Chakraborty.

As the announced second speaker, Sri Ajit Bhattacharyya remained absent for his illness, Anjali Chakraborty took the charge of speaking about the theme proposed by Ajit Bhattacharyya—’the Forum for United Independents’. He proposed for a common platform/Forum consisting of a few non party members - honourable, sensitive and intelligent



persons engaged in different professions to contest in elections. Bhattacharyya said that it would have a cascading effect which will gradually place the polity on real democratic rails. This Forum will act as facilitator to connect the unconnected and atomised individuals. It will sponsor independent contestants for election. Then Dr. Chakraborty noted her own observation. She conveyed thanks to her previous speaker Pravin Patel, the national Covenor of Forum For Fast Justice, who presented truly the real scenario of Indian politics today. She agreed with his question of feasibility of election contest by independent contestants avoiding political parties as there was found no significant number of independent winners in election since the first election to the present 17th Lok Sabha election in India. It means that our citizens don't value the party-less governance as they have been accustomed with party rule. Besides, Indian society is authoritarian in nature which has been suited to the authoritative party system, and where democracy exists mainly in the institutional structure, not in action or implementation. She repeated the comment of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar mentioned by Pravin Patel that "Democracy in India is only top-dressing on Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic". Though many people have lost faith in credentials of political parties and immersed in despair, disappointment against the behaviour of elected representatives, yet till now they can't think of government and politics without party system. This is because of their deeply rooted mindset.

In search of a way out from undemocratic and corrupt politics, an Indian thinker and activist like Jaswant Mehta, Mumbai has suggested for a Presidential model of Governance which has little chance of corruption at a mass level. It is a modified version of American model of democracy suitable to India. By amendment of the Constitution, it might be experimented.

Dr. Chakraborty reminded that just after the Independence, the revolutionary philosopher M. N. Roy had rejected the system of party based politics which is inherently defective, inviting corruption at a large scale. He was able to predict the degeneration of democratic norms and rise of fascist attitude of rulers in India. So he did not only criticize the parliamentary liberal democracy but with his wide experience across the countries, he suggested for a new alternative political ideology, e.g., an organised and participatory democracy. It is to be materialised through the Peoples' Committees at every village level unit. Each and every individual will be an active participant to determine his/her political & economic destiny. Party politics will be replaced by scientific/responsible politics through the active participation of villagers in Gram Sabha selecting responsible representatives in higher stratas. Thus every village units will be the learning ground for them. This advanced radical thought of individual rights and duties enlightened by the constant exercise of rationality and experience was suggested by M. N. Roy who died too early to gauge its experimental value. The radical humanists, like orphans, have been suffering from an irreparable setback. Dr. Chakraborty called for a positive attitude inviting responsible interested citizens to be united at a common platform/ Forum as independent of party politics to find out the ways for cultivating rationality in politics, rejecting the immoral anti-social politics and repetition of same phenomena for election after election. She concluded that this can be built not in air but through activities of educating the educators and enlightening the citizens about cultivation of rational politics.

#### **From the audience desk :**

Sri Bhaskar Sur, Goutam Bhattacharya and some other people supplemented the observations of the speakers.

Goutam Bhattacharya, a radical humanist,

Kolkata submitted that the basic principles of Radical Humanism were not at all open-ended. These evolved from the vast experience that M.N. Roy has earned during his political activities in the countries spreading over three continents including his own. It was not party-less democracy. It was perceived to be a cogent system of governance with intrinsic principles of participatory, decentralized and organized democracy with widest diffusion of power ensuring pursuit of individual freedom towards unfolding the potential of each and every citizen of the State. It is a pyramidal structure with Peoples' Committees at the villages forming its base. For a system builder like M.N. Roy, it is a bottom up approach.

#### **President's note:**

At the end, Sri Mahi Pal Singh concluded the session making some comments on the subject of today as follows.

"For the last few years Shri Ajit Bhattacharyya, a senior radical humanist, has been advocating for the support of radical humanists to 'good unattached individuals', by which he means non-party candidates, in elections. This he calls promotion of 'party-less democracy'.

This would be a good proposal to counter the vices of party-based electoral democracy if there was even a very distant possibility of some of such candidates winning against the parties' nominated candidates. We have seen prominent social workers contesting parliamentary and state legislature elections, including Irom Sharmila from Manipur who protested against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) for a long time and Medha Patkar, the well-known Narmada-bachao social activist, contesting elections as independent candidates supported by civil society activists and all of them losing their deposits without exception. In view of the in-viability of such a proposal the Citizens for Democracy also rejected his

proposal. Obviously such candidates cannot hope to succeed against the money power and political organization of political parties.

The Radical Democratic Party (RDP) founded by M.N. Roy also contested elections in early 1946 and none of the candidates could even save the deposit. Though the Congress had a popular appeal because of its role in the freedom movement, the strong party affiliations and the money and muscle power enjoyed by political parties today did not exist at that time. Still M.N. Roy's political adventure completely failed. After taking into account all the pros and cons, the party workers decided to dissolve the RDP in 1948 at the meeting held at Kolkata and to continue as a Radical Humanist movement as proposed by Roy. But it did not mean that Roy was abandoning electoral politics altogether. He drew a full-fledged plan of participating in electoral politics which would do away with the vices attached with party politics – undemocratic functioning of the parties, one person or a group of top leaders taking all the decisions, party sponsored candidates remaining accountable to their parties after being elected, instead of being answerable to the electorate, etc. His idea of 'party-less democracy' was direct and participative democracy.

Roy's emphasis was on promoting democratic values. Instead of the voters voting for unknown persons nominated by political parties, he wanted 'people's committees' in villages, towns and areas to select their own candidates very well known to them, from amongst themselves, who would work for a long time amongst those people and remain answerable to them if elected. In this plan the radical humanists were expected to choose villages or areas of their choice and educate the people of that area politically until they became enlightened citizens, and help in establishing and making functional 'people's committees' in those areas. In this process they themselves had to give up all

kinds of political ambitions themselves and work selflessly to strengthen this democratic movement. Their role would be as philosopher, friend and guide of the people of those areas. This came to be popularly known as ‘Party-less Democracy’ among the radical humanists. It is undoubtedly a long drawn process but all philosophic movements are like that.

An example of the success of such a plan has just been given by Mr. Pravin Patel who worked in five village panchayats in Chhattisgarh, made the people of those villages select their own candidates for panchayat elections and four of them won.

Some of our friends out of confusion misinterpret Roy’s idea of ‘party-less democracy’ as contesting elections themselves or supporting so-called good independent candidates. This is absolutely different from Roy’s idea of ‘direct democracy’ and ‘participative democracy’. Such candidates are self-chosen candidates and not selected by the electorate of the electoral constituency. However big and famous social workers they may be, they have never worked among and with the people living in that constituency and it is quite possible that the people of that area may not be aware of their work elsewhere because certainly most of them are not enlightened and educated citizens. And more often than not they leave the constituency immediately after losing the election never to

come back again. In that sense they are not people’s candidates. So people are not wrong if they do not feel any affinity with them and do not vote for them.

The only way of promoting ‘party-less democracy’ is by working on the plan suggested by Roy. The biggest and greatest work is to educate the masses about constitutional and democratic values like secularism, equality and fraternity and to make them aware of the undemocratic functioning of political parties and corruption prevalent in public life. They must also be made aware of their rights and duties as citizens of a democratic polity. This work will never be undertaken by political parties who are engaged in ‘mad scramble for power’ as Roy put it. Educating the people will go against their vested interests because enlightened citizens will not tolerate the way they function. This is the task only radical humanists can undertake with the help of other such enlightened and selfless people who may be inclined to do so.

Thanks Giving:

On behalf of the organisers—the Indian Renaissance Institute, Delhi and the Radical Humanist Association, Kolkata, Dr Anjali Chakraborty thanked the audience and all others who had come to join the Seminar at the Indian Association Hall ignoring the heavy rainy day.

Report by **Dr. Anjali Chakraborty** 

## Two Memorable Audios

The memorial talk by late Agehananda Bharati delivered during the centenary celebration of M N Roy at Open University, Hyderabad can be heard at the following link:

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

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## V.R. Narla’s ‘The Truth About the Gita’

This link is published for open discussion about V.R. Narla’s ‘The Truth About the Gita’ critique. It is unique. This text was published by Prometheus Books in the USA

<https://soundcloud.com/cbrao/narla-audio-book-gita>

## Dr. R M Pal memorial lecture, 2019

The fourth Dr. R M Pal memorial lecture delivered by eminent Ambedkarite activist and author Mr Bhanwar Meghwanshi threw serious questions as why the caste does not disappear from India. Jaati in India is a nation, he said, echoing a statement long ago coined by V T Rajshekar, whose book: Caste as Nations, was published years ago.

Bhanwar Meghwanshi is the voice of Ambedkarite movement blamed not only brahmanical system for it but also questioned those who are mobilizing people in the name of caste and keep their mouth shut when their castes misdeeds are questioned. He was categorical as how can we keep silent if the atrocities on Dalits are done by the middle castes. Should we just keep silent on such issues of violence on the Dalits just we are to make a political alliance with that 'caste'. He did not believe that removing surnames, inter-dining or temple entry would solve any issue of the caste. He gave example of Bhutan where the government of that country decided a unique experiment of putting different surnames to each members of the family and therefore the concept of caste superiority in that country sieze to exists. Bhutan is a small country but in the Human Happiness Index, it is the numero uno for several years and country's social environ is responsible for that. Annihilation of caste must become the agenda of Ambedkarite if we have to create an egalitarian society. Bhanwar Meghwanshi also felt honored to be speaking in memory of Dr R M Pal who was associated with PUCL for years and edited the bulletin for a decade. He was shocked that though he was also part of Rajasthan PUCL but never knew about him which was really sad.

Complimenting Bhanwar Meghwanshi and his eloquent lecture, the chair of the session well known author and educationist Prof Mohan

Shrotriya explained in detail the source of caste system and why it is important that all the myths and symbols of caste superiority which also spread superstition must be rejected if we wish to progress. He felt that the left forces failed in India because they did not address the caste question. The fight against caste system should not be confined to it but must join battle in fight against superstition as well as communalism. He also reminded people that it is the voice of reason which will challenge orthodoxy and was their main target. The murders of Kalburgi, Govind Pansare and Gauri Lankesh were because they spoke against superstitions and discrimination.

Academic activist Sujatha Surepally spoke about the growing atmosphere of intolerance in her state of Telangana for which many laid down their lives. Today, Dalits face the biggest violence and they cannot even raise their voice against injustice meted out to them. She referred to various cases filed against her just because she stood with the people seeking justice. Young boys and girls are being killed because they are daring to marry beyond their castes but state is not providing justice to them. 'I used to think that state only oppress those who pick up guns but last few years have shown that the biggest fear of the government is from its critique and those who are writing fearlessly. This is the saddest part.

Introducing the event, Vidya Bhushan Rawat, founder of Social Development Foundation, informed that this was the fourth lecture in the memory of Dr R M Pal after his death in October 2015. The first one was addressed by Prof Shamsul Islam on the growth of communal fascist forces in India. The second was a panel discussion on the issue of discrimination against Dalits which included Dr Surepally Sujatha, Dr Goldy M George, Mr Manas Jena and Shri P L Mimroth. The 2018 lecture was delivered by



Prof Chaman Lal.

V.B. Rawat, spoke of his association with Dr R M Pal and his contribution in strengthening the human rights movement in India and bringing the caste discrimination issue to the forefront of the mainstream human rights bodies who abhorred to speak about the subject for long. He also was the first person in the human rights circle who not only wanted to focus on state accountability on human rights violation but also societies particularly in our part of the world where state are bullied by society and social order remain the biggest violator of the human

rights of the people.

Vidya Bhushan Rawat said that India is a hugely diverse country with different languages, cultures, food habits and festivals but the only commonality among Indians is their sense of 'glory' of their castes, untouchability and oppression of the Dalits and women. Indians take their caste along with them.

It was great that the gathering had participants from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha.

Report by **Vidya Bhushan Rawat** 

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## **Book Review :**

# **Ground Scorching Tax, by Arun Kumar**

Penguin Random House India Pvt Ltd., Gurgaon, 2019; hardbound, pp 296; Rs 499

Review by: **Dipavali Sen**

In mainstream Economics, the role of the government is best kept minimal. The market is supposed to function best in a laissez faire economy. These two French words translate into Leave Alone. If the government merely polices the country, sees to law and order and lets the people to be on their own, it does the best for the economic activities to go on full steam.

But the government has its own expenditure and therefore must have its income or revenue. So it must tax the people, for their own sake! Taxes thus must be purposed towards people.

By naming this book *Ground Scorching Tax*, author Arun Kumar has questioned the fundamentals of tax imposition, specifically, the indirect tax named Goods and Services Tax made operational in India on 1 July, 2017.

An alumnus of Delhi University, JNU and Princeton University and the Malcolm Adiseshiah chair professor of the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, Arun Kumar is a reputed as a speaker who makes himself heard –without rhetoric. This book is scholarly yet clear

enough for the layman to read it with interest and acquire an understanding of the subject. This, many will agree, is not something one can say about all books on Economics, especially on Public Finance.

As early as 2015, he had written why the GST would not be so good for India. Soon after the GST became operational – that is, in July 2017 – he made a presentation before 20 MPs. And now he has come forth with this book.

“A year and a half after the launch of the GST, now its adverse effects, as predicted by me since 2015, are visible”, Arun Kumar says in the Preface dated 8 November 2018.

The first four chapters along with the Introduction provides a clear background to the GST in India. The fourth chapter discusses its macroeconomic implications. Chapter five looks at the nitty-gritty (as Arun Kumar describes it), its design and micro view. Chapter six continues with the micro aspects, and difficulties caused by the way GST was implemented. The implementational flaws are however less severe than the structural ones, in the very design of

the GST. The seventh chapter relates GST to the issue of India's 'black economy' on which the author is an authority. Proponents of the GST argue that it would help tackle the black economy because under it all inputs and outputs in the entire chain of production and distribution would be computerized. Along with demonetization and digitization, this would bring about a transformation of the economy. But Arun Kumar points out that this is impossible without a "reform of the human element"(p 138).

In the eighth chapter, he asks how correct the claims on behalf of GST are. His conclusion is that it can turn out to be "more distortionary" and do nothing to "promote 'ease of doing business', especially for the unorganized sectors" (p 167). He finds GST "very complex and a half-way house"(p 169). What is more, as he argues in the ninth chapter, it has social and political implications. Beneficial primarily for the organized sector and the well-off states, it can adversely affect the unorganized sector and the backward states (p 199). In the tenth and concluding chapter, he calls this a process of "Marginalizing the Marginal" (p 205).

But then does Arun Kumar have a solution to offer? He does suggest an alternative. The first part of the alternative would be to collect a lot more from the direct taxes by checking the black economy. The second part would be to

reform GST to be better than it is (p 216-19). For example, GST could be levied only on the final consumption leaving out the intermediate stages of production and distribution. It could be levied ad valorem rather than VAT. In the services sector, productive services can be left out of the net. The production of the unorganized sector too could be exempted. This would nourish, rather than scorch the ground and redeem the GST from being a Ground Scorching Tax to a Ground Nourishing Tax (p 220-1).

Thus Arun Kumar is not suggesting the government to be a *laissez faire* one, merely a policeman. He is asking it to tackle black money and reduce indirect taxes. He is arguing for a political solution to a political problem – that of the black economy. Demonetization, digitization, computerization and GST work through technology. "Technology can only go thus far and no further. If the human element is not willing, then technology can only play a limited role... Political will is needed to curtail the black economy." (p 220-21).

The language of the book is easy-flowing and the print is comforting for aging eyes. But it is backed by fifty pages of Appendices (tables, graphs, equations and excerpts), followed by Acknowledgements, Bibliography and Index. Firmly based on facts, sound in theory and warm in understanding, the book is a masterpiece by Arun Kumar. 🌈

*Worship at its best is a social experience with people of all levels of life coming together to realize their oneness and unity under God. Whenever the church, consciously or unconsciously caters to one class it loses the spiritual force of the "whosoever will, let him come, doctrine and is in danger of becoming a little more than a social club with a thin veneer of religiosity.*

**- Martin Luther King Jr.**



# In Man's Own Image

By Ellen Roy and Sibnarayan Ray

Simplified by Vinod Jain

(Earlier two parts of 'In Man's Own Image' have appeared in the August and September issues of *The Radical Humanist*. This one is the third of the series.-- Ed.)

## Man's Place in Society

We have given ideas their place of dignity. We have also maintained that man's destiny must be fulfilled in this world, in this physical universe. We have shown that freedom, which is man's ultimate aim, must consist in the fullest development of all his potentialities in this life on earth. Man has his life in society. He has created society for the ultimate aim of freedom. We may now consider the affairs and institutions of society and men's ideas about them. We shall try to find out to what extent they have so far served their purpose of increasing the amount of freedom enjoyed by human beings in society.

*The purpose of all rational human endeavour, individual as well a collective, is attainment of freedom in ever increasing measure. Freedom is progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities as individuals, as human beings, and not as cogs in the wheels of a mechanised social organism. The position of the individual, therefore, is the measure of the progressive and liberating significance of any collective effort or social organisation. The success of any collective endeavour is to be measured by the actual benefit for its constituent units.*

Earliest ordered society was a rational endeavour. Because it was aimed at (a) a more successful struggle for existence, (b) fuller developments of potentialities of individuals, and thus (c) conducive to greater freedom. Social organisation is a collective endeavour, in which the individuals cooperate.

Yet, experience has shown that only a very few individuals could develop to any significant

degree. That means, freedom is still a far cry. From the potentialities developed by those few, it can be inferred that there could be much more freedom in the world. Much more could have been done and created. In the earliest stages of social evolution there used to be very few such free and creative individuals. Their number grew in course of history. Yet their number is small. To enlarge their number so that it may reach to all the people, is called democracy.

Democracy is where all the people participate in the affairs of the community. They contribute their share in thought and action. In a society so shaped all can have the opportunity to develop their potentialities. The precondition for this is that the material problems of the struggle for survival and existence must be capable of solution. Human existence must be secure and guaranteed. Only then can man devote his energies to the positive aspects of the pursuit of freedom. Modern production techniques can fulfil this precondition. Enough can be produced today to free all men from the necessity to struggle for their existence.

But during the economic evolution, notions developed which limited human freedom. From the first earthen vessel to the products of human labour in stone, wood and metal, from the earliest articles of daily use to the more recent products of arts and crafts, their manufacture was carried on by individuals. They often themselves produced their means of production, that is, their tools. Earlier, there was primitive communal ownership. Later on, private ownership of tools, and their produce came to stay, and continued for centuries. This was a period when the general level of knowledge was

low. We are not, however, dealing here with the main means of production like land, and property relations in it. Nor are we dealing with the consequent social conditions of men engaged in cultivation. Our trend of thought here is different.

A great change in the process of manufacture of commodities took place. Introduction of machines resulted in mass production. Earliest machines were still there, owned by individuals. Meanwhile, means of production became very complex and vast. Things like joint-stock enterprises and complicated system of finance developed. New developments vitiated the spirit of (individual) production and frustrated the purpose of man's capacity to produce, as well as his creativeness. Henceforth, things were not produced because they were needed for the use of human beings. They were produced because they fetched money. When they fetched less money, they were not produced (even when they were needed for use).

The new vast economic machinery was administered, controlled and monopolised by small groups of people, who had nothing to do with the process of production itself. Those who were working therein were not using things produced by themselves. They were paid enough not to die and, if possible, not more than that.

Those few who owned the means of production also determined the political and cultural affairs of society. They had all the freedom there was. The majority were only cogs in the wheels of the society as a whole. It never occurred to them that they too had potentialities to develop. The proportion of the distribution of freedom and suppression in society was at its worst. Those (who were rich and) enjoying freedom, developed their potentialities, created cultural values and ideas. But their conscience, their sense of social responsibility etc. was not sufficiently developed to desire a diffusion of those opportunities to the largest number of men.

When social existence had led to the actual experience of disaster and social upheavals, did social conscience become also a moral and cultural postulate in the consciousness of the privileged sections of society.

This state of affairs had been developing and aggravating ever since the close of the Middle Ages (1000 to 1453 A.D.) in Europe. There had been isolated individuals, who developed (not invented) the ideal of democracy and spread their ideas. Sense of morality gradually developed in society. **Morality is an appeal to conscience, and conscience is the instinctive awareness of, and reaction to, environment.** The environments had reached a stage when the rationality and morality in man revolted, and reacted with the idea of Socialism.

Democracy, the idea that all the people should cooperate in running society politically. i.e., the State, had been experimented in modern history since the French Revolution. The experiment was not successful because the preconditions did not exist. As a reaction to this situation came the idea of Socialism. Socialism was to create the precondition for the largest number of men to develop their potentialities and enjoy freedom; the precondition of political democracy through economic democracy – that was Socialism to be.

The prophets and ideologists of Socialism recognised the inconsistency and irrationality of private ownership in a collective system of production. They were of the view that the class of people who were directly involved with the means of production – the proletariat – must henceforth be the prime beneficiaries of that system and control the State. It was thought that it should take the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat.

This idea naturally appealed to the oppressed and deprived, which in consequence increasingly swelled the ranks of the proletarian class parties.

The socialist movement grew in strength until,



in a moment of crisis after the First World War, one of the predictions of the Socialists came true: the reactionary State machinery broke-down in one country. A revolution occurred in one country. The experiment did not take place under optimum conditions. However, it succeeded in establishing itself and was carried on by strong and devoted men according to the letter of their scriptures, if not – a point which might be argued from two sides – according to their spirit.

The political structure of the State was based on the foundation of Soviets. The Soviet State became a powerful dictatorship, if not of the proletariat, certainly of the Communist Party. It did improve the status of the working class, even though the general backwardness of the country and the particular circumstances under which the Soviet State had to operate, militated against a standard of living comparable even to that enjoyed by the proletariat in capitalist countries.

In the end, it proved its stability and vitality by its colossal and decisive contribution to the defeat of Fascist Germany in the Second World War. After the war neither the U.S.A. nor the U.S.S.R. held out hope and satisfaction for man's basic urge for freedom and a rational order, in which he could develop his creative potentialities.

Why is that so? To find out the reason for this failure is the precondition for more successful endeavours in the future. The reason is that **for creating a new world of freedom, revolution must go beyond an economic reorganisation of society. Freedom does not necessarily follow from the capture of political power in the name of the oppressed and exploited classes and abolition of private ownership in the means of production.**

The reason for the moral crisis of our days is this collapse of the high hopes and expectations that modern progressive men had placed in the creation of the Russian Revolution when the

ideal was for the first time put to test in practice, it was found wanting as a means to this end.

The main fallacy of the communist practice was based on a wrong emphasis in Marxism on the collectivity of human beings as against the individuals constituting it. This fallacy was historically determined, as a reaction to preceding experience. The political system which was the counterpart of capitalist economy against which Socialism was a revolt, was parliamentary democracy. Under this system, the basic units of society were individual human beings, all of whom had theoretically and legally equal rights and equal freedom. But all did not have equal opportunity. These opportunities were reserved for those who owned the means of production. Others did not have enough to sustain them. Their right consisted in periodically throwing a piece of paper in a ballot box, voting for someone who promised to do things for them in the parliaments. But there the right ended, because the elected member was beyond the control of the voters. Thus, the rights under parliamentary democracy were in fact a mockery of human rights.

The prophets of Socialism had found out that individuals were thus utterly powerless. They also discovered that in their mass, as a collectivity, they could exercise some influence and power, could improve their living conditions. They might even attain freedom itself, through collective action in a revolution. The idea came as an immense relief. Hope and salvation for the oppressed and exploited masses lay in their collectivity. Safety was in collectivity; responsibility was to be collective, action collective. The deprived individual merged his individuality in this collective entity. The individual was a forlorn despicable nothing. To sacrifice any number of them on the altar of the new godhead was justified. Like any other godhead, this new deity of the socialist movement also had its agents, who interpreted what was good or bad for it. And the masses of

men, sore with the experience of their individual nothingness under parliamentary democracy, were drunk with the illusion that collective power and greatness would bring them freedom. They lost the consciousness of their dignity and sovereignty as individuals, and rapturously trampled in the dust everything that reminded them of their unfortunate individuality.

This led the more developed individuals in the communist movement to live under the strain

of a perpetual malaise. A scientifically devised propaganda technique inside the Soviet Union may retard the assertion of man's essential rationality by realising errors and blazing new trails. The process has started in other parts of the world. Some people, almost everywhere, are reacting to the Soviet experience with new ideas, a revaluation of old values, and a reorientation of man's pursuit of freedom.

...to be continued 

## **Books by M.N. Roy**

- **Beyond Communism**
- **Cultural Requisites of Freedom**
- **From Savagery to Civilization**
- **Historical Role of Islam**
- **India's Message**
- **Materialism**
- **Memoirs**
- **China: Revolution and Counter Revolution**
- **Men I Met**
- **National Government**
- **New Humanism**
- **New Orientation**
- **Politics, Power and Parties**
- **Reason, Romanticism & Revolution – Volume I**
- **Reason, Romanticism & Revolution – Volume II**

(These books are Available at [www.lohiatoday.com](http://www.lohiatoday.com))

## Readership of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist', Volumes I & II at Academia.edu hits 125 (45 Indian & 80 foreign) cities across the world and still going strong

In encouraging reports from academia.edu where the two volumes of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist' were put, the readership has been growing at a rapid pace all over the world. Till 15.10.2019 the readership has reached 125 cities across the world, including India and for several weeks the two volumes of 'Selections from The Radical Humanist' have been our top papers on academia.edu. Readers from the following cities have read articles from the two volumes:

Sr. No. City & Country	Sr. No. City & Country	Sr. No. City & Country
1 Abu Dhabi (UAE)	44 France	86 Mirpur Khas, Pakistan
2 Accra, Ghana	45 Ghaziabad, India	87 Morristown, NJ, the US
3 Ahmedabad, India	46 Goharganj, India	88 Mountain View CA US
4 Aligarh, India	47 Gorontalo, Indonesia	89 New Delhi, India
5 Amherst, MA, the US	48 Göteborg, Sweden	90 New York, the US
6 Amsterdam, The Netherlands	49 Guatemala, Guatemala City	91 Nigeria
7 Arizona State University	50 Gurgaon, India	92 Noida, India
8 Auckland, New Zealand	51 Guwahati, India	93 Novi, MI the US
9 Balurghat, India	52 Helsinki, Finland	94 Padaebom, Germany
10 Bangalore, India	53 Howrah, India	95 Pattambi, India
11 Bangladesh	54 Hyderabad, India	96 Pérama, Greece
12 Barnala, India	55 Indore, India	97 Phoenix, Mauritius
13 Bellville, South Africa	56 Irvington, NJ, the US	98 Poona, India
14 Benoni, South Africa	57 Islamabad Pakistan	99 Port Moresby Papua New Guinea
15 Beograd, Serbia	58 Izmir, Turkey	100 Pretoria, South Africa
16 Bhilai, India	59 Jaipur, India	101 Pune, India
17 Bhimavadiaram, India	60 Jakarta, Indonesia	102 Ridge Spring, SC, the US
18 Bhopal, India	61 Jalpaiguri, India	103 Rohtak, India
20 Bhubaneswar, India	62 Jammu, India	104 Rome, Italy
21 Bilaspur, India	63 Jhelum, Pakistan	105 Saint-cloud, France
22 Boston, MA, the US	64 Jodhpur, India	106 San Antonia, TX, The US
23 Brighton, The United Kingdom	65 Johannesburg South Africa	107 San Salvador, El Salvador
24 Bronx, NY, the US	66 Kanpur, India	108 San José, Costa Rica
25 Brooklyn, NY, the US	67 Karachi, Pakistan	109 Seattle, WA US
26 Budva, Montenegro	68 Katsina, Nigeria	110 Sirajganj, Bangladesh
27 CA US	69 Kenya	111 Sonapat, India
28 Cairo, Egypt	70 Kigoma, the UR of Tanzania	112 Springfield, MO, the US
29 Cameroon	71 Kolkata, India	113 Streatham, The UK
30 Cape Town, South Africa	72 Kota, India	114 Stockholm, Sweden
31 Chandigarh, India	73 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	115 Surat, India
32 Chennai, India	74 Krugersdorp, South Africa	116 Suva, Fiji
33 Cheyenne, WY, USA	75 Lagos, Nigeria	117 Sydney, Australia
34 Chittagong, Bangladesh	76 Lahore, Pakistan	118 Thrissur, India
35 Cote D'Ivoire	77 Lepe, Brazil	119 Toledo, OH US
36 Dehradun, India	78 Loganville, GA, the US	120 Trivendrum, India
37 Des Moines, IA, the US	79 Lonavala, India	121 WA, The United States
38 Dewas, India	80 London, UK	122 West Bengal, India
39 Dhaka, Bangladesh	81 London SOAS University, UK	123 Wilmington, DE, the US
40 Dubai, the UAE	82 Malabar Hill, India	124 Wynberg, South Africa
41 Enfield the U.K.	83 Mandi, India	125 Zambia
42 Europe	84 Melbourne, Australia	
43 Faridabad, India	85 Middletown, OH US	



**Maharaja Sri**, the unsung, un-recognised rationalist! Why the humanists, atheists, rationalists, fail to follow Mr Maharaja Sri is a small wonder. He was born in Tenali area but lived mostly in Hyderabad and took up the cause of rationalistic thought and philosophic revolution of Bertrand Russell. Every year he conducted meetings and published a booklet about the need for spreading the rational thought of Bertrand Russell. He organised meetings annually in Working Journalists' Office, Basheer Bagh, with eminent jurists, public servants, and conducted it meticulously. He went round the offices of dailies and journals to spread the thought of Russell. From Chikadpalli in Hyderabad he used to walk miles together and met several persons to get the support for his cause. He even organised protest meets and exhibitions as one man show about the need of banning nuclear weapons in the national capital, Delhi. He lived and died in poverty but never compromised so far as rational thought of Bertrand Russell was concerned. Where were the agnostics, rationalists, humanists, atheists when he was shouting for the ban of nuclear weapons!

**- Dr. Narisetti Innaiah**