

THE RADICAL HUMANIST



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The Whole Country Protests against CAA



Anti-CAA protest in Delhi



Photo: PTI

Anti-CAA protest in Chennai on Sunday, 22 December 2019

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Deliberate ambiguity regarding citizenship laws threatens to undermine the values of the Constitution

In such circumstances, it is the duty of the judiciary to step in against this brutal suppression of peaceful protests. However, we are yet to see any effective and strong action by the judiciary.

Prashant Bhushan, Cheryl D Souza

Rattled by the widespread agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act, which, coupled with the National Register of Citizens, is rightly seen as the first concrete step to establish a Hindu Rashtra. Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed at Ramlila Maidan that there is no move by the government to prepare a countrywide NRC. He also claimed that there were no detention centres for detaining non-citizens in the country. His denials were clearly false, as Amit Shah had stated multiple times the decision of the government to implement a nationwide NRC. The government had also admitted in Parliament and elsewhere about the construction of detention centres. The fact is that many were being constructed in various states, particularly those ruled by the BJP.

Yet, Modi's denial may have been seen by some as stepping back from a nationwide NRC by a government rattled by the agitation against it. However, within two days of his denial, the cabinet decided to go ahead and prepare the National Population Register. Though the government denies the link between the NPR and the NRC, under the Citizenship Rules of 2003, the NPR would be the basis for preparing the NRC. Clearly, the government seems to be in no mood to backtrack.

There is deliberate ambiguity regarding the NPR/NRIC and its implementation. However, the modalities for the preparation of this register are contained in the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.

The scheme mandates the preparation of a population register from which after "due verification" a local register of Indian citizens

will be prepared. A sub clause in the rules gives the local registrar the power to mark out individuals whose citizenship is "doubtful" in the population register and send them for further enquiry. Claims and objections are invited against names published in a draft register and after these are disposed, the district magistrate (DM) shall prepare the Local Register of Indian Citizens, to be transferred to the National Register of Indian Citizens. The appellate authority for those aggrieved by their exclusion is the DM himself, who is the final functionary responsible for publishing the register.

Under the Foreigners Tribunal (Amendment) Order, 2019, the power to refer a suspected foreigner to a tribunal has also been delegated to DMs. Those excluded will be left at the mercy of the quasi-judicial Foreigners Tribunals, to be set up across the country, the constitutionality and functioning of which in Assam have raised many questions. Its members have no judicial experience and are appointed on a yearly basis. Their extension depends on how many persons they have declared as foreigners. Their proceedings are rather arbitrary. Notices are rarely served and even when served give no reasons for suspecting the citizenship of the person. The result is that the majority (63,959) of persons have been declared foreigners through ex parte orders until February 2019. Persons declared foreigners can then be detained in sub-human conditions in detention centres and languish there, sometimes indefinitely.

This rather arbitrary procedure for weeding out the "doubtful", leaves us with the frightening prospect of administrative manipulation in

creating a citizens register to further a divisive electoral and political agenda. This is clear from the CAA, which is designed to bring back non-Muslims (from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan) left out from the NRC by giving them citizenship as refugees.

The nationwide NRC is an amplification of the very flawed and inhuman process adopted in creating a NRC in Assam. In Assam, persons were asked to apply with documentary evidence of their birth, land ownership, school degrees, as well as documents to establish their ancestry from 1950 onwards. Many people, especially the poor, did not have such documents. Others had to spend enormous sums of money to collect such documents from offices of various registrars and issuing authorities. A lot of people lost their life savings in this process and many were still excluded because of minor discrepancies in the spellings of their names in different documents. The exercise spawned an enormous humanitarian crisis.

The cost of preparing the NRC in Assam was approximately Rs 400 per person. A pan India exercise of that kind would cost over Rs 50,000 crore. The expense for people in procuring the documents required for inclusion in the NRC would be many times over. This at a time when the country is reeling under the highest unemployment in the last 40 years.

In sum, the process for declaring persons as non-citizens through the NPR and NRIC is arbitrary and inhuman. It will come at an enormous cost to the poorest in our country who will be left to wade through complex procedures, having to scramble for documents, and still be left out. They would then face the prospect of being in detention centres. However, with the CAA, those excluded from the NRIC and who belong to the Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Parsi, Jew or Christian community, can apply to become citizens by proving that they have fled religious persecution in either Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan. Ironically, these are the

same individuals who would have produced documentation to prove that they are Indian citizens to be included in the NRIC, making them liable for prosecution for perjury.

Though agitation in the country has been sparked off by the passing of the communal and discriminatory CAA, a far more serious malaise lies behind the NRIC and the NPR. This exercise has however, finally lit the spark of a massive people's movement against this inhuman and communal regime. The government is trying to suppress the protests by brutal police action in BJP ruled states. There are many videos showing that in many towns in Uttar Pradesh the police have gone on a rampage, attacking peaceful citizens, battering cars and motorcycles and even ransacking homes. Many peaceful protestors, and even those who were not protesting have been arrested and charged. Shops of people unconnected with any violence, have been sealed on the grounds that these people have destroyed public property. All this is totally illegal. Most of the victims of police atrocities are Muslims, who are being specially targeted.

In such circumstances, it is the duty of the judiciary to step in against this brutal suppression of peaceful protests. However, we are yet to see any effective and strong action by the judiciary. The constitutional validity of the CAA has also been challenged in the Supreme Court. We hope that these petitions will be heard soon and the Court will rise to defend constitutional values and strike down this blatantly unconstitutional law. While the continuation of the protests is important, it is even more important that they remain non-violent, despite attempts to provoke violence.

This article first appeared in the print edition of Indian Express on January 13, 2020 under the title 'Undermining the Republic'. Bhushan and D'souza are advocates practicing at the Supreme Court of India and involved in the cases on detention centres and the NRC in Assam. 

CAA+NRC Is the Greatest Act of Social Poisoning By a Government in Independent India

Narendra Modi and Amit Shah's plans will harden Hindu identity and potentially turn many Indians, including a disproportionate number of Muslims, into stateless subjects.

Sushil Aaron

The Bharatiya Janata Party has a mode of politics that has little use for deliberation once it gets into power. The party is adept at staging well-funded election campaigns that are marked by anti-Muslim rhetoric, fake news and dog whistles, and once elected, it tends to drown out everyone else's voice. Mainstream media is tamed, industry leaders experience fear, universities are repressed and parliamentary discussion counts for little as the Narendra Modi government has the numbers to push through legislation.

The Indian people are now, however, insisting on talking back – judging by the nationwide protests on December 19 and thereafter.

It is unclear how this situation will evolve hereon. The BJP has reasons both to be smug and to panic. It may assume that the “real India” has no truck with middle-class liberals rallying in the streets, and like Donald Trump’s supporters in the US, it can expect Modi’s base to ally with him, regardless of what the critics say.

A sense of alarm is also evident going by the arrests and the brutal crackdowns on students and protestors in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. The number of protestors may be small but a determined counter-mobilisation in society has begun and nothing terrifies the party more than the power of a spectacle that can galvanise the public; it would, after all, have vivid recollections of what the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement did to UPA-II. Equally, the BJP will also be seeking a compelling image and a plausible narrative of protester excess and wait for the tide of majority opinion to change.

The government, meanwhile, remains firm on implementing the new citizenship law. Home

minister Amit Shah had made it clear that implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) will be followed by the National Register of Citizens (NRC) throughout India that will be concluded by 2024 – though the party seems to be on the backfoot now.

What the NRC actually entails in experience is still unknown. The government is yet to announce which documents would be acceptable to qualify for citizenship. ANI, the news agency, published a curious non-gazetted “fact sheet” released by “government sources” on the NRC. This fact sheet, which was also released by the Press Information Bureau, has no official status, but it strains to clarify that the CAA and the NRC are separate processes and that no one will be denied citizenship on the grounds of religion. It, however, leaves no doubt that everyone in India will be swooped up in the exercise of proving their citizenship to the government, by furnishing a yet unknown list of documents. The sheer brazenness of the government in inflicting anxiety about citizenship status on millions of (largely poor, uneducated) Indians while they are struggling with livelihoods amid a tanking economy is simply breathtaking.

Some have suggested that the nationwide NRC will be different from the NRC in Assam. As argued by Shoaib Daniyal, everyone in Assam had to submit an application to be included in the NRC. The NRC was published and those who were excluded could appeal by providing further documentation. The nationwide NRC will on the contrary, specialists say, will be based on the National Population Register (NPR) that is compiled by a house to house enumeration – after which a list of doubtful citizens will be prepared,

who can then take part in a “claims and objections” process.

Regardless of which process is applied, it is clear that the NRC process has been conceived in a manner that spares Hindus, for the most part, the trouble of proving they are Indian citizens, since the CAA eventually offers pathways to Indian citizenship for them in a way that it does not provide to Muslims.

The NRC serves to produce several far-reaching social effects. From BJP’s vantage, the NRC promises to have a profound impact on the consolidation of a Hindu identity that transcends caste divisions. History suggests that large-scale social engineering policies targeting a minority have a tendency to reinforce majoritarian identities.

To take an example, Serene Jones, a theologian, recently spoke about how white identity was constructed where she growing up in the American South. She mentions that when Jim Crow laws were passed in US states segregating blacks and whites – those who were not black, even if they had Cherokee origins, had to sign documents declaring themselves to be “pure white” to claim title to land they possessed. In other words, non-black individuals had to assume a white identity in order to avoid the violent exclusion meted out to African-Americans.

Likewise, the massive nationwide churning that the NRC will provoke, wherein one side is accorded a pre-existing legal advantage, will also yield a firmer sense of being a Hindu across the country, regardless of the substance of religious observance. If Hindu identity has hitherto been marked by family belonging, or a form of fluid religiosity, wherein faith extended beyond religious boundaries, it will now also be anchored in the experience of privilege in a bureaucratic process. Collective and individual insulation from dispossession, through a long-drawn, torturous process, becomes the agent for a sharply-defined religious identity, which is exactly the outcome

the BJP wants.

The CAA+NRC will also tear India’s social fabric in newer ways. Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has said that 70% of Indians do not have documents required for citizenship and so the chances of millions, particularly minorities, being excluded in the NRC is quite high. The effects of this will be devastating. Journalist Ravish Kumar has pointed out that localities across India will now be rife with discussions on Hindu-Muslim issues because of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that will mark the aftermath of a published NRC.

The NRC will threaten to snap the associational life between Hindus and Muslims. The former will find it increasingly difficult to relate to Muslims who have been deprived of citizenship. It may even become illegal to do business with those declared as aliens, thus effectively imposing an economic boycott on them. The relentless hate speech material on WhatsApp about Muslim population will serve to distance communities further and the next generation – that will be less exposed to the experience and memory of sharing living spaces with Muslims – will come to see them as hostile aliens.

There are other consequences of the NRC to be mindful of. Those declared non-citizens will either be moved to detention camps or live out their lives as stateless citizens. This would entail stripping of voting rights for potentially millions, in effect turning the NRC into a vast gerrymandering exercise, in ways that can be beneficial for the BJP. BL Santosh, a BJP-RSS leader from Karnataka, recently said the concentration of Muslims and Christians in some areas is dangerous, and stated that “this has to be resolved.” Rendering minorities stateless in key constituencies and handing out citizenship to groups that can vote for the BJP, as the party plans to do in Bengal, would be one way of dealing with this.

The NRC will be the latest of the harassments

that Muslims have faced in India in recent years. They were first turfed out of many neighbourhoods as people refused to rent or sell homes to them in major cities and small towns, as the narrative of terrorism took hold. Second, they were forbidden to fall in love with Hindus through the ‘love jihad’ campaign. They have been subject to lynching and constant hate speech on social media. Muslim communities now find themselves, in the midst of protests, ring-fenced by police action and mob violence and will soon be caught up in the production of national illegitimacy through the NRC, if the appalling experience of Assam is any indication of what’s in store for the rest of India.

The net result will be heightened polarisation, risk of mass violence and the creation of Muslims

as the new ‘untouchables’, disenfranchised in real and symbolic terms, culturally distant, and maligned when they protest for their rights.

The CAA and NRC are together for these reasons the greatest acts of social poisoning contrived by a government in India since the British introduced the census in 1872, which began the process of hardening religious boundaries, which set the stage for the Partition in 1947.

India can scarcely afford this form of turmoil. The students and other citizens on the streets are those who are trying to spare India the chaos the BJP has in store for the country.

*Sushil Aaron is a political commentator.
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Courtesy The Wire, 23 Dec/2019 

Why the CAA Is More Lethal Than a Projected NRC

The seemingly compassionate CAA not only introduces religion as a marker for the grant of citizenship but seeks to demarcate one and only religion as a persecutor – thus furthering the domestic political agenda of the Hindutva forces.

Badri Raina

Among the many debates on the current imbroglio, there are voices which suggest that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act is somehow a lesser evil than the projected nationwide National Register of Citizens. Important allies of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party like the Janata Dal (United) seem to have taken such a position, although there have been a few voices within it who have disagreed. This sort of ameliorative position on the CAA involves, in my view, a grave misjudgement of what is intended by this seemingly compassionate act of providing citizenship to non-Muslim minorities from three Muslim-majority countries.

Whereas the scale of the consequence issuing from the CAA may well be less than alarming – barring the intent to regularise non-Muslims designated ‘illegal immigrants’ in the Assam NRC – the principle that informs its conceptualisation

is potentially lethal to the continuance of a secular republic.

Supporters of the CAA, who include some apparently well-meaning non-Hindutva Indians, argue that, after all, the implementation of the CAA will have no bearing on those who already are Indian citizens; so why the hue and cry.

Well, here’s why: In according not just refugee status (note that India is still not a signatory to the international Refugee Convention of 1951, which it indeed should be) but citizenship to individuals from designated religious communities to the exclusion of one religion, the Indian state would have for the first time adopted a non-secular principle of citizenship.

The simple point is that once admitted into India, the ostensibly persecuted would stand to become citizens not on any existing constitutional parameters but on religious considerations. Thus,

whereas the disingenuous argument that no existing citizen may be affected by this new law may be true, in fact something much more heinous would have happened to the character of the state itself in subverting the secular constitution within which existing citizenship finds validity.

Some 200 million Indian citizens would have been told that their religion is somehow at the heart of the persecution that is sought to be rectified, since such new recruits to citizenship will come exclusively from three designated Islamic states. This move would then nicely gel with the Hindutva narrative that only Muslims have persecuted Indians through what the Hindutva historians dub “Muslim” rule in India. In this Jungian recourse to a manufactured collective unconscious, the record of persecutions engaged in our history by non-Muslim rulers would stand relegated to oblivion.

This insidious line of thinking is buttressed by the concomitant fact that persecuted Hindus in Sri Lanka, or persecuted Christians in Bhutan, or Madhesis in Nepal, or Rohingya in Myanmar are not a part of the CAA, suggestive of the Hindutva dogma that non-Muslim states cannot be religious persecutors. How, perish the thought, can Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, or fellow-Hindus in Nepal, after all, be regarded as capable of persecuting anyone on religious grounds!

The seemingly innocuous and compassionate CAA, then, is a thin end of a wedge that seeks to demarcate one religion as a persecutor and exclude other religions from such predilections. It is thus not hard to imagine how an ideological stance of this sort would not but impact the collective psyche of Indian Muslims, whose citizenship may well not be affected by the CAA but whose self-perception would not but be severely debilitated as a class, if you like, by this misreading of history and contemporary realities.

The CAA then has the effect of putting one isolated religion in the dog-house not just in the three designated countries but on a far larger

ambit of reference that inevitably includes Islam in India as well. Since the Hindutva forces seek pointedly to locate the CAA within a revived memory of Partition, the new law also has the potential to propagate the view that atrocities were then committed only by Muslims on non-Muslims, a position that runs patently foul of the tragic bipartisan character of that unconscionable episode in the life of the sub-continent.

Such a construction of religious communities may in time to come have a more cascading legal and cultural consequence within India than we are now allowed to contemplate.

Once the demarcation is made current, many aspects of India’s collective life may bear the fall out. A concomitant logic resides in the Hindutva argument that Ahmediyas, Shias and Hazaras cannot be considered persecuted sections because they constitute an “internal” schism within Islam, and therefore, do not qualify for external intervention. This cleverly pre-emptive move forestalls the likely argument that any other country may have any locus, for example, to consider citizenship for persecuted Dalits in India, since, like the Ahmediyas, Shias and Hazaras, Dalit issues are “internal to Hinduism” and thus outside the pall of international concern.

The CAA, then, bears the seeds of causing a disjunction both within the constitution and the social/religious plurality of India that can promise to Hindutva forces further long-term recalibrations of both the nation and the state.

The country-wide resistance to the CAA, cutting across communities, is evidence of the fact that “we the people” are wiser to the totalised meaning of the CAA legislation than its proponents profess. Indian citizens out protesting may be credited to have sensed that what seems just a snow flake is propelled by an avalanche that harbours menace for the constitutional republic.

That the government of the day is unable to answer with any humanist conviction why the

new law should not include all “persecuted minorities” from all neighbouring countries gives its sectarian game away. Agonising as it does for persecuted Hindus and Christians, for example, it is unable to convince the polity about the basis on which Sri Lankan Hindus and Bhutanese Christians should not find a place within its bleeding-heart schema.

The NRC project, by contrast, as many have remarked, may have the intent of excluding Indians of a particular hue from citizenship, but will in effect be a class-based onslaught that will impact impoverished Indians across the board — a fatal exercise akin to the disastrous demonetisation one.

As many have pointed out, if documents like the Aadhar card, voter ID etc., are also likely to be legitimised as proof of citizenship then the need for the NRC exercise is futile *ab initio* since some 90% of the populace is already on the record to state agencies. It is also the case that the proposed exercise may indeed never happen, since a plethora of state governments, including

those friendly to the ruling party, have already made known their intent not to implement it. The more canny political purpose will of course be served in carrying on with the resolve to implement the NRC, namely to keep the vast masses embroiled in this mortal fear of exclusion so that the real issues of livelihood and governance are side-tracked for as long as possible.

However, should the government insist on the exercise, overriding opposition, it may indeed generate chaos from which the republic may not recover for generations. And if that chaos includes seeking to use the NRC for nefarious sectarian purposes — to exclude Muslims and regularise non-Muslims — it is again the CAA that would have enabled that project. It is, therefore, the CAA that remains a game-changing challenge to the realm; which is why the peaceful mobilisation of mass democratic resistance to its continuance remains warranted.

Badri Raina has taught at Delhi University.
24 Dec 2019 

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Political discussions fall silent as fear grips Varanasi

Amarnath Tewary



Let them out: BHU students staging a demonstration demanding the release of anti-CAA protesters

Residents say the atmosphere is not conducive to talk about CAA, NRC

The usual crowd at Pappu's tea stall near Assi ghat chowk (intersection) of Varanasi was missing on December 28 — so was the intense discussion on political issues there. Just a few were sipping hot lemon tea but they were reluctant to speak on the burning issues of Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) or National Register of Citizens.

"It's not because of the cold wave but people in general here are apprehensive of coming out of their homes and indulging in political discussions", they say. But why? "You know it better", was the stock reply before even the few patrons beat a hasty retreat.

Many in Varanasi have learnt politics through lively debates and exchanging nuggets of information at this tea stall. The Banaras Hindu University is nearly two-km from the shop owned by Vishwanath Singh, aka "Pappu", which elicits instant recognition. These days one of his four sons, Manoj Singh, manages the shop which has no sign board or offers no proper

chairs or tables. Only two wooden benches occupy the place by the roadside. People used to stand for hours engaged in political or academic debate here.

A yellow tungsten bulb piercing the winter fog offers a little light. Noted Hindi writers Kashinath Singh, Balraj Pandey and Chowkiram Yadav were regular visitors and spent hours in discussion. Kashinath Singh's famous novel *Kashi ka Assi* is based on everyday political discourse at this tea stall and the entire crew of popular Bollywood film *Mohalla Assi* has been here. It is said veteran socialist leader George Fernandes had once held a two-hour press conference over cups of tea at the stall when V.P. Singh was the Prime Minister.

"But, people, these days, are afraid of visiting Pappu's tea shop and discussing politics...the very atmosphere is not conducive...everyone is suspicious of everyone", Rajat Kumar, a student of BHU who on, December 24, refused to receive his Master's degree in protest against CAA and NRC, told *The Hindu* while sipping lemon tea here. His friends Shantanu, Gaurav

and Avinash too agreed with him. They have all been protesting against CAA and NRC.

“In the 365 days of 2019, Section 144 was imposed in Varanasi town for 359 days...how can one feel free and safe to speak one’s mind?”, asked Rajat.

“To hold any meeting or any function in any park of the city these days, one has to take permission from local RSS or BJP officials as they hold shakhas (daily-meetings) every morning there”, rued some residents of Adarsh Nagar locality of Mehmurganj. A prayer meeting for the safe release of all 54 anti-CAA and NRC protesters was organised on December 28 at the residence of retired irrigation department official Krishna Kumar Tiwari, whose son and daughter-in-law, Ravi and Ekta Shekhar, were among those arrested.

“On December 26, when we were meeting family members of the arrested persons at Bharat Mata temple, near Vidyapeeth, local police forced us to leave”, said BHU students

Preyesh Pandey, Rajat, Aakash.

At a police outpost in Bajardiha locality, a large number of policemen were seen sitting by the roadside. “They can arrest anyone, anytime in the name of violating Section 144”, said local residents Mohd Imtiyaz and others. “It’s frightening these days to come outside and meet people”, they said.

People are really afraid to speak freely. “Well, the tenor of political discussions in Varanasi has changed after 2014...people do get fearful while expressing their opinion”, senior journalist A.K. Lari told *The Hindu*.

BHU professors Brinda Pranjape and M P Ahirwar too said the usual bonhomie in the University as well as the city has been “seriously threatened and throttled” after 2014. “After 2014 the colour of the city and University has become saffron...BHU now has become shelter home of Sanghis (RSS workers)”, they said.

Courtesy **The Hindu**, 1 January 2020. 

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CAA: UP Police Totally Communalised, Tortured Me, Says Activist Sadaf Jafar

The political activist and teacher was released on bail three weeks after she was arrested for protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act. Jafar has accused the Uttar Pradesh Police of physical assaulting her in custody.



Betwa Sharma

Sadaf Jafar, a political activist, was the only woman arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police on 19 December, 2019 in Lucknow.

LUCKNOW, Uttar Pradesh — Sadaf Jafar smiled as she walked out of jail and into her sister's arms on Tuesday morning. "Sangharsh jari hai. I have nothing to fear now," she said, as she turned to face the cameras pointing at her, and pumped her fist in the air.

Jafar, a political activist and teacher, who had recently joined the opposition Congress Party, was arrested on 19 December, while she filmed a peaceful protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) descend into chaos in Lucknow. The 43-year-old mother was the only woman arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Police that day. Following her incarceration, her family said the police did not tell them where she was for almost two days. They also alleged she was thrashed in custody.

In an interview with *HuffPost India*, her first after she was released on bail on Tuesday, Jafar gave a blow by blow account of how she was assaulted by male and female constables on 19 December. But more than their batons striking her back, the Shia Muslim woman said it was their language that betrayed just how communal the UP Police is.

"They beat me. They mouthed the filthiest abuses that you won't be able to print. They did not give me food and water. I was completely dehumanised," she said. "Thanks to this BJP government, I know the extent to which a person can be dehumanised."

"They kept saying, 'You are Pakistani. You eat here, you have children here, but you support Pakistan,' she said, "I could have never believed a police force could be filled with so much communalism and hate, but now I know."

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in UP, Jafar said, was determined to reduce the broad-based movement against the CAA and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) to a "Hindu-Muslim issue."

Nowhere have protesters been silenced as brutally and completely as they have in UP, where the police answers to Chief Minister Ajay Bisht, a Hindutva hardliner in the BJP. The police have arrested thousands of people, beaten women, shot at non-protestors, and tortured children. Now, Bisht, who calls himself Yogi Adityanath, is sending notices to people

suspected of damaging public property to pay damages or face seizure of their properties. In Lucknow, social activists who called for peaceful protests on 19 December were either placed under house arrest or jailed. Their families have accused the UP of beating them in custody.

While Jafar was making videos at the protest site, Deepak Kabir, another well known activist, was jailed when he entered the *thana* located in Hazratganj to look for her, the next morning.

Mohammed Shoaib, a human rights lawyer, and S.R. Darapuri, a retired police officer who is critical of the BJP government, were picked up from their homes and sent to jail. Shoaib is Muslim, Darapuri identifies as Dalit. They are both in their seventies.

These activists, who champion the cause of some of India's most marginalised communities, face a range of charges including attempt to murder, being in possession of explosives and vandalism.

Darapuri, who was released on bail on Tuesday, said, "The biggest shame is how the police have brought people into the Hazratganj and Hussainganj *thana* and beaten them. I was in the police force for 32 years and I have never seen cruelty like this."

The 72-year-old man said, "I kept telling them that I don't have clothes, I need food, and I'm cold, please give me a blanket. They did not give me food. They did not give me a blanket."

"I was in the police force for 32 years and I have never seen cruelty like this."

Beating at the protest site

Jafar, who is a member of the Congress Party, says that both male and female constables hit her with batons and assaulted her at Parivartan Chowk, the site of the protest in Lucknow.

"I knew how bad things were going to get because even as they were taking me to the side of the road, they were hitting with me batons on my legs. I asked, 'I am walking. I am cooperating. Why are you hitting me?'"

A woman constable, Jafar said, told her to

shut her mouth or she would be hit in the face with a baton.

Jafar says she was encircled by the constables near the Laddoo Chanakya sweet shop at Parivartan Chowk.

"He told me to sit on the ground. I refused, saying that I have a bad knee. He slapped me. I fell on my hands and knees. My spectacles fell off," she said. "Then, I don't know who was hitting me. I only felt the blows on my back."

"He slapped me. I fell on my hands and knees. My spectacles fell off."

A woman constable whose scooter was gutted in the ensuing violence, Jafar said, was encouraged "to take out her anger."

On 22 December, the UP Police released a 30 second video, denying all the accusations levelled against it in Jafar's case. "All the accusations levelled against the police are untrue and baseless," said a policeman, whose designation did not appear in the video.

While granting bail to Jafar on 3 January, Additional Sessions Judge S.S. Pandey noted the UP Police had failed to furnish any evidence of her engaging in arson.

Beating at the *thana*

The violence, Jafar alleged, continued at the *thana* in Hazratganj.

It was eleven at night, Jafar said, when a male police inspector told her, "'You were saying big things at the protest. What is your education? Have you even studied the CAA law? I'll put Section 307 (attempt to murder) on you and make sure you rot in jail.'"

This inspector, Jafar said, then asked the woman constable in the room to slap her.

"When she gave me two light slaps on my cheeks, he told her, 'Have you not eaten properly.' Then, he kicked me in the stomach and on the knee. That night my bleeding started."

The police personnel who allegedly beat and abused her, Jafar said, were not wearing their

name badges. She believes it was a deliberate omission to conceal their identities.

Jafar says she *can* recognise them by their faces. “If I see them, I can single out each one,” she said.

“Then, he kicked me on the stomach and on the knee. That night my bleeding started.”

No food and water

Jafar alleges she was not given anything to eat or drink for over 24 hours following her arrest on 19 December.

When her blood pressure shot up, Jafar said she was taken to a government hospital that night. Her BP was 160/100.

“After some time, they said, ‘You leave, you are making excuses.’ I said, ‘Look, I have been hurt here and here.’ They said, ‘Don’t do *nautanki* here.’ They said, ‘she is looking for an excuse to sleep in the warmth here. She has to go,’” she said. “It’s not just the police, it’s the doctors too.”

It was the driver of the police van and the woman constable, who came with her to the hospital, who got her tea in the paper cup and a biscuit.

“It was kind of them. But it was two in the morning and I was feeling like puking. I couldn’t eat anything. They said, ‘Eat it because you won’t get anything else.’”

Kindness

As the night wore on, Jafar recalls warming up to some of the women constables. One woman was pregnant. Another woman, who was recently engaged, did not find time to speak with her fiancé. An older woman, a widow, showed her photos of her children.

“I told the pregnant woman to sleep with a pillow between her legs. That had helped me,” she said. “When I was worried sick about my children not knowing where I was, the elderly woman reassured me that someone will find out where I am and tell them. She also said, ‘If you are going to be so scared then why did you go

in the first place?’”

These women constables, she said, shielded her from one policeman who, while hurling abuses at her, insisted that she sit on the floor.

“He said, ‘why are you letting her sit on a chair, make her sit on the ground, lock her up with the rats.’”

The women constables told her, ““*Didi*, go sit on a chair. We will tell you when he comes and you just stand up or he will keep abusing you.””

On how she reconciled her bonding with some women constables despite the violence she had suffered, Jafar said it was hard to explain, but easier to feel it. “If you lose your human touch, even for those who hurt you, your movement is defeated,” she said.

“If you lose your human touch, even for those who hurt you, your movement is defeated.”

But the bonhomie, Jafar feels, is superficial. The hate speech targeting Muslims, which goes far and wide via Whatsapp, is what people have come to believe.

“We do make person to person connections, but the overall thinking is that Muslims are alien to India, the descendants of Babur, who need to be grateful for the air that India gives them to breathe, she said. “Even if the government changes in the next few years, it will take decades to reverse the damage done by the Whatsapp university. It will take decades to detoxify India.”

“Even if the government changes in the next few years, it will take decades to detoxify India.”

The next morning

The next morning, when Deepak Kabir, the prominent activist, came looking for her at the Hazratganj *thana*, Jafar recalled that she was more worried than relieved.

The constables, Jafar said, confiscated his phone, hit him with their batons and locked him up.

“The last time that I saw him, he had his shoes in his hands, his hair was disheveled and he was getting into a police van,” she said.

Kabir remains in jail.

Veena Rana, his wife, said she was perplexed by how the police were behaving. Her husband, who organised an annual cultural festival in Lucknow, was known to a lot of people in the city including bureaucrats and police officers. She wondered if they knew what the constables and inspectors were doing in their respective *thanas*.

“Where are the orders for this kind of barbaric behaviour coming from? Is there a disconnect or is everyone complicit?” she said.

“Where are the orders for this kind of barbaric behaviour coming from?”

Next?

For close to an hour after she was released on bail, Jafar spoke with journalists near the gate of the district jail, slamming the BJP government in UP and vowing to continue fighting the discriminatory citizenship law.

Naheed Verma, her sister, who was waiting for her to finish, said, “Looking at her, it’s hard to believe that she just got out of jail. There is no stopping her now.”

It was later that morning, while speaking about how “dehumanised” she felt, did Jafar let the tears stream down her face.

“I was really scared about how scared my children were not knowing where I was. I was scared about my sister who is also on her own. Where would she go on her own to find me? Which *thana* or mortuary or hospital?

“Where would she go on her own to find

me? Which *thana* or mortuary or hospital?”

As she fielded phone calls on her way from the district jail to get home, Jafar said that she did not know what lay in store for her.

She was ready to delve deeper into politics but not obsessively so. She could speak against injustice as a spokesperson of the Congress Party or as a lone activist.

“I’ve always live from one day to the next. I was happy to see so many people, supporters, journalists, who were waiting for me to come out today. But if no one came, it would have been fine too. I would have asked Mr. Darapuri to drop me home.”

If there is a nationwide NRC, Jafar has decided that neither she nor her children will furnish the documents needed to prove their citizenship.

Civil disobedience was a family trait, said Verma, her sister. Their father’s brother S.M. Jafar was a renowned freedom fighter in Lucknow, who had worked alongside Mohandas Gandhi and Subhash Chandra Bose. Their grandfather’s brother Syed Ali Zaheer was also a freedom fighter and the law minister in Jawaharlal Nehru’s first cabinet.

For Jafar, a single mother who is fighting a custody battle for her 16-year-old son and 12-year old daughter, providing for them is always her priority.

“I was a freelance translator before they arrested me. I don’t know if I still have that job,” she said. “I hope I do.”

Betwa Sharma is Politics Editor, HuffPost India

Courtesy HuffPost, 8 January 2020. 

Police inflicted violence on innocents!

“There is complete collapse of law and order in the state of UP where the police had inflicted violence on Muslims & those peacefully protesting against the CAA. In fact the very state administration that is charged with protecting the rule of law is perpetrating violence upon its own people,” says the People’s tribunal (which included retd Delhi HC Chief Justice A P Shah, retd SC judge Justice Sudarshan Reddy and Prof Irfan Habib)! ~ *The Hindu/ Jan 17.*

PUCL(DELHI) CONDEMNS VIOLENCE AT JNU

6TH JANUARY, 2020

PUCL (Delhi) strongly condemns the ghastly attack by masked men on the students and teachers inside the campus of Jawahar Lal Nehru University (JNU) on the evening of 5th January 2020. Around 50-60 masked men wielding sticks, metal rods and sledge hammers entered hostels, even girl hostels, and mercilessly beat the students and teachers. These goons vandalized properties outside and inside the hostels and rooms, even damaging laptops and computers of the students. Around 40 students and teachers are reported to have received injuries, some of them serious ones. Aishe Ghosh, President of the JNU Students Union, was severely beaten and got serious head injury while profusely bleeding.

It is surprising as to how these 50-60 goons entered the University gate where entry of outsiders is properly regulated and secured by large number of security personal employed by the university. The allegations of the victims is that these masked men, most of them were outsiders, were members and supporters of ABVP. These masked men freely terrorized and ran riot for about three hours between 6.30 to 9.30 P.M. without any attempt on the part of the JNU administration or the police to control them. These goons even attacked the ambulances which sought to carry the victims to the hospitals. The teachers and students, target of the attack, claim that in spite of their repeated complaints to the police right from the beginning when the attack started the police did not bother to provide any protection to the victims. President of the JNU students union claim that she had even sent a message to the police during middle of the day complaining that that many miscreants had entered the campus. The worrisome news from reliable sources is that the police which was standing nearby

outside the campus in large numbers, instead of arresting the miscreants, provided them safe passage to flee. Only thereafter the police entered the campus and organized a flag march to register their presence. Not a single miscreant has been arrested so far.

From the reports and videos it appears that it was an organized attack on the students and teachers in connivance with the administration and the local police. Many political leaders and activists reached the gate of the JNU campus at night with a view to render help and succor to the victims of the assault but even they were prevented and abused by the mob standing outside the gate who were chanting slogans like “Bharat Mata Ki Jai”, “Vande Mataram”, “Nakshalon Ko Nikalo”, “Goli Maron Saloon ko”. Yogendra Yadav leader of the Swaraj India who also reached was badly manhandled.

Many students have left the hostels in search of a safe place while others who are still there shudder in constant fear. The JNU administration and the local police must be ashamed that students and teachers do not have any trust that the former are capable of providing safety and protection to the latter.

We therefore urge upon the Central Government to see to it that real culprits responsible for the mayhem are immediately identified, arrested and prosecuted in accordance with law so that people's confidence in the police as protector of the citizens is restored and government stands legitimized.

N.D. Pancholi,
President; **Sheoraj Singh**, General
Secretary
People's Union For Civil Liberties (PUCL)
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Why RSS/BJP Hate JNU And Social Sciences?

Kancha Illaiah Shepherd

The attack by masked forces, who were freely allowed to enter the JNU campus and injured teachers and students tell a new story of the BJP rule in Delhi. It is likely that they want to dismantle JNU and some other universities in the country. Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP) have major issues with universities that teach social science courses seriously.

In this attack about 35 people including the Students' union president Aishe Ghosh and some teachers were injured. The way dozens of masked people entered the JNU campus tells a new story of anti-academic muscle power in operation in universities that are meant to produce new knowledge and change the life people of India. The Hindu Rastra that they want to build seems to move on the lines of Muslim countries that do not allow serious rational social science knowledge that challenges the traditional belief system and create ideas of equality in all spheres of human life.

Universities were never major structures of education in the world before political democracy as a system emerged. People's rights, elections, modern markets, new cultural platforms came into human life because of universities. They synthesized knowledge resources of diverse people, living in different areas in the world. Serious university education in India is very modern and relatively recent. It has not yet mobilized new knowledge resources that are available in all fields of life of Adivasis, Dalits, Other Backward Classes and upper Shudra agrarian forces. So far the research is West or mythology centered. This is likely to change with the children of productive castes moving into universities like JNU.

Though we talk about Nalanda university as

most ancient university of India, it was never a major university like the present universities with a view of secular mobilization of ideas and teaching of them to young educated persons, in all fields of human life. The first modern university with a modern educational purpose was established in India only in 1857 in Madras. That means we only have a history of 163 years of university education in India. But the university structures till today remained brahminic, without producing serious indigenous knowledge. That is slowly changing.

As of now India has 689 proper universities and among them the JNU is the best. The Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janatha Party leaders know this very well.

Its social science reputation is very well known. Though established in the early 1970s it has produced outstanding social science scholars, leaders, bureaucrats. RSS/BJP seems to think that because of its quality education—more so in social sciences— it is dangerous. They, therefore, characterize it as communist.

Every serious social science student in the country wants to seek admission in JNU and this strong social science base of that university that worries RSS/BJP brahminism. I myself was one such admission seeker without success.

In 1976, when I was in the final year of an MA at Osmania University, Hyderabad, JNU was the most coveted university for the serious MPhil and PhD aspirants would dream of getting into. To fulfill that dream, I took a loan and went to Delhi for the first time in my life. I had to expend more effort to go there than the upper-caste rich did to go to Oxford or Harvard. However, I could not make it. I thought I missed a lot in life as I did not get admission in JNU. Even today no other university matches it in

giving exposure, serious reading, debates and interaction with global scholarship as JNU does.

RSS/BJP view is that it is a communist university without any regard for religion, particularly Hindu textual knowledge. Hence its social science culture is dangerous to their future. This is how even many Muslim leaders in Islamic countries in the Middle East think about university education. Hence they too did not develop serious university structures that mobilize knowledge of social systems beyond religion. Many Muslim leaders in the Middle East also think that social science studies are communist in nature.

What RSS/BJP leaders do not understand is the notion of nation, the notion of better organization of human beings to have better life than what they were having before, came from the university education. Serious religious and secular studies in a manner to upgrade human living standards evolved in universities.

They think that mechanical/technical and medical education is enough, as those who are educated in those fields follow the religious practices without applying those scientific tools to human organization. Universities constantly change those organization structures because of social science studies. Without a serious social science study and education any nation's , political institutions, media structures and even medical and engineering institutions would not have developed.

Great European thinkers who evolved many ideas that we take for granted today were evolved with a great struggle in social science studies. They interpreted religious texts, production systems, the stories and life of human personalities that come to us in the religious texts in a very radically different way, with a positive approach. Methodologically that approach was called positivism. For example, a major thinker of early 19th century G.W.F. Hegel wrote a book on Jesus called the *The Life of Jesus* in which he drew a different conclusion from his teaching

which no other theologian could draw.

According to Hegel the idea of Reason from moving away from blind Faith was mooted by Jesus Christ. It was Jesus who also constructed the idea of spiritual citizenship in Kingdom of God. Hegel's foundational theory of Spirit, which is different from body and the moving force of humanity, was taken from Jesus' teaching.

Hegel drew a great theoretical lesson from one of the statements of Jesus who says "Man as man is not not altogether sensuous being, he is not by nature just confined to pleasure seeking impulses. He has a Spirit too; as rational being he received as his inheritance as a spark of divine essence". It is from these ideas of Jesus that Hegel worked out his theory of Reason, Spirit and Dialectics.

It is true that the Indian universities have not yet produced serious scholars who could re-interpret the Indian mythological/theological texts. Only Dr. B.R. Ambedkar did that and he came to a conclusion that RSS/BJP leaders and scholars do not agree with. His assessment of Manu and writing was against their understanding. No communist brahmin scholar came to such a conclusion about the brahminic parampara of ancient India. Many scholars like Ambedkar are likely to emerge from the social science departments of universities. This is a worrisome situation for them.

From the very same texts, unlike Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi and V.D. Savarkar came to different conclusions. But the latter two were not social scientists like Ambedkar. However, Gandhi drew a non-violent lesson from his own study and Savarkar drew very violent lesson and they seriously differed while both of them were studying their law in London—not political science, economics or sociology.

One of the serious fears of the RSS/BJP is that not many wealthy and upper caste youth are going into social science studies to protect their ideologies, these days.

(To be Contd....on Page - 40)

Analysis :

JNU Attack Investigation: The Delhi Police Pleases Its Political Masters

The Delhi Police couldn't summon the courage to name the BJP-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) even as they blamed the Leftist student unions for the January 5 violence in Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Aman Sethi

NEW DELHI — At a “press conference” on Friday, called to discuss the January 5 violence in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Deputy Commissioner of Delhi Police Joy Tirkey offered up a timeline of the horrific attack that took place, only to stop his narration at the moment that the worst of the violence broke out.

Over 20 minutes, DCP Tirkey spoke of scuffles between students on December 3, December 4 and the afternoon of December 5, 2019, but his account stopped right at the point when 50 masked goons armed with iron rods, crude hammers and heavy wooden batons entered JNU, bludgeoned students and destroyed several hostel rooms.

DCP Tirkey named four Left student groups in connection with his investigation — the Students’ Federation of India (SFI), the All India Students’ Association (AISA), All India Students’ Federation (AISF) and Democratic Students’ Federation (DSF), each of whom have a representative in the JNU Students’ Union — but stopped short of the moment when JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, who is from the SFI, was struck on the head, and filmed as blood streamed down her face.

At the end of his presentation—the Delhi Police would take no questions at the “press conference”—DCP Tirkey held up a stack of 10 photographs of students whose roles in the violence are being probed: Eight of the students, including Ghosh, were identified as belonging to these four leftist student groups.

The slide, purportedly showing Ghosh

standing with a group of people, was accompanied by the following caption that suggested DCP Tirkey had perhaps made up his mind before his investigation was over: “JNUSU President *Aishe Ghosh* with red bag is seen in the video of Periyar Hostel Vandalism. Leading her masked violent comrade gang in hostels.”

Two more students were also named, but DCP Tirkey appeared unaware of their political affiliation. The students, numerous media reports have noted, are members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student affiliate of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). An investigation by news channel *NDTV* suggests the police have misidentified at least one male student believed to be a member of the ABVP.

The BJP’s Home Minister Amit Shah is the ultimate in-charge of the Delhi Police, the organisation that employs DCP Tirkey. Shah, as it turns out, was a member of the ABVP in his youth.

DCP Tirkey also said he was investigating WhatsApp groups in which students, some of whom appear to belong to the ABVP, allegedly choreographed their assault on campus. One of the groups, DCP Tirkey said, was named “Unity Against Left”. DCP Tirkey did not mention the name of the other WhatsApp group that several media outlets have reported on: “Friends of RSS”, which included not just ABVP members, but also the Chief Proctor of JNU, Dhananjay Singh, a former ABVP member.

In his 20-minute address to the press, during

which he took no questions, DCP Tirkey appeared unable to bring himself to mention the ABVP by name.

The selective nature of the Delhi Police's investigation, DCP Tirkey said, was because the police had only just begun investigating the events at JNU and was yet to come to the First Information Report in which students from the Left student groups have accused the ABVP of arming themselves with rods, sticks and hammers to attack students on campus.

There would be more updates for the press as the investigation continues, DCP Tirkey said, but for now he seemed to have done enough to please those who control the Delhi Police.

"I would not take it very seriously," said Vikram Singh, former Director General of the Uttar Pradesh, of the Delhi Police's investigation on *India Today*. "It is unnatural to come out with premature disclosures before you have even begun the investigation. I don't think it is very professional."

Meanwhile, the JNU administration has announced an inquiry of their own. All faculty members on this inquiry committee, the *Hindustan Times* reported, are from the JNU Teachers' Federation (JNTUF) — a faction of faculty who have publicly opposed the student body and thrown their weight behind JNU Vice Chancellor Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar, who has set up the inquiry in the first place.

False equivalence

It is now apparent that the first week of 2020 witnessed sporadic clashes between Left student groups and the ABVP over the JNUSU's decision to oppose a fee hike at JNU. News reports, and *HuffPost India*'s own conversations with students and faculty members, indicate there were scuffles between students, and in at least one instance stone-pelting, over January 3, January 4 and the afternoon of January 5.

Student union members from Left unions have been accused of damaging the university's

server room on January 4 in an attempt to prevent students from registering for the next semester. ABVP members have issued a statement, and released photographs of their members who were injured in beatings allegedly administered by members of the Left student unions.

The JNU administration has sought to equate the violence on the evening of Jan 5 — when a mob of 50 masked goons, armed with iron rods, hammers, stones and wooden batons, swept through JNU campus — with everything that preceded it. This narrative was first put forward by the JNU registrar in a press release issued immediately after the violence; and was reinforced by DCP Tirkey in his evening press conference.

As everyone from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to US President Donald Trump has learnt, once a narrative has been mouthed by enough members of authority, the press has no option but to report contesting narratives as if they are equally plausible.

But the attack on the evening of January 5 differs in magnitude from everything that preceded it.

As *HuffPost India* reported the following day, the mob attacks inside campus were coordinated with groups that had gathered at the university gates and demanded that Leftists be shot and buried. Journalists who tried to take photographs of this mob were threatened, and in some cases hit.

An investigation by *NDTV* indicates that the masked mob was directed by members of the ABVP. Inside Sabarmati hostel, the rooms of ABVP members were spared while the rooms of Muslim and Kashmiri students were attacked.

Ultimately there is a big difference between vandalising an inanimate computer server and bludgeoning human beings. Even DCP Tirkey would probably agree.

Courtesy **HuffPost**, 10.01.2020. 

JNU violence: ‘Echoes of Germany moving towards Nazi rule,’ says Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee

Academic Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd also condemned the mob attack on the university’s teachers and students.

Economist and Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee on Monday urged the Narendra Modi government to establish “the truth of what happened” at New Delhi’s Jawaharlal Nehru University on Sunday evening, when a mob of masked attackers assaulted several students and faculty members, News18 reported.

“I think any Indian who cares about the nation’s image in the world should worry,” Banerjee, a JNU alumnus, told the news website. “This has too many echoes of the years when Germany was moving towards Nazi rule.” Banerjee has criticised the Indian government’s economic policies in the past and prescribed ways to bring the economy back on track.

“The government needs to actually establish the truth of what happened and not let it get drowned in the chorus of counter accusations,” said the Nobel laureate, responding to a statement from the university registrar blaming students protesting against the hostel fee hike proposal for the violence.

Banerjee said he was concerned about those who were injured. “I wish everyone injured a speedy recovery,” he added.

Academic Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd also condemned the attack on the university’s teachers and students. “For the first time in higher education history after independence masked forces with lethal weapons entered the

campus and brutally beat teachers and students,” he pointed out. “This signals a new level of disturbing trend of organised violence with a support of University and higher administration.”

Shepherd accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of “encouraging its student wing” to attack students and teachers opposed to its ideology. The JNU Students’ Union has blamed the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad – an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh – for the violence, and claimed that members of the outfit entered the university campus with rods and sticks. *Scroll.in* also traced WhatsApp messages planning the attack to ABVP activists. However, the BJP alleged that “Congress, Communists, AAP and some elements want to create environment of violence in universities across the country”.

Shepherd said the saffron party and the RSS never realised that the ABVP should engage in serious reading and writing by building rational knowledge from universities. “They can build their own ruling class thought with serious study and writing,” added the academic. “ABVP was/is not known to the academic rigour even in their own ideology. They always deploy muscle power on the campuses but not brain power.”

6 January 2020. 

“The preservation of freedom is not the task of soldiers alone. The whole nation has to be strong. We all have to work in our respective spheres with the same dedication, the same Zeal and the same determination which inspires and motivates the warrior on the battle front. And this has to be shown not by mere words, but by actual deeds.”

-: Lal Bahadur Shastri

University Campus or Cantonment?

Prem Singh

In the mid-seventies, when I came to Delhi University (DU) from a small village in Haryana, the deployment of police or private security guards either in the college or university campus was unheard of. There used to be university watchmen at the gate of college, hostel and faculty, who were generally befriended by the students. In the entire north campus, only one man from intelligence used to be seen from time to time. That sociable police officer was often recognized by the students who took part in student politics, debate, literary-cultural activities. Of course back then there used to be protests, students and teachers organizations elections, big fairs and festivals, a wave of new 'bad elements' used to come year after year, there was a race among certain colleges to be on top as a 'terror' college, there were many kinds of fights in between, even knives were used, ... but generally there was no need to call the police before or after the incidents. The college and university administration used to manage everything on its own. The police intervention was allowed only on the permission and deliberations of college and university officials. This had no effect on the lives of the students who were enjoying their studies and pursuing other interests. What is meant is that a large university, whose symbol is elephant, used to run only with its own arrangement, despite the fact that the campus is an open campus which can easily be accessed from all directions. The situation was more or less same in all central and state universities and colleges. Obviously, this was possible due to mutual understanding and sense of responsibility among the teaching, non-teaching staff, students and, of course, the vice-chancellors and the principals.

As the influence or pressure of neo-liberalism increased in politics, society, religion and culture through country's economy, the education

system could not remain untouched by it. According to the Indian Constitution, education is the responsibility of the state. However, it was opened to the private sector under neoliberal policies. Due to the privatization of education, a large world of private educational institutions has come into existence. The pressure of privatization has also been put on the already existing public sector educational institutions. Under the earlier administrative setup all employees from peon, *chowkidar*, *daftari*, gardener, scavenger, butler, lab assistant, library assistant etc. to clerks happened to be permanent employees of the university. There was a new recruitment after the retirement of a person. But that practice has stopped twenty-twenty-five years ago. Instead of making permanent recruitments, appointment on contractual basis became the trend. One contractual employee was made to accomplish work of three-four employees and for more than the prescribed hours of duty. The teachers also could not escape this trend. About five thousand teachers are ad-hoc or guests in Delhi University at present. Such vice chancellors and principals were appointed by the governments who blindly implement the policies of privatization in governmental educational institutions.

Meanwhile, the character of student politics also changed. The patent on '*goondaism*' did not remain with the National Student Union of India (NSUI) alone in student politics. It was brought up to the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the students wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), further to the student fronts of satraps which came to power in the states due to the politics of social justice, and to the communist student organizations in West Bengal and Kerala. Simplicity, healthy debate, common student interest did not remain the concerns of student politics. The student

politics has become an endless series of confrontation with opponents invoking their leaders, icons, slogans, parties, ideologies etc. The students from marginalized societies who, due to constitutional provisions, join the arena of higher education have envisaged their own mobilization in student politics. So, this clash among student groupings is multi-cornered, which the RSS and the communists operate with a strategy of showing it between themselves. This phenomenon of student politics is not one-sided or single-folded. The student politics of the neoliberal era is a shadow of corporate politics prevalent in the country in present times. This is also the truth of teachers' politics to a large extent. Teachers' politics has lost the strength to oppose privatization of education by securing higher pay scales and other facilities under neoliberal policies. They are not ready to concede that the communalization of education cannot be stopped without abrogating privatization.

The wealthy students get relieved by getting admission and campus postings in private educational institutions. Most candidates who seek admission and job in public sector colleges and universities live in constant uncertainty. Government education is no longer as cheap and affordable as it used to be before. The pressure of an all-round consumerist culture also plays its role. They are constantly told by the political elites that the country is progressing very fast. When they try to find their place in that progress, then disappointment is often felt. Then various kinds of debates, discourses and NGOs are waved in front of them. They join them and experience the significance of their being for some time. There seems to be no solution coming out of this 'touch revolution' and the age goes on increasing. They live in a state of constant restlessness. The way the entire education system is being uprooted from the axis of the Constitution without proper thought and planning, and is mounted on the pivot of

privatization of a clumsy kind, there is no dearth of protest issues in front of them. Events at national and international level also agitate student groups. So, there is one or the other protest every day on the campuses. The student leaders who make student-politics a means of making a place in party politics or other vested interests take advantage of this situation. Big-small leaders, media, civil society activists are ever ready to play their roles. Hence, there is a need to look into this background while discussing the private security arrangements and the presence and role of the police/paramilitary forces on the campuses.

If there is restlessness and uncertainty in the minds of students then there will be protests. In the absence of trust towards students and teachers, university officials will continue to resort to the police again and again. 'The police answers to those in power' - this practice has been going on in India since colonial times. The police will defend the student organizations and leaders which have affiliation with the government in power and will suppress the opponents. It will also defend anti-social and violent elements of or called by the ruling party. When the top leaders of the country do politics by making communal divide its basis, then the police will also practice communal behavior. In the last few decades, the presence of police on campuses and incidents of interference have increased very rapidly. Rather, the demand for permanent deployment of paramilitary forces on the campus by the vice chancellors has gained momentum. Last year, on the demand of the vice chancellor of Vishva-Bharati (Shanti Niketan), the central government decided to permanently deploy the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on the campus. This is the first time that this has happened in the university system. Earlier in 2017, the vice chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) had demanded the government for permanent deployment of paramilitary forces on the

campus. At that time the government had not given permission because the vice chancellor had to go on long leave due to certain allegations. In November last year, the vice-chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) called the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on the campus to deal with the students' agitation.

The increasing dependence on the police by the university officials even in minor disputes is converting campuses into cantonments. The day is not far when the police will enter the premises even without their orders. Recently this has happened in Jamia Millia Islamia. In the absence of police, a large number of private guards and barriers give the campus a look of a cantonment. The south campus of Delhi University is small and compact. It has only six small buildings including a library. There is a police checkpoint

at the main gate. Despite this, there is a plethora of private guards. A person coming to meet a teacher cannot reach him/her easily. Not at all if he/she is a media person.

In fact, all this is done to enslave the young minds so that they can subordinate themselves to the system. It is the responsibility of university officials, teachers, students and administrative staff to not allow a campus to be transformed into a cantonment. Parents and guardians can also play an important role in this. They should insist that the primary responsibility of the university authorities is to create a safe, fear-free and creative environment on the campus, and not to obey this or that government's order.

The author is a teacher of Hindi at Delhi University. 

Supreme Court has not acted with urgency to protect citizens from executive excesses

One can only hope that the Court introspects and intervenes forthwith to stop any bloodshed in the country, and assuage the sentiments of a large section of the society, which feels they are no longer wanted.

Dushyant Dave

Article 14 contains a positive injunction against the state:

“The State shall not deny to any person equality before the Law or the Equal Protection of the Laws within the territory of India”.

The Supreme Court of India enjoys an extraordinary status in the hearts and minds of Indians. They look up to it when it comes to keeping the essence of the nation intact and insulated from attacks by the executive of the day. The Court has created for itself an exalted position over the last seven decades by assuming the role of a sentinel on the Qui Vive (“on the alert” or “vigilant”).

Part III of the Constitution of India contains Fundamental Rights and Article 13(2) thereof mandates that, “The State shall not make any Law which takes away or abridges the rights

conferred by this part and any Law made in contravention of this Clause shall to the extent of contravention be void.” Thus, there is a twofold provision — prohibiting the state from making an unconstitutional law, and simultaneously declaring that such a law would be void. Article 14 contains a positive injunction against the state: “The State shall not deny to any person equality before the Law or the Equal Protection of the Laws within the territory of India”.

Affirmative action on the part of the state in favour of disadvantaged sections of society is within the framework of liberal democracy.

Socio-economic justice is part of the equality clause. Equal protection also means right to equal treatment of citizens: This is the essence of Article 14, a basic feature of the Constitution, which obliges the courts, especially the Supreme Court, to review state-made laws and declare them as unconstitutional, if found to be so. The Court cannot desert its duty to determine the constitutionality of an impugned statute. And so, the decision of the SC, led by the chief justice himself, to defer the examination of the challenge to the much talked about Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 is, to say the least, disappointing.

The Court should have put aside other matters and heard the group of writ petitions challenging the validity of this *ex-facie* unjust law. Its vacation is hardly an excuse to defer such a challenge. Even if the judges wanted to enjoy their much deserved winter vacation, their refusal to stay the law is even more disturbing. Such an order would have immediately defused the tempers running high across the nation, and, “We, the People” could have breathed a sigh of relief. Instead, the judges have left us to fend for ourselves in the streets of our cities. The cost of this decision by the Court will only become clear with time.

The granting of a stay order against the operation of this citizenship law would not have caused any prejudice to public interest whatsoever. On the contrary, it is my belief, that it would have served the public interest well. It is true, there is, generally, a presumption in favour of constitutionality of law. But that is not an absolute rule. If the Act *ex-facie* violates the fundamental rights of citizens, a mere presumption which decides the burden cannot serve that law.

The Delhi High Court’s order to defer the writs in the Jamia violence cases is a shocking abdication of its constitutional duty. It appears that judges across the spectrum are unwilling to test the executive’s actions, however

unconstitutional they may be.

We must beware that the popular saying, “Nero fiddled while Rome burned”, does not come true for this great nation. The Supreme Court, in recent years, has shown its leanings in favour of the executive. In a series of decisions, the Court has, surprisingly, justified many of the state’s actions, which either needed a deeper probe or simply to be declared unlawful. In fact, the Court is almost proving that it stays in ivory towers. After the appointment of the current chief justice, those of us who admire the Court had expected a departure from such a course.

One can only hope that the Court introspects and intervenes forthwith to stop any bloodshed in the country, and assuage the sentiments of a large section of the society, which feels they are no longer wanted.

The Preamble is an irreversible contract between the state and its people to keep India a “Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic”, and, “to secure to all its citizens” justice, equality, fraternity and liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.

The great judge, H R Khanna, in the celebrated Kesavananda Bharati case declared that the “State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion only”, and, interpreted Articles 15(1) and 16(2), even before the “secular” word was added to the Preamble.

All citizens, including judges, must remember the words of B R Ambedkar: “It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater.” These words appear too relevant today. Will the judiciary’s conscience awaken soon?

This article first appeared in the print edition on December 24, 2019 under the title “While the court fiddles.” The writer is a senior advocate at the Supreme Court of India

Courtesy **Indian Express**,
December 24, 2019 

‘Amit Shah is lying’: Opposition parties attack government over links between NRC and NPR

The Congress said that the 2018-’19 Annual Report of the Home Ministry clearly states that the National Population Register is the first step to an NRC.

Opposition parties hit out at the Centre on Tuesday after the Union Cabinet approved funds of more than Rs 3,900 crore to update the National Population Register, with some calling it the first step in the formation of a National Register of Citizens.

This population register is linked to the census, due in 2021, and is a list of “usual residents” in the country. However, it has also been linked to the National Register of Citizens, a proposed nationwide exercise to identify undocumented migrants and differentiate them from citizens of India. The Census of India website has described the NPR as “the first step towards the creation of a National Register of Citizens”.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in an interview with ANI on Tuesday evening, claimed that the National Population Register has nothing to do with the National Register of Citizens. He also said there had been no discussions on the NRC as of now.

“There is no need to debate this [pan-India NRC] as there is no discussion on it right now, Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi was right, there is no discussion on it yet either in the Cabinet or Parliament,” he said. Shah also claimed that detention centres had been built only in Assam and would not be constructed for the purpose of holding undocumented migrants following the NRC process.

However, Opposition parties refused to buy Shah’s argument, saying that it was contradictory to the statements the government had made many times in the past.

“Once again the BJP government is caught in a trap of their own making,” the Congress tweeted. “2018-19 Annual Report of the Union

Home Ministry clearly states NPR is first step to NRC. Also in 2014, former MoS Home Ministry Kiren Rijiju replied to a question in Rajya Sabha stating the same. Who’s lying now?”

“We also did National Population Register in 2011, but we never took it forward to NRC,” Congress leader Ajay Maken said, according to ANI. Maken said Amit Shah’s claim that there was no link between the National Population Register and the NRC is a “bigger lie” than what Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said at the Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on Sunday.

“NPR alone is fine, but when you link it with NRC, it becomes draconian,” Maken said, according to PTI. “Then it becomes something which is a violation of human rights and of the secular credentials of the Constitution.” He also pointed out that the latest annual report of the BJP government said that the National Population Register is the first step towards the NRC.

Modi had said at a rally in Delhi on Sunday that there are no immediate plans for the NRC, and accused the Opposition of trying to mislead the people. On Tuesday, Maken said Shah was lying because of the anger of the people.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav claimed that the BJP government’s “hidden motives” to have a National Register of Citizens had been exposed through the National Population Register. “When the government itself said in Rajya Sabha that NPR will be the basis of NRC, how much lie these BJP men will speak and mislead people?” Yadav tweeted.

On the other hand, Trinamool Congress MP Derek O’Brien claimed that the Centre is trying to fool the people in the name of the National Population Register, which is the “first step

towards NRC". O'Brien said that the government had in a written reply in Parliament in 2014 said that the National Population Register by verifying the citizenship status of every usual resident is the first step towards creation of the NRC, PTI reported.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury said that chief ministers who opposed the NRC should also stop the National Population Register process. "It was stated clearly on the record in the Rajya Sabha by this government that the National Population Register is the base document from where the NRC work will start," Yechury said.

There have been massive protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National

Register of Citizens in the country over the last two weeks, resulting in the deaths of at least 24 people. The Citizenship Amendment Act, passed by Parliament on December 11, seeks to provide citizenship to refugees from six minority religious communities from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, it exempts Muslims from its purview.

The governments of Kerala and West Bengal have already decided to halt work on the National Population Register. However, Shah said on Tuesday that he will try to convince these governments not to hinder the process, for the benefit of the poor who need to access government schemes.

Courtesy [Scroll.in](https://scroll.in/article/89377/citizenship-amendment-bill-2019-what-is-it-and-what-does-it-mean-for-india), 25 December 2020. 

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- Mahi Pal Singh, Editor, The Radical Humanist

The Chakravarthi Has Lost the People's Trust

Modi's governance style is akin to warming oneself up with a fire that has been lit by inciting emotions about caste, religion and language that lay asleep in the community.

A character in the Kannada TV serial *Silly Lalli* called Lalithaamba, a social worker, would always open her mouth to say, "Trust me, trust me please". After passing the Citizenship Amendment Act, our Prime Minister while addressing the shaken public, essentially tweeted, saying "Don't get anxious. Trust me, I am your *sevak*." Watching this felt like Narendra Modi's words and Silly Lily's social worker Lalithaamba's words were falling into the same rhythm.

The irony is that, in recent times, people have probably not believed anyone like they have believed Narendra Modi. People have trusted him, insanely. Is it just one or two things that Modi has gotten the public to believe and that the people have believed?

He had said he would bring back black money hoarded abroad and would deposit Rs 15 lakh in every Indian's bank account. People believed him. There may even be some who still believe and are waiting.

But today the situation is such that there is no guarantee even about the money that people already have in their own bank accounts. He also bragged and promised people that he would create crores of jobs annually. People believed him and brought him into power.

But with the employment situation today, forget about creating new jobs, the jobs that exist are themselves shrinking. In the past 45 years, the rate of unemployment has increased the most during the Modi regime. Similarly, saying he would double farmers' incomes he has only doubled their distress.

Moreover, during the stressful time that was created after the note ban, Modi's promise to the nation was: "I have only asked for 50 days.

Devanoora Mahadeva

Give me time till December 30. After that, if any fault is found in my intentions or my actions, I am willing to suffer any punishment given by the country"

It has been nearly three years since Modi uttered these words. Even today, the disaster caused by the note ban is still burning across India. All of this is strongly reminiscent of Mahabharata's Uttara's macho posturing. One can't figure out whether this is the fault of those who believe or the ones who make them believe. People have never trusted anyone else like they have trusted Modi and Modi has betrayed people's trust in way that no one else has done before. I speak these words in pain.

Modi's governance style is akin to warming oneself up at a fire that has been lit by inciting beliefs and emotions about caste, religion, language etc that lay asleep in the community. The most recent example of this is the Citizenship Amendment Act. Where will these take us? More economic collapse, more unemployment, more price rises, more mob lynchings that people indulge in, leading one to doubt whether a government is in existence or not.

The Modi government has failed at resolving the problems that are eating away the nation. He is inciting people's beliefs and emotions so that they may forget the pain caused by these problems. This is like creating another pain to forget the first. But if you provoke beliefs and emotions and let them loose then they become demons baying for blood. This is what is happening today.

If through the CAA and NRC, India is made into a religion based nation it will be like rats and bandicoots burrowing through and eating up the very life of the constitution, disfiguring

the very form of it. Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha's President Badagalapura Nagendra's words that "India should not become another Pakistan" is the alarm bell.

If the religion-based Pakistan becomes our ideal, India will lose its Indianness. The mindset of 'my enemy is committing atrocities so I too will commit atrocities' will drag people who think like that into ruin. The Modi-Shah gang, who have set out to make India a religion-based country modelled on Pakistan, are becoming the supreme bhakts of Pakistan without they themselves knowing it. Hence while incorporating models of different countries and different religions there should be some wisdom to it.

For example, however high an eagle flies its eye is always focused on the rotting garbage on land. But for a swan, even if one mixes milk and water, it will drink only the milk. This *hamsa ksheera nyaya* concept is the very character of Paramahansa. He assimilated all the positives in Indian philosophies and set aside the contradictions.

Vivekananda too saw the good in Hinduism, Islam, Christianity etc. For example, wouldn't brotherhood and hugging, that is inherent in Islam, be a medicine for the Chaturvarna Hindu dharma racked with the illness of untouchability and caste discrimination?

A *chakravarthi* should always have everyone's trust even if his governance is viewed as the thuggish governance of *palegars*. Otherwise one would feel that it is the *palegar* sitting in the place of the *chakravarthi*. For instance, Giani Zail Singh, after becoming the president, conducted himself with the dignity that

the position demanded.

Even H.D. Deve Gowda, whose politics in Karnataka was objectionable on several grounds, on becoming the Prime Minister, behaved in a way that was appropriate for his position. He made an attempt to untangle the problems in Punjab, Kashmir, North-east India by winning over the hearts of people.

I have several reservations about Manmohan Singh as well. But upon seeing the collapse of the Indian economy, he spoke with a lot of pain and not a Hitler-like roar. One should heed these softly spoken words. Similarly, the BJP's Vajpayee who said "If India is not secular, then India is not India at all." behaved like a *chakravarthi*, much like Deve Gowda.

So, a request from Modi-Shah: Don't turn into eagles, do change into swans. The time is close at hand for the country to start a conversation, not just with students, people's organisations and the opposition parties, but also with the innocent believers of the RSS, BJP and its allies.

Devanoora Mahadeva is a Kannada writer who has been conferred with the Padma Shri as well as the Sahitya Akademi award both of which he returned in protest against the growing intolerance in the country. A public intellectual and Dalit activist he has been a guiding force to various social movements in Karnataka and the country.

This article was first published in Kannada in Varthabharati on December 20, 2019. It has been translated into English by Rashmi Munikempanna.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 27/Dec/2019



We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm & adventure. There is no end to the adventures we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open.

-: Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

PEOPLE'S UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS (PUDR), DELHI

Release of fact-finding report

BLOODY-SUNDAY 2019 : POLICE BRUTALITIES AT JAMIA UNIVERSITY 13-15 DECEMBER 2019

26 December 2019

A six-member team of PUDR conducted a four-day fact-finding from 16-19 December 2019 into the incidents of police brutalities at the campus of Jamia Millia Islamia University on 13 and 15 December 2019. The brutalities happened in the context of ongoing protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019, passed by the Parliament on 11 December 2019. PUDR's report, "**Bloody Sunday 2019: Police Brutalities at Jamia University 13-15 December 2019**", based on our investigations, provides a picture of police terror and the police as a lawless force sanctioned to quell dissent. PUDR spoke to a number of students, teaching and non-teaching staff on campus; with doctors, injured students, their parents; with local residents and their staff, eyewitnesses to different events. We also visited campus and found broken locks, empty tear-gas shells, broken windows and furniture, blood on the floor, among many other visible signs of the destruction of that night. The report provides an extensive, though not exhaustive account of the course of events from 13 December to frame the context for the ensuing violence on campus on 15 December.

The report finds that, prior to the incident of crackdown on 15 December, there had been a similar crackdown against protestors by the Delhi police in riot gear on 13 December, when the police attempted to stop a rally comprising thousands of students and residents of neighbouring areas from marching to Parliament street to express their opposition to the CAA. At the time, the Delhi police used unauthorized and excessive force to restrain the rally from

proceeding further, through indiscriminate lathi-charging, teargasing and destruction of public property in and around campus. At that time too, the Delhi police unauthorisedly entered campus, beat up students and destroyed property unrelated to the protest, and unlawfully detained many. The crackdown on 15 December was an escalation of the same strategy by the Delhi police to overpower students through indiscriminate force.

On Sunday, the police again resorted to excessive lathi-charging and teargasing to restrain a thousand-strong rally of protestors from moving towards Mathura Road. The DGP (South East) claims that this was necessary to control a violent mob of protestors. But the *modus operandi* and nature of injuries on those admitted at hospitals for injuries during the violence indicate otherwise. Apart from confirmed bullet injuries and the use of approx. 400 tear gas shells, injuries were predominantly on the head, face or legs, showing intent to maim or cause maximum damage.

Further, the report finds that the use of force by the Delhi police inside campus, ostensibly to address stone-pelting from inside the gates, was entirely unauthorized and unjustified. The report details gruesome accounts of the police forcefully entering campus by breaking locks at gates, assaulting guards, breaking CCTV cameras, proceeding to indiscriminately lathi-charge, tear-gas, beat up, communally abuse and humiliate every single person- men and women alike- in their sight, and then to launch unprovoked attacks on students and workers unrelated to the protests in the libraries,

mosques, bathrooms, gardens etc.

This combative and communal treatment against students continued at the police stations and hospitals where the injured had been admitted, as the Delhi police systematically obstructed and denied emergency and necessary medical care to dozens of injured, and unlawfully detained more than 50, and denied them legal aid. At all these times, students were continuously abused with communal slurs and threats. The intent appears to be to inflict maximum damage and terrorise the university, as opposed to one of minimum damage in efforts to control a violent assembly.

PUDR notes that since 15 December, the Delhi police has unleashed similar brutalities at both protestors and Muslim neighbourhoods across Delhi. The patterns have been similar: lathi-charge, tear-gas firing, followed by large-scale detentions, and denial of legal and medical aid to detenues. Between 13 and 23 December, about 1500 persons have been detained in Delhi under the cover of violence relating to anti-CAA protests. Protests have been disrupted at Jamia University (13 and 15 December), Arts Faculty DU (17 December), Red Fort and Mandi House (19 December), UP Bhawan (21 and 23 December) and Assam Bhawan (23 December). Targeted attacks at Muslim neighbourhoods were seen at Seelampur-Jaffrabad, Daryaganj and Seemapuri (20 December). The most brutal of these were at Daryaganj where about 11-12 minors were

detained at the police station until 3am, with denial of medical and legal aid. Preceding that had been brutal lathi-charges at protestors, with injuries reported mostly on the head. At least 1 minor had also been detained at Seemapuri thana on 20 December until late night hours, again without medical or legal aid for long hours. FIRs have been registered against at least 40 persons who are presently in judicial custody, charges ranging from arson, to rioting, to unlawful assembly, destruction of public property etc., for incidents at Jamia University on 15 December, Seelampur, Seemapuri and Daryaganj on 20 December. PUDR investigations into these incidents are ongoing.

PUDR demands that an FIR must be registered against the Delhi police for brutal use of force in and around Jamia Millia Islamia University, and that a Commission of Inquiry be instituted to examine the unauthorised, unjustified and excessive use of force and wanton acts of destruction by the Delhi Police. PUDR further demands that the right of citizens to protest must be recognized as inalienable and the practice of routine refusal to grant permission must be stopped.

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I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made mis-steps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk has not ended.

- : Nelson Mandela



Swamis - the Lethal Parasites

P.A.S. Prasad

*Jattilo Mundi Lucchita Kesha,
Kashambara Bahukritha Vesha
Pasyannapicha Napasyati Moodha
Udaranimittho Bahukrithavesha,
Bhajagovindam Moodhamathe.*

(From Adi Sankara's Bhajagovindam)

More than 1800 years back house holders were cautioned not to be foolish and be beware of those matted haired, shaved heads, saffron robed also approaching in various garbs for their livelihood.

*Poochum, Shugal Kya Hai,
Guruji Ne Kaha, Ramnam Japna,
Chelonka Maal Apna.*

Akbar Illahabadi

(When asked what is his calling Guruji said, he recites Ram's name, and the properties of his devotees will be his).

In this article the word 'swami' is used as a general term to refer to *sadhus, hermits, yogis, gurus, babas, rishis* or by whatever name an individual assumes.

Even from the earliest times, e.g., from the Mahabharata, we have this episode of Arjuna faking as a swami to woo Subhadra. Since then the scope, numerical strength, influence and power has increased manifold. The grip of the swami is so vice-like over people from the rulers to the ruled even an Octopus or a Crocodile is no match. In mythology we see how mighty rulers were shivering and cowering before the *swami* in awe and abject terror of the curse of the *swami* for the slightest infraction while fulfilling the desires and needs of the swami.

Coming to the modern times - actually the cult of the *swamis* is as ancient as the Indian Civilisation. The present day *swami* is a continuum of the earliest *swami* in essentials. Now it is more colourful with innovative exploitation.

Most of the people who take to the profession of *swami* are motivated by seeing the examples of *swamis* enjoying opulent living without effort also garnering respect and influence as bonus. Sometimes harems are also created for recreation.

In ancient times the hermits went to the forests seeking God. But the origin of the *swami* species as we see them today have the beginning in the begging-bowl seeking alms in the name of God and they found it easy by wearing saffron robes, growing long hair.

While a few disgusted with family problems, termagant wives, debts and some to escape penal action for crimes committed, taking to saffron robes, a good many must have taken to this life, for easy living, not in the least responsible - neither to family nor to society and lastly to the nation.

Right from the stark naked *Naga swamis* to the mendicants abounding fall in this category. Their general distribution is around all pilgrim centres, temples, near river shrines and other places where people gather, like *melas* and festivals full of religious fervour.

Another quite remunerative opening for an enterprising *swami* with good looks or prominent eyes being positive factors, is underneath a big tree on the outskirts of a village. By mere sitting, saffron robed, with half closed eyes, will make the day for the *swami*. By the evening he is assured of a reasonable cash collection on the cloth spread before him and enough items of food, banana and coconuts, of course. After a few days under the tree, he finds a palm leaf or some other temporary shade over his head, small comforts being added gradually. In the wake of this life if he manages or attracts a like-minded young disciple, the set up is complete. Some of them obtain discreetly a suitable disciple from their native village or some

known sources. He serves the purpose of gathering intelligence unnoticed about the village problems, people, individuals and so on. He will also spread word about the *swami's* powers and qualities of head and heart. He will just hint and leave it. In villages this gets vastly embroidered by word of mouth from person to person. And lo, before long the *swami* gets a dwelling becoming an ashram. This is the embryo. They grow into estates and empires. Any function in the *ashram* will see an important personage invited as chief guest. If the *swami* is a gifted singer or has gift of the gab, then VIPs-VVIPs grace the place adding to the lustre and prosperity of the *ashram*. A galore of opportunities for influence, wealth and more wealth.

In course of time, politicians, the ruling powers, business tycoons and other prominent elite in various fields start patronising the leading *swamis*. Each of them come to the *swami* with a different agenda of getting a want fulfilled or a problem solved through the seemingly spiritual influence and power of the *swami*. The ostensible reason for meeting with him seeking his blessings is the smoke screen. Jargon of spiritual guidance and so on is to have the advantage of *swami's* intervention on their behalf for handling delicate matters with high placed disciples from various walks of life.

We hear of the example of P.V. Narasimaharao as PM used to visit Satya Sai Baba to utilise *baba's* good offices with Premadasa, PM of Srilanka, who was also a devotee.

Many such instances at various levels would be taking place. The *swamis* thus gain much material wealth and clout which shield them from any action for misdeeds. *Swamis* are tainted generally, as the very purpose of entering this way of life is to have a good time in all material pleasures with least exertion on their part. They are happy to sponge and suck, lethal parasites personified.

Presently we have two *swamis* who are pampered by the rulers. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a VVIP *Swami*. Many years back in one of his stints as the CM of Andhra Pradesh, Chandrababu Naidu engaged Sri Sri to motivate his top bureaucrats for better, positive performance. Of course, no such improvement is visible as corruption and hassles continue. People still fall prey in increased measure to the tyranny of govt. officials at the village and *tahsil* level.

in course of time the *Swami* built an empire around him so much so that Shobha De in one of her sharp takes mentions that a few businessmen complained to her that their wives were parting with their hard earned wealth to Sri Sri and some of them were not even coming back home. A case was also instituted against him for violating pollution laws when he held a conclave in the Yamuna River-bed in Delhi. He is nominated to some important bodies. He was honoured with a national award too.

The other VVIP *Swami* is Sadguru. He too built a vast empire near Coimbatore. *Isha Yoga Centre* looks like a medium sized planetarium where we find devotees chanting soft music from all nationalities. Once I asked a well known thinker of recent times why so many flock around *Swamis* and indulge in weird activities. He simply laughed and said that their minds are sick and maimed, including his own followers!. Sadguru enjoys immense state patronage, received national awards. He built a record sized *Shivalinga*. He indulges in interaction with many groups and individuals. In his talks he sinks from the sublime to the ridiculous, from modern scientific thought to how his tantric gurus made corpses walk and bring back to life birds within three hours of death. He answers queries like whether masturbation is good and whether premarital sex is O K and so on in his abstract jargon.

Regarding Satya Sai Baba the less said the better. Apart from an expert sleight of hand there

are quite a few unexplained activities in his *ashram*. His devotees included heads of state and VVIPs from many walks of life. He too created a vast empire around him.

But not all the Swamis are humbug charlatans who abound and suck the hard earned money of the ordinary folks and from the very-well-to-do.

Swami Vivekananda was truly inspired and service oriented who pointed out the many evils of Hinduism in practice and his very wise and practical insistence that it was futile to preach spirituality to hungry people; satisfying their hunger was of paramount necessity.

Ramana Maharishi, orthodox unassuming in appearance but very rational free thinking, no cant and convention, always available and accessible all times, less talk and more influence, no claim for miracles or salvation, made easy formulas. He treated people and princes alike. He wore a simple foot length white cloth wound around his waist seen on daily walks. Arguably he was considered the greatest sage of recent times. His humility and simplicity were exemplary.

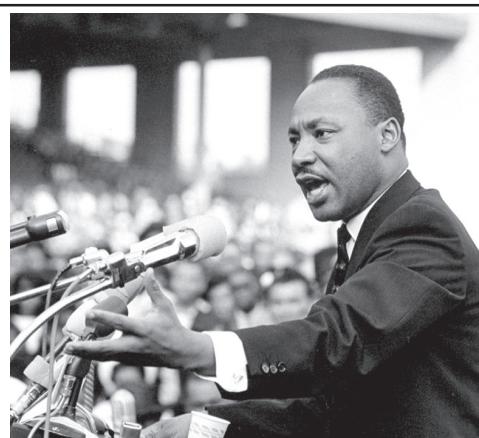
In the present day, Swami Agnivesh is a refreshing change and a whiff of fragrance in the putrid community of Swamis, very rational, speaks easily and understood well. Assaulted and manhandled for standing upto truth. It is a mystery why he has chosen to wear much

maligned saffron robes.

The Indian psyche, DNA and fibre are instilled with an irrational blind reverence for any one in saffron robes or those in similar vocations or white robes. From the stark naked Naga Swamis to the top Swamis, there are so many of varied hues, practices and preachings. The *tantrics* among them perpetrated horrors on gullible people, indulging in ritual sex, sacrifices and we heard of cases of brainwash resulting in the sacrifice of one's own children. The Swamis committed all kinds of crimes. Their contribution to the nation is nil. They are lethal parasites. They damaged the psyche of the people. Every step the country takes towards developing scientific temperament, these parasites try to pull down by two steps. The bitter part of it is that from time to time some top guns in the scientific community get close to select Swamis. We heard of Dr. Suri Bhagavantham, chief scientific adviser to the govt. of India, was something like a right hand to Satya Sai. The recent Chandrayan launch gave me a shock when I found the paradox-perfect Swami Sadguru among the guests. The closeness of high end science with forces of drag of the self seeking Swamis is harming the cause of development of a scientific attitude and rationality and setting up a very awful example. It will take a long, arduous and concerted effort to get out of this quagmire. 

"We must examine honestly the weaknesses of traditional capitalism. In all fairness, we must admit that capitalism has often left a gulf between superfluous wealth and abject poverty, has created conditions permitting necessities to be taken from the many to give luxuries to the few, and has encouraged small-hearted men to become cold and conscienceless so that they are unmoved by suffering, poverty-stricken humanity."

Martin Luther King



In Man's Own Image

By **Ellen Roy and Sibnarayan Ray**

Part III Towards a free society-II Simplified by **Vinod Jain**

2 The Socialist Alternative

If the reconciliation of individual liberty and social determinism was the chief concern of liberal thought, the aspiration of socialism has always been to achieve equality between man and man in institutional life. There has not been any necessary contradiction between liberty and equality. Still socialism has ever been an alternative to liberalism in the endeavor to bring about social adjustment. Socialism is a method, it is a philosophy concerning human relationship and conduct, and because it is so, it has wielded such enormous influence and caused such great havoc in recent human history.

The basic idea of socialism is obviously human equality. The three essential devices of socialist thinkers to invest the value of equality with a practicable character have been: 1. to conceive of society as an organic unit, 2. to reduce individuals to functional units in that organism and, 3. to advocate ruthless planning to eliminate divergences and sources of conflict. These elements are common to both "utopian" and "dialectical" socialism. They may be seen no less in the philosophical Communism of Plato and Sir Thomas More than in the economic Communism of Karl Marx... The individual must have, as Socrates explained in the third book of *Republic*, a definite place and function in a just society.

Socialism is a mixture of two conflicting trends in human history. Modern "scientific" socialism took over from liberalism along with its aspiration for a just society, the concept of "natural law" as determining social progress. To the orthodox scientific socialist the "first person singular is no more than a grammatical figment". Socialism in its anxiety for equality between man and man reduced man into a cog

in the social wheel, and in its desire for efficiency and planning, took away from man his supreme distinction as a moral being. Socialism thus, theoretically prepared the conditions for a totalitarian social order, intolerant of individual differences, ruthless in its elimination of conflict, based upon the essentially economic impulses of human beings and reducing all the various cultural manifestations of human creativity into directly purposive reflections of economic processes. And what it visualized theoretically was corroborated to the last letter by the practices of the Communist parties of the world during the last three decades, and the national and international policy of the Soviet Union, particularly since its abandonment of the New Economic Policy of Lenin towards the end of the nineteen twenties.

This is not to deny either the incipient (beginning to happen/ developed) moral urge of the socialist movement or its achievements in the field of social investigation. It is true that socialism even in its latest and most menacing form, derives a large part of its appeal from the promised utopia of a free, just and egalitarian society to come after the dialectical process of violent class—conflict and the transitional stage of ruthless class dictatorship. In this, its appeal has been of the same nature as of any religion which promises salvation and heaven after the necessary tribulations and sufferings of this contingent (subject to chance) earthly life are over.

But neither the moral appeal of Marxian Socialism nor its achievements in the field of social enquiry can make serious students of socialism blind to the fact that Marxism, more than any other ideology in recent times, has been responsible for the popularity and success of totalitarian movements in the period between

World War 1 and World War 2.

Socialism has come to mean a negation of that perennial endeavor with which human history began. Its dialectical metaphysics is a rejection both of Science and aesthetic creativeness. It is also the end of all morality.

Socialism no less than capitalism has created a state of mind and a historic situation in which war, aggressiveness, blackmail, regimentation and total extermination of every obstinately opposing opinion or voice have come to be recognized as the only means to peace and order. But then, it is a peace of the grave; it is at best the order of the animal herd.

The failure of scientific socialism to provide a more adequate approach to the problem of freedom in our time may therefore be broadly traced to certain basic features in its philosophy. First and foremost is its forgetfulness of the aim of all social adjustment, the freedom and happiness of the individual, a forgetfulness which hardened into contempt and derision of that aim and its negation in the means, method and process in the name of realism and practicability. The second damaging factor is the adoption of dialectics as the key to history. It is a rejection of that scientific spirit of enquiry which the European Renaissance had reintroduced in the modern world.

The hybrid product of the combination of dialectics with economism has been the preposterous theory that class conflict is the main lever of human progress. Socialism further adopted and popularized the interpretation of state as an instrument of class coercion. Socialism sponsored an age of wars and revolutions, of mental and social disorder, and

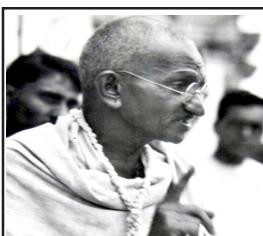
finally degenerated into a plea for totalitarian society.

Socialism's reaction to the hypocrisy and injustice of the capitalist economy was strong. Socialism decided on the subversion of the capitalist order and became totally indifferent to the need for providing the alternative picture of a better society. It confused democracy with capitalism. It could not rescue the achievements of liberalism, which indeed were very great, and carry the positive pursuit of freedom further. Karl Marx, followed the tradition of a moral politics, which was introduced to modern Europe by Niccolo Machiavelli. Thus did he belie his original moral inspiration?

Socialists had a craze for planning; planning which has today become the new fetish, as private property and enterprise were in the capitalist order; planning for inner coherence in the institutional pattern and not with a view to some moral end. Socialist planning in consequence today has affected unsurpassed discipline and fanaticism within its party organization but completely paralyzed the spirit of enquiry and moral consideration in its advocates; has raised production in a socialist state but also its destructive employment; has achieved simultaneously full employment total slavery of the common population; and brought about great efficiency in administration on the basis of an omnipresent bureaucracy and regimented population.

If liberalism reduced freedom to formality, socialism has reduced equality to goose-step (a march of the soldiers without bending their knees).

To be concluded... 



"An education which does not teach us to discriminate between good and bad, to assimilate the one and eschew the other, is a misnomer."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Gautam Thaker – Insubstitutable and A Matchless Man!

Gopal Bhatt

Gautam was blessed with a friendly and amiable disposition. He hailed from a humble family. During his college days, he contested election as a General Secretary of H.L. Commerce College and won it against all odds since in those days only the affluent and muscleman could emerge victorious. Gautam was a multi-dimensional personality, competent and eminent as a Trade Union leader, social worker, defender of human rights, civil liberties, awakening people for justice and privileges, an event manager as also regularly contributing articles on sports in various newspapers and magazines, culminating into authoring a book titled “Five Decades of Pavilion”.

In the prime of his life, he toiled and struggled very hard but did not allow any moral values to suffer erosion. When he joined service with Central Bank of India, Anand Branch, his salary was hardly Rs. 225 per month. He had to look after two of his ailing elder sisters. He made up and down by train between Ahmedabad and Anand town. In order to avail of student concession pass, he secured admission in Anand based Law College as without student pass, daily up-down seemed expensive. When Gautam’s father Dashrathbhai came to know about this, he tore off and threw away the railway pass adding that one should not have temptation to enjoy anything that is not earned by honest labour and it was his closely guarded principle. Thereafter, Gautam never resorted to unfair path to gain anything.

Former C.M. Late Chimanbhai Patel and his wife Urmilaben had allotted to Gautam a sum of Rs. 30,000/- in connection with organizing some event. After that event was over, Gautam handed over the complete account and balance Rs. 1800 upon which the said couple got overwhelmed with

surprise and admiring Gautam said that in public life he was the only person who meticulously and carefully maintained the accounts.

Gautam was adept at organizing functions. Whenever the Govt. announced any anti-people programmes, Gautam will immediately summon meetings of Radical Humanists and friends from PUCL and shall convene a press meeting to put across his views and concerns. None of his agitation or crusade was thwarted due to financial constraints.

Gautam had good rapport with many C.Ms. of Gujarat such as Babubhai Jashbhai, Chimanbhai, Keshubhai, Shankarsinh Vaghela and Narendra Modi. Gautam regularly attended office of Intellectual Citizens Power Forum set up by the former C.M. Sureshbhai Mehta and ably responded to the mails from there. Due to indifferent health, doctors advised Gautam to take break and rest, but even then he persistently worked for the cause of democracy and civil liberties.

One employee of Central Bank, Anand Branch was charged of financial irregularities and the management pressurized Gautam to give testimony against the accused but Gautam stuck to the truth and justice, resulting into absolution of charges and thus one innocent person was rescued from unwarranted punishment.

During ‘Emergency’ spell, Gautam’s enthusiasm to work from behind the curtain, along with Jay Prakash Narayan, George Fernandez, Tarkunde, Chandrakant Daru, Prabhudas Patwari has persisted throughout his life. Gautam had become the youngest Secretary of the Indian Radical Humanist Association. Speaker of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, Natvarlal Shah, who was President of Gujarat Unit of All India Bank Employees’ Union had nominated Gautam’s

name which goes to prove that he was indeed a promising trade union leader and an illustrious example of honesty and sincerity.

Once a 'Monthly' named 'Akhandanand', having wider circulation came to be discontinued without justifiable reasons. Employees engaged with that institute were sacked without giving them any kind of compensation. Afterwards all the employees made representation to Gautam. In support of these aggrieved employees Gautam commenced a legal fight without charging any fees and secured compensation worth lakhs of rupees. This is a rare instance in the history of trade union activities with social concerns and sense of fellowship.

Gautam's father Dashrathbhai had taken on rent an office in Mirzapur area. While giving back its vacant possession, his co-workers had expected for certain monetary consideration. But Dashrathbhai said that "because of us, wooden staircase of that premises had sustained wear and tear, whose compensation we have not paid and how can we expect for any consideration." In the same vein, while giving back keys for vacating of rented house in Madalpur area, Gautam said, "We have to hand over vacant possession of your house without taking any consideration". Upon hearing this, tears rolled off from landlord's eyes, who said in to-day's times, people selfless nature like you can hardly be met.

Rajya Sabha Member, Pravinbhai Rashtopal had serious differences among his family members which were amicably resolved by joint efforts of Gautam and his co-worker, Maheshbhai. Pravin Rashtopal, after constant follow up with the then P.M. Dr. Man Mohan Singh helped in resolving lingering issue of gratuity perks to the bank employees. The Bank Union had no inkling until the last hour that relations between Gautam and Pravin Rashtopal had played positive role in the above case matter. Gautam never hankered after temptation to earn any credit and never let any body get hint in this matter. He always said, "We should mind our work irrespective of seeking

credit or compliments."

Gautam was perhaps the only Union representative who ably discussed and represented with Finance Ministers like Man Mohan Singh, Pranab Mukherjee, P. Chidambaram and Yashvant Sinha and secured important decisions in favor of bank employees. In the event of any member of the Union having been served with charge sheet or suspension, Gautam took positive approach and always said that "we should first defend our fellow employee and later sort out other matters."

Gautam used to visit Bombay based office of his Union's General Secretary Subhash Savant. He indulged in spying and espionage after Gautam but ultimately he realized that Gautam was not engaged in any questionable conduct. Former C.M. Shankarsingh Vaghela during the farewell party of Gautam had praised his honesty and style of working. I myself have at many times experienced the fragrance of Gautam's relations and contacts. I had to go to Jaipur for attending a meeting of PUCL, for which arrangements of air travel and hotel stay were made by Siddharth Patel on Gautam's recommendations. Similarly, India's Attorney General Soli Sorabjee was to attend one meeting convened at Ahmedabad, as its chief guest. Lodging and boarding arrangements for him were tied up at Cama Hotel. Thanks to Gautam's rapport, son of Cama Hotel's owner, as a gesture of goodwill and courtesy like his father made all the arrangements without charging a single penny. This shows outstanding influence of Gautam's relations.

Gautam had authored many articles about "Undeclared Emergency" under Gujarat's BJP regime. Prohibitive and restrictive approach such as deterring people to publicly voice one's legitimate view point, ban on staging agitation or demonstration in public places etc. which was not at all acceptable to him. Hence, when it was decided to hold a meeting under the leadership of Swami Agnivesh then Gautam had maneuvered to successfully organize such a

meeting at Sardar Garden near Lal Darwaja.

For installation of a statue of People's leader like Indulal Yajnik at a prominent place, Gautam represented before the Govt. but the latter did not pay any heed to that matter. Ultimately Sanat Maheta, affiliated to Congress party suggested to install that statue in ONGC compound since it was under the Central Govt. especially in light of regime of Congress party at the centre at that time, which was acceded to by Gautam resulting into amicable solution to the controversial issue confronting both the parties.

Gautam used to regularly organize meetings of the intellectuals at Gujarat Vidhyapeeth which was attended by many intellectual professors including the Vice Chancellor Shri Sudarshan Iyangar. This group was ironically named as "Futile". In the same way, one such group used to assemble on a regular basis at "Narmad Meghani Library" near Mithakhali, where Dwarika Nath Rath, Prakash N. Shah, Meenakshi Joshi and other scholars expressed their view points. Gautam was entrusted the task of overseeing renovation and refurbishing of Mehndi Navaz Jang Hall and auditorium where he frequented for holding meetings, seminars etc.

It would not be out of place to mention that for releasing payment towards distribution of one book published by the Congress Party some person had demanded commission against which Gautam made vigorous protest. In the end the concerned person made entire due payment to Gautam.

Former General Secretary of Central Bank of India Employees' Union, after his retirement was staying at his native town – Hyderabad and Gautam came to know about his weak economic condition. Although Gautam was office-bearer of the rival Union, he arranged to make available required fund to support him, without arousing any feelings of indebtedness. That person's eyes were filled with tears of happiness and sense of gratitude. He said, "Gautam, we were unable to recognize you. In the true sense of word, you

are really a Radical Humanist."

While interacting with a number of political analysts who came here from U.S., U.K., Australia etc. Gautam emphatically told one point that, "Narendra Modi is our Prime Minister, and against him we do not have any personal conflict but our main protest is against policies and approach of his party viz., BJP. Looking at such a considered and healthy view point on the part of Gautam, foreign delegates felt wonder-struck.

Gautam happened to call upon Narayan Desai, a staunch Gandhian but then the latter kept on operating his spinning wheel. Upon this, Gautam retorted in clear terms that, "you may leisurely continue with rotating your spinning wheel, and allow us to leave off". Narayan Desai quickly sensed the true meaning of Gautam's assertion, and leaving aside his spinning wheel started to talk with Gautam. Agenda of the meeting was transfer of funds from one Trust to the other. After preliminary inquiry in the subject matter, Narayan quickly gave his nod to the said proposition. Gautam indeed was outspoken but was reverenced by respectable person like Narayan Desai.

The Owner of 'Sandesh' daily, Shri Falgunbhai was reluctant in acceding to one task. Reacting to this, Gautam plainly yet forthrightly told that "we had worked with your father, with sense of mutual co-operation". Taking this into account, Falgunbhai promptly assented to fully co-operate in the case matter. Gautam knew very well as how to get things done.

For mitigating injustice meted out to unorganized workers, Gautam held a number of discussions and deliberations with the Labour and Employment Minister. He single-handedly executed a number of onerous tasks, which even an institution as a whole cannot complete. If one tends to write on series of such tasks, then one would need to author an entire book to adequately enumerate Gautam's contributions.

Gautam had visited Delhi to call upon Energy Minister with prior appointment. But the Minister

was delayed and arrived quite late, to which Gautam conveyed his displeasure. Upon this, instead of expressing regrets or apology, the Minister tried to avoid that matter. Thereafter Gautam had a meeting with Ahmedbhai Patel to whom the former mentioned about approach and conduct of that Minister. To this, Ahmed Patel told, "You need not go to any body but directly come to my office and to whomsoever you want to meet, will be requested to come over here. This goes to prove Gautam's relations with political leaders and his personal impact.

When the Gujarat Govt. presented CAG report quite late, Gautam staged protest in public. During this protest agitation very few supporters had backed Gautam but in fighting against 'wrongs' he never bothered for the numerical strength of supporters. As a Political Analyst, he gave interviews to many news channels and always consoled himself saying that because of us life and wellbeing of others should flourish and

prosper. As rightly said, "Behind every successful man, contribution of his wife is valuable. Gautam's wife, Bhadraben, ever stood beside him to care, comfort and co-operate in many challenging tasks. Similarly, his only daughter, Mrs. Hiral and his son-in-law, Mr. Ashish Mehta always readily lent valuable support and co-operation in Gautam's endeavours. Gautam advised to her daughter that even when her son, Chandark, may study in English medium, but in daily routine he should be insisted to interact in the mother tongue which is Gujarati. Thus, Gautam was unequalled and insubstitutable man and shall forever remain so through his noble deeds that he pursued until the last moment of his mortal life. Passing away of Gautam is an irreparable personal loss to me!"

P.S. Author is Uncle of Late Mr. Gautam Thaker & Ex. Officer in various Offices in State Bank of India, Gujarat Region. 

Why RSS/BJP Hate JNU And Social...

Contd. from page 40 ...

The social science studies have now become the bastion of Shudra/OBC/Dalit/Adivasi youth. They seem to think that all those who study social science courses seriously, even though study Hindu texts, might come to same conclusion that Ambedkar came to. Hence nullification of social science higher education, particularly in serious universities like JNU has become their priority.

But that assumption itself is based on wrong notion of social sciences. Muslim mullahs also have similar understanding of social science studies. They also think that Reason based derivative study of Quran might lead to problems.

But what they do not understand is that when the religious texts are seriously studied with a sociological perspective lot of new interpretations would emerge and that would increase the 'Social Reasoning'. It is this social reasoning that causes advancement of science and technological knowledge. Such serious social science studies did not lead to abolition of Christianity in the West where very serious scrutiny of Bible and Christian history took place.

The recent organized attack on JNU teachers and students seems to have been done with a design to set the clock of university education back in India. There is a strong view among RSS/BJP leaders that mass votes do not depend on university struggles. But once universities collapse democracy, economy and the whole Indian modern social system will collapse. We will go back to medieval times and get dictatorship as it is in many Middle Eastern countries.

Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd is political theorist, social activist and author.

January 11, 2020 

“Selections From The Radical Humanist” hits 216 Not out

‘Selections from The Radical Humanist’ Volume I (1970 to 2005) and II (2006 to 2018) containing articles by all-time great Indian thinkers and intellectuals 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 on the periodicals page where ‘The Radical Humanist’ magazine is put every month. The two volumes are also available at

www.academia.edu and have been accessed from the following 220 cities, 84 in India and 136 across the world till 16 January 2020 Readers may download these volumes from there and read whenever they like.

- Mahi Pal Singh

Sr. No.	City, Country	Sr. No.	City, Country	Sr. No.	City, Country
1	Abu Dhabi (UAE)	30	Bhandara, India	58	Des Moines, IA, the US
2	Accra, Ghana	31	Bhilai, India	59	Dewas, India
3	Ajman, the UAE	32	Bhimavadiaram, India	60	Dhaka, Bangladesh
4	Ahmedabad, India	33	Bhopal, India	61	Dindigul, India
5	Alcobendas, Spain	34	Bhubaneswar, India	62	Doha, Qatar
6	Alegre, Brazil	35	Bilaspur, India	63	Dubai, the UAE
7	Aligarh, India	36	Boston, MA, the US	64	Edmonton, AB, Canada
8	Allahabad, India	37	Brasilia, Brazil	65	Electronics City, India
9	Amherst, MA, the US	38	Brighton, The United Kingdom	66	Enfield the U.K.
10	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	39	Bronx, NY, the US	67	Ernakulam, India
11	Arima, Trinidad and Tobago	40	Brooklyn, NY, the US	68	Europe
12	Arizona State University	41	Budva, Montenegro	69	Faridabad, India
13	Athens, Greece	42	Buffalo, NY, the US	70	Footscray, Australia
14	Auckland, New Zealand	43	CA US	71	France
15	Aurora, IL, the US	44	Cairo, Egypt	72	Ghaziabad, India
16	Balurghat, India	45	Calicut, India	73	Goharganj, India
17	Bangalore, India	46	Cameroon	74	Gonder, Ethiopia
18	Bangladesh	47	Cape Town, South Africa	75	Gorontalo, Indonesia
20	Banská Bystrica, Slovakia	48	Chandigarh, India	76	Göteborg, Sweden
21	Barnala, India	49	Chennai, India	77	Greeley, CO, the US
22	Barsat, India	50	Cheyenne, WY, USA	78	Groningen, the Netherlands
23	Batala, India	51	Chirala, India	79	Guararema, Brazil
24	Belgaum, India	52	Chittagong, Bangladesh	80	Guareña, Spain
25	Bellville, South Africa	53	Coimbatore, India	81	Guatemala, Guatemala City
26	Bénin, Nigeria	54	Cote D'Ivoire	82	Guelph, ON, Canada
27	Benoni, South Africa	55	Cotonou, Benin	83	Guntur, India
28	Beograd, Serbia	56	Cyprus	84	Gurdaspur, India
29	Berhampore, India	57	Dehradun, India	85	Gurgaon, India

Sr. No.	City, Country	Sr. No.	City, Country	Sr. No.	City, Country
86	Guwahati, India	131	Lucknow, India	176	Rodenbach, Germany
87	Haldia, India	132	Ludhiana, India	177	Rohtak, India
88	Haldwan, India	133	Malabar Hill, India	178	Rome, Italy
89	Hamma Bouziane, Algeria	134	Mandi, India	179	Ruwais, Qatar
90	Helsinki, Finland	135	Mathikere, India	180	Saint-cloud, France
91	Howrah, India	136	Medan, Indonesia	181	San Antonia, TX, The US
92	Huddersfield, the UK	137	Mahesana, India	182	San Salvador, El Salvador
93	Hyderabad, India	138	Melbourne, Australia	183	San Jose, Costa Rica
94	Indianapolis, IN, the US	139	Menomonee Falls, WI, the US	184	Sao Jose Do Rio Preto, Brazil
95	Indore, India	140	Middletown, OH US	185	San Jose, CA, the US
96	Irvington, NJ, the US	141	Milan, Italy	186	Santa Fe, NM , the US
97	Islamabad Pakistan	142	Mirpur Khas, Pakistan	187	Seattle, WA US
98	Izmir, Turkey	143	Morristown, NJ, the US	188	Secunderabad, India
99	Jaipur, India	144	Mossel Bay, South Africa	189	Sikar, India
100	Jakarta, Indonesia	145	Mountain View CA US	190	Sirajganj, Bangladesh
101	Jalpaiguri, India	146	Mumbai, India	191	Sonepat, India
102	Jammu, India	147	Muzaffarpur, India	192	Springfield, MO, the US
103	Jhelum, Pakistan	148	Neuvic, France	193	Srinagar, India
104	Jodhpur, India	149	New Delhi, India	194	Streatham, The UK
105	Johannesburg South Africa	150	New London, CT, the US	195	Stockholm, Sweden
106	Jorhat, India	151	New York, the US	196	Suri, India
107	Kanpur, India	152	Nigeria	197	Surat, India
108	Karachi, Pakistan	153	Noida, India	198	Suva, Fiji
109	Karaikudi, India	154	Novi, MI the US	199	Swartruggens, South Africa
110	Katsina, Nigeria	155	Ojo De Agua, Mexico	200	Switzerland
111	Kenya	156	Olney, MD, the US	201	Sydney, Australia
112	Kigoma, the UR of Tanzania	157	Ongole, India	202	Tenkasi, India
113	Koani, UR of Tanzania	158	Pacoima, CA, the US	203	Thane, India
114	Kolkata, India	159	Padaebom, Germany	204	Thrissur, India
115	Kota, India	160	Panjim, India	205	Toledo, OH US
116	Krugersdorp, South Africa	161	Pattambi, India	206	Toronto, ON, Canada
117	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	162	Perama, Greece	207	Trivendrum, India
118	Kuju, India	163	Perambalur, India	208	Uganda
119	Lagos, Nigeria	164	Phagwara, India	209	Vadodara, India
120	Lahore, Pakistan	165	Phoenix, Mauritius	210	Varanasi, India
121	La Mesa, CA, the US	166	Pickering, ON, Canada	211	Vishakhapatnam, India
122	Lamongan, Indonesia	167	Point Cook, Australia	212	Vijayawada, India
123	Ledyard, CT, the US	168	Poona, India	213	WA, The United States
124	Lepe, Brazil	169	Port Moresby Papua New Guinea	214	Warsaw, Poland
125	Lima, Peru	170	Pretoria, South Africa	215	Walworth, NY, the US
126	Loganville, GA, the US	171	Princeton, NJ, the US	216	Wellington, New Zealand
127	Lonavala, India	172	Pune, India	217	West Bengal, India
128	London, UK	173	Ramanathapuram, Ifndia	218	Wilmington, DE, the US
129	London SOAS University, UK	174	Ridge Spring, SC, the US	219	Wynberg, South Africa
130	Los Angeles, CA, the US	175	Riverside, CA, the US	220	Zambia

Narrow Mindedness of Scientists? Why? Look at the view of late M.N. Roy:

Narisetti Innaiah

Expert scientists often express bizarre views on subjects other than their field. Roy studied this matter and came to the conclusion that lack of synthetic approach with other subjects is the main reason. Suppose a chemist talks about biology and supports irrational matters; that means he never applied the synthetic approach. The Scientist who ignores biological research may support irrational religious views on astrology. This is happening day in and day out throughout the world, more so in India.

A scientist who was an expert in physics says in a public speech that humans did not evolve from monkeys directly! He also supports that in ancient India flying in sky through Pushpaka Vimanam (aeroplane) was achieved. They could not exhibit any proof of this except quoting the religious books.

M.N. Roy says that such things happen because the synthetic approach is totally lacking among scientists. That means, an expert scientist in one field never looks into the results of other branches and hence he is as ignorant as a lay person.

Hence the basic synthetic approach is necessary to have sane attitude towards different subjects.

That means the results of various scientific subjects may be approached through Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science. Then a chemist or astronomer will not talk nonsense about other subjects.

This approach is quite modern and needs to be popularised.

The media, while inviting subject experts, must brief them about the synthetic approach. A priest or pundit expressing views on astronomy without verification should not be given publicity. This should be observed by print media too.

Koganti Subrahmanyam

During 1950s when the Radical Humanist movement was facing difficulty in running regional journals, Mr. Koganti Subrahmanyam came to the rescue in Andhra Pradesh, India.

Koganti was a simple school educated peasant who was President of village panchayat for 6 years in Kuchipudi village near Tenali, Andhra Pradesh, India.

M. N. Roy, the pioneer of the Radical Humanist movement, died in January 1954. There was sudden vacuum but his intellectual wife Ellen filled the gap and took responsibility of running The Radical Humanist journal in English.

In Tenali, Telugu fortnightly journal Radical Humanist faced financial crisis. At that critical juncture Mr. Koganti Subrahmanyam jumped in and took the responsibility of running the journal. He was a disciplined Radical Humanist who translated some articles of Roy into Telugu. He was well trained in the Radical Humanist thought.

But during 1970s he had to migrate to Khammam area for livelihood. He died in early 1970s.

