

THE RADICAL HUMANIST



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M.N. ROY

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HE SPOKE BOLD TRUTH!



“In the last twelve years, we have witnessed
‘unexplained interference by the government’
in the selection of judges in India. The
objective of appointing the best possible
judges has not been served.”

- SENIOR ADVOCATE AND
FORMER HIGH COURT CHIEF JUSTICE,
DR. S. MURALIDHAR

679

BLACK SHEEP IN JUDICIARY IS INCREASING; COURTS NOW MUTE SPECTATOR TO LIBERTY VIOLATIONS.

JUSTICE DEEPAK GUPTA WRITES



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11

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THE RADICAL HUMANIST

Vol. 90, Number 07, October 2026

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CONTENTS :

Page No.

Articles and features:

We are all Dimagi Naxals 4
PUCL Bulletin Editorial Board

In the light of Jantar Mantar, Congress and BJP 7
Vandita, The Indian Express

The Question of Erasing 120 Million Votes: Is Democracy in India Being Killed Without a Bullet? 9
Pratap Saharan

ARE POOR SAVARN SECOND CLASS CITIZENS? 13
S.N. Shukla

Zoya Hasan's Independence Day Speech on Why Pluralism Matters, Which She Was Prevented from Delivering 19
Zoya Hasan

Swaraj Is Freedom from Xenophobic Nationalism 24
Faisal C.K.

Wither Democracy: Post Jantar Mantar India 27
Ram Puniyani

Why ill-functioning private educational institutions must be nationalised 29
Sandeep Pandey

Why an 850-seat Lok Sabha threatens Indian democracy 32
Shashi Tharoor

WHY WE SUPPORT THE WAR 34
Ellen Roy

The Humanist Frame: Human Potentialities 39
Aldous Huxley

Poem: 'Meeting Kailas' 42
Raju Z. Moray

October 2026

THE RADICAL HUMANIST

3

Articles and Features :

We are all Dimagi Naxals!

PUCL Bulletin Editorial Board

On 15th August, 2026, on the 80th anniversary of India's independence, Prime Minister Modi, identified a new threat, the so-called 'Dimagi Naxal'. In the Prime Minister's words, while the armed Naxals had been defeated, the ideology continues to live. Those who embodied it needed to be identified and isolated, he announced.

While this labelling of an opposition is something we are used to, from the Prime Minister, considering his previous coinages of 'Tukde Tukde Gang', 'Khan Market Gang', 'Andolan Jeevi' and 'Urban Naxal', there was something new about this coinage. By using the word 'Dimag', the Prime Minister seemed to imply that the very act of thinking is an offence. The Prime Minister shockingly disregards the constitutional imperative under which the right to think enjoys unconditional protection.

Article 19(1) of the founding document of international human rights law, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that, 'Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.' The only basis for restricting opinions under Article 19(3) is when opinions are expressed through 'print', 'art', or 'any other media'. The basis for restricting opinion are grounds such as 'national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.'

There is no limitation on the right to hold opinions. The right to hold opinions without interference is crucial as the human personality develops through this right. When one uses the word 'conscience', it is fundamentally about the right to hold beliefs which may be at odds with what the family, society or nation thinks.

It is about allowing for the expression of individual opinion, regardless of what the collective may think. The Preamble to the Indian Constitution, by setting liberty as one of the constitutional ideals, sanctifies the idea that people can think differently and to protect the right to be different is at the very heart of the Indian Constitution.

The Prime Minister through the coinage of 'Dimagi Naxal', expresses his reservations about this constitutional guarantee according to which each individual should be allowed to develop in accordance to his or her way of thinking. For the Prime Minister, when such free 'thought' aligns with the ideology of Naxalism, a crime is in the offing.

However, it may not be too far from the truth, to say that for the Modi regime, you may fall under this category simply for disagreeing with their policies, raising questions or criticising them.

The Prime Minister by creating this new national enemy called the 'Dimagi Naxal', who has to be 'identified' and 'isolated' is declaring himself in alignment with the criminalisation of thought crime in Orwell's dystopian novel, 1984. As per Orwell, 'the essential crime that contained all others in itself' was the 'Thoughtcrime'. In Orwell's totalitarian state, citizens were terrorized into submission by the 'thought police'.

The right wing ecosystem latched on to this idea of a 'thought crime' and sought to 'identify' and 'isolate' all those who disagreed with the policies of the Union Government as 'Dimagi Naxals' on social media. When a pillar of the establishment such as former Home Minister, P. Chidambaram (who was himself

guilty of human rights violations committed in the name of eradicating Naxalism) tweeted that 'I am proud to be a Dimagi Naxal', something had changed.

Modi's previous attempts at 'identifying' and 'isolating' those who opposed the policies of the BJP government through disparaging labels such as 'Urban Naxal' and 'Tukde Tukde Gang' did not see the political class resist by embracing those labels. In the past it was mostly left to courageous civil society voices, be it Girish Karnad who wore a placard saying, 'I am an Urban Naxal' or Arundhati Roy who called herself 'a proud Andolanjeevi' to challenge the government's narrative of labelling all opposition to its policies as 'anti-national'.

The new vocabulary of protest while using satire, also drew from the history of India's independence movement. This was best embodied in the formation of the online Dimagi Naxal Party which gathered a strong online following in just a few hours. The Dimagi Naxal Party declared that its manifesto is to 'question everything', 'think critically', 'seek facts' and 'follow the Constitution 'claiming the tradition' of Bhagat Singh, who they noted 'inspired rational thinking, scientific temper and fearless questioning'. Bhagat Singh in their estimation 'read more books in jail than most cabinets read in a term' and was therefore the quintessential 'Dimagi Naxal.'

The pushback seems to have made the Prime Minister realise that Indians used to the constitutional protection of the freedom of speech and expression will not easily submit to the policing of thought itself. The icons of Indian independence, be it Bhagat Singh or Ambedkar, were fierce advocates for the freedom of thought and this historical current could not be delegitimised so easily.

Pushed to a damage control mode, in a rare comedown, the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Kiren Rijiju was forced

to clarify on X that,"PM @narendramodi ji didn't say opposition leaders as Dimagi Naxals. Only following are Dimagi Naxals: 1. Who support Maoists and reject Indian Constitution. 2. Who stand with separatists & support Article 370. 3. Who want to cut chicken neck to separate North-East from India."

However, this clarification did little to address the crucial question as to whether the BJP was willing to abide by the values of the Indian Constitution. If according to Rijiju, the Prime Minister meant that Dimagi Naxals were those who supported Maoists and rejected the Indian Constitution, the best response comes from the archive of human rights lawyering. When eminent human rights lawyer and former president of the PUCL, K.G. Kannabiran was asked in court as to 'why should Naxalites who do not believe in the Constitution take shelter under it?', he replied, "When such issues come before the court, it is your values and not their values that are on trial. It is the values enshrined in the Constitution and the values of the state that are under test." Simply put, the expression of a viewpoint which rejects the Constitution is protected speech under the Constitution.

The second category created by Rijiju is the support for Article 370; this has been voiced by politicians, media and civil society. It cannot be a criminal offence to voice a political opinion at odds with the way the Modi government has responded to the Kashmir issue.

Regarding the third category, it must be noted that there is a test laid down by the Supreme Court as to when speech can be restricted under the sedition law. In *Balwant Singh v. State of Punjab* in 1995, the Supreme Court adjudicated the question as to whether shouting slogans including, "Khalistan Zindabad" in a crowd the day Indira Gandhi was assassinated amounted to sedition. The Supreme Court noted, "We find it difficult to hold that upon the raising of such casual

slogans, a couple of times without any other act whatsoever the charge of sedition can be founded.” In simple terms, even the advocacy of the viewpoint that the “chicken neck should be cut to separate North-East from India” is not an offence. It is only when such advocacy becomes incitement to the act that the statement can become a criminal offence. In *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*, the Court held that discussion and advocacy of any cause, however unpopular, lies at the heart of Article 19(1)(a), and that only incitement may be restricted.

What cannot be forgotten is the context in which the Prime Minister made his remarks. Just a month ago, a wave of student protests initiated by the Cockroach Janata Party had pushed the government on the backfoot and forced the resignation of the Minister for

Education, Dharmendra Pradhan. Clearly the label of ‘Dimagi Naxal’ was nothing other than a preemptive move to target the burgeoning student movement now spanning both Gen Z and Gen Alpha.

In the time going forward it is likely that we will see even more critical speech. We will also see new forms of association both online and offline to ventilate the grievances of all those dissatisfied with the current government. We are also likely to see more protests by students, workers and all those dissatisfied with the status quo.

The constitutional protections of speech, association and assembly are likely to be tested as never before. It is up to ‘we the people’ to ensure that our freedoms are not taken away.

We are all Dimagi Naxals!

Courtesy **PUCL Bulletin**, Sep 01, 2026. 🌈

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Reader's Comments

Excellent issue (September 2026), as usual. Congratulations.

S.N. Shukla

In the light of Jantar Mantar, Congress and BJP

If the students' movement is important for the light it throws on others and the silences it breaks long after its full-throated voice has faded — if “Gen Z” is not merely the new player of an old game — the question is: What has it made more visible, what looks clearer after Jantar Mantar, even if just a bit? From this vantage point, take a look at the BJP and Congress, the ruling party and its main Opposition, as they face the people, and as they go about their inner lives.

The BJP is in its third term at the Centre, a staleness is setting in. There is a restlessness, even among the believers. A journey through poll-bound Uttar Pradesh in June, just as the Jantar Mantar agitation was taking off in Delhi, turned up signposts of the Yogi-Modi double engine sputtering, and of other discontents gathering around the issue of exam paper leaks.

The issues are not new — price rise and corruption, education and jobs. But the first is given a sharper edge by a faraway war, while the students' upsurge frames the last two more starkly. Education and jobs also present a twin challenge that defies the pre-election quick-fix. On education, too, the BJP's choices over 12 years have now returned to haunt — of pouring its political capital and energy, despite the claims and boasts of the National Education Policy, into the conquest of institutions and advancing of ideological projects, instead of reforming systems and modernising processes.

Voices are also now being raised against the pall of fear that has made speaking up against the government costly for critics, and the wielding of “bulldozer justice” by BJP state governments against a voiceless minority especially, copying a template set in UP.

Add to that the “chanda chori” controversy

at the Ram temple in Ayodhya, which sings the BJP-RSS leadership intimately, and the caste question, re-opened by anti-reservationists and by the backlash sparked by the UGC regulations against discrimination — the BJP seems back on the tightrope on Mandal, and newly defensive on Mandir.

The BJP that faces these new vulnerabilities is a party of growing resentments within. The tight Modi-Shah grip at the centre means that many of the discontents are not voiced openly, at least not in Delhi, but down the line, the cracks are showing.

The glee of BJP leaders in Bihar at their own party's Bankipur rout, for instance, was a pointer to unease in the party with the anointment of Samrat Choudhary. Choudhary's elevation as chief minister is part of a pattern of uninspiring state-level promotions and appointments by a high command that wants to retain control, above all. Or take the rumblings underway in the BJP's West Bengal unit about opening the door too wide to let the defeated opponent in. The spectre of “Trinamoolification” of the party in a state where the mandate was more against the TMC than for the BJP is made worse by the absence of state-level BJP leadership that could calibrate the pace, manage the friction between new and old.

Murmurs can also be heard in the BJP's senior leadership against the increasing outsourcing of decision-making to professional political consultancies. A party that has prided itself on its well-oiled machinery and its sprawl of committed karyakartas is being presented to-do lists and perception indexes by the omnipresent external agencies. When consultants are given too large a place at the table, senior BJP leaders point out, party forums can weaken and wilt.

On the other side of the political fence, it is now being said that Rahul Gandhi is pulling ahead of his own party. More than before, the journey through UP also showed that voters acknowledge that Gandhi is raising resonant issues, and persisting in taking the fight to the BJP.

But Gandhi's outreach to the young, through the "Chhatron ki Goonj" programmes, for instance, or his dharna outside the PM's residence recently, or his six-hour sit-in at a police station to force an FIR over a student's pellet injuries — all frame a leader without the party. In fact, in the case of the latter two events, they showed the leader taking his party by surprise. Like his two cross-country yatras earlier, these events and programmes frame Gandhi's breakthrough, while pointing to a Congress standstill.

The Bharat Jodo yatras, from Kanyakumari to Srinagar, and then from Manipur to Mumbai did turn public perceptions vis a vis Gandhi — they helped him climb out of the corner he had been pushed into by his own lack of a strong politics/government CV, and by the BJP's propaganda machine. But since then, Gandhi seems to be making his way forward without carrying his party with him.

This is not just because Congress, out of power for long, is burdened with inertia and slowed down by factional infighting. It is also because of Gandhi's scepticism towards the party he owns.

There are many images of this distrust. Of the yatris who flocked to Gandhi from civil society, marched alongside him during his two yatras, made common cause with him, only a

handful were later inducted in Congress, little effort was made to create room for them in the party. The coterie that surrounds Gandhi and controls access to him is made of those who did not come up from the Congress ranks, and that almost seems to be his inner circle's USP. It is Gandhi's apolitical team, not his party's youth wings, the NSUI or Youth Congress, that controls and curates the stage during "Chhatron ki goonj".

Gandhi may well have decided that he is better off taking the plunge alone, until he can get the party of his dreams. But by not working through the party, and by distrusting its instruments and processes, he is complicit in leaving many of its organisational crises unattended.

The toll is especially visible in the poll-bound states of Punjab and UP. In UP, the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee, dissolved in 2024 to jumpstart an overhaul ahead of the 2027 assembly election, is still to be reconstituted. In Punjab, there are no empty spaces, but there is open infighting, the party is divided into jostling camps that do not meet.

In the aftermath of the students' movement, then, are two parties, which did not expect the sudden shaft of light on them, and which still seem blinded by it. They need to find their bearings again, and find a new way forward. That is their test, after Jantar Mantar.

Till next time,

Vandita

Opinions Editor.

Courtesy The Indian Express,

30 August 2026. 🌈

The Radical Humanist is available

At our own website: <http://www.indianrenaissanceinstitute.com> at: 'The Radical Humanist' page and also at: <http://www.lohiatoday.com/on-periodicals> page, thanks to Manohar Ravela who administers the site on Ram Manohar Lohia, the great socialist leader of India.

– Mahi Pal Singh

The Question of Erasing 120 Million Votes: Is Democracy in India Being Killed Without a Bullet?

Pratap Saharan

It is dangerous to describe SIR merely as “cleaning up the electoral rolls.” The real question is: Whose votes are being erased, and why?

The biggest question facing India’s democracy today is not who will form the next government. The question is: Who will be left to vote in the next election?

A massive change is being carried out in the electoral rolls in the name of Special Intensive Revision, or SIR. According to political economist Parakala Prabhakar, husband of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, approximately 120 million names have reportedly been removed from the electoral rolls across various phases so far. This is not a minor administrative figure.

120 million is not a small population. Only a handful of countries in the world have populations larger than this. Therefore, this is a question concerning hundreds of millions of democratic voices.

And when such a massive number of names are removed, it should not be sufficient for the Election Commission to simply say that this is “cleaning up” the electoral rolls.

We must ask: Whose rolls are being “cleaned”? On what basis? On whose orders? Through what process?

And most importantly: Were the people whose names were removed given a genuine opportunity to establish their eligibility as citizens and voters?

If the answer is no, then this is not a technical matter.

It is a direct assault on democratic rights.

“If the Population Is Growing, Then Why Are the Number of Voters Falling?”

Parakala Prabhakar’s most fundamental question is extremely simple.

India’s population is growing. The population above the age of 18 is also growing. Then how

can there be a decline of crores of voters?

Yes, the names of deceased people should be removed. Yes, duplicate names should be removed. Yes, the records of people who have permanently shifted their place of residence should be updated.

But if a person has moved from one Assembly constituency to another, that person has not disappeared from India. Their vote should simply be transferred to another place.

A citizen does not disappear. Only their constituency changes.

Therefore, if crores of voters are disappearing at the state and national levels, the Election Commission has a moral and democratic responsibility to account for every deletion.

No vague press note.

No hiding behind technical terminology.

No slogan of “data cleaning.”

If you have deleted a name, tell us why.

The Biggest Question: Whose Votes Are Disappearing?

This is where the matter becomes even more serious.

Prabhakar claims that among the deleted names, people belonging to minority communities, Dalits, Adivasis, the poor, daily-wage workers and other marginalized sections are being disproportionately affected. He also alleges that women are being disproportionately affected.

These claims must be independently and rigorously investigated.

But the question is: Who should be afraid of such an investigation?

If the process is completely impartial, what is the problem with making the complete deletion data public?

Give us state-wise data.

Give us district-wise data.

Give us Assembly constituency-wise data.

Give us reason-wise data.

While protecting sensitive personal information based on caste, religion and gender, make the aggregate statistics public.

Then the country itself can see whether there is any pattern.

If there is no wrongdoing, transparency will clear it up.

And if there is a pattern, hiding it would be a betrayal of democracy.

A Game Bigger Than Winning an Election: Removing the Voter from the Field Itself?

This is where it can be dangerous to understand SIR merely as electoral arithmetic.

One political party may lose 500,000 votes in an election. Another party may gain 500,000 votes.

That is democracy.

But if an eligible citizen's name itself is removed from the electoral roll, that person cannot vote either for or against any political party.

In other words, a citizen has been removed from the field even before the electoral contest begins.

This is not losing an election. This is losing the right to participate in an election.

And if this happens on a massive scale, the question is no longer merely about the election result. The question becomes:

Who is being considered a part of the political society, and who is not?

Those Without Votes Have No Political Power Either

Imagine that 500 families live in a colony, but nobody's name appears on the electoral roll.

Why would an MLA go there?

Why would a councillor ask for their votes?

Which political party would care about their problems?

Whom would these 500 families approach and demand:

We need water.

We need roads.

We need schools.

We need hospitals.

We need electricity.

We need employment.

The basic bargain of democracy is this:

The citizen votes, and the representative answers.

But if the right to vote itself is taken away from a citizen, this relationship of political representation is broken.

That person may continue to live in the country.

They may pay taxes.

They may work.

They may raise children.

But if their democratic voice is absent from the electoral roll, their bargaining power within the political system becomes weaker.

This is precisely why understanding voter deletion merely as the removal of some names from a computer system is extremely dangerous.

Do Not Turn Democracy into a Technical Problem by Calling It a "Technical Process"

It is very easy to describe SIR as a "technical exercise," "electoral roll cleaning," or "purification."

But democracy is not an Excel sheet.

A voter is not a database entry.

And a citizen is not a record that can simply be deleted without a valid procedure.

Behind every name there is a human being.

A family.

A life.

A political right.

And a constitutional identity.

Therefore, the real question is not how many duplicate records existed in the system.

The question is:

How many genuine, living and eligible citizens have had their voices erased because of error, negligence or a systematic process?

The Numbers from Bihar, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala to Gujarat and Rajasthan Must Be Accounted For

Prabhakar has referred to large numbers of deletions in different states.

According to him, approximately 9.3 million

names in West Bengal, 9.7 million in Tamil Nadu, 2.4 million in Kerala, 7.7 million in Gujarat, 4.5 million in Rajasthan and 4.4 million in Madhya Pradesh have reportedly been removed.

Changing electoral rolls on such a massive scale cannot be treated as routine housekeeping.

It demands a nationwide democratic audit.

And then comes the most frightening question: Do the people whose names have been removed even know that their names are gone?

This may be the most dangerous aspect of the entire matter.

An urban, educated and resourceful citizen may check their name.

But what about the poor?

The daily-wage worker?

The migrant?

The illiterate citizen?

The woman living in a remote area?

How will she know that her name has been removed from the electoral roll?

And what if she discovers on election day that her name is simply not there?

By then, it may be too late.

In a democracy, the most dangerous way of depriving a citizen of their vote is a process of which the citizen is not even aware.

The Election Commission Must Answer

There is no need here to defend any political party.

There is no need to declare any opposition party innocent either.

There is only one issue:

The Election Commission must answer.

How many names were removed?

Why were they removed?

On what basis were they removed?

Which officer took the decision?

How many people appealed?

How many names were restored?

How many people were found eligible?

How many were declared ineligible?

How many people were not given an opportunity to present their case?

Every question requires a documentary answer.

In a democracy, saying “we followed the procedure” is not an adequate answer.

Because the procedure itself falls within the scope of public scrutiny.

If Everything Is Fine, Then Why Fear CCTV and Documents?

Parakala Prabhakar has raised questions regarding transparency surrounding documents related to the electoral process, polling records, CCTV footage, videography and other records.

When allegations are made against a constitutional institution, the strongest response in a democracy is:

Open the records.

Allow an investigation.

Conduct an independent audit.

Make the data public.

If the allegations are wrong, put the facts before the public.

But if the records themselves are unavailable in response to questions, then suspicion does not disappear. It grows.

Political Parties Are Also Being Tested

This is not only a test for the Election Commission. It is also a test for opposition parties.

Because if a politician’s only concern is, “Were my voters removed or the opposition’s?”, then that politician has failed to understand the democratic problem.

Today, your supporter may be removed.

Tomorrow, the name of my supporter may be removed.

But the principle in a democracy must be:

Every eligible citizen’s vote must remain protected.

Political parties should create national data on “Deleted Voters.”

They should establish grievance centres in every state.

They should conduct voter-verification campaigns in every Assembly constituency.

And they should raise the voice of every citizen

whose name has been removed without proper justification.

Because a Citizen's Vote Is Not the Property of Any Political Party

This needs to be repeated again and again:

A citizen's vote does not belong to the BJP.

It does not belong to the Congress.

It does not belong to the TMC.

It does not belong to the DMK.

It does not belong to the SP.

It does not belong to any leader.

The vote belongs to the citizen.

And the right to exercise it comes from the Constitution and the law, not from the generosity or goodwill of any political party.

Therefore, protecting the vote of an eligible citizen is not "partisanship."

It is the protection of democracy?

"Bloodless Political Genocide" - The Words Are Harsh, But the Questions Are Even Harsher
Parakala Prabhakar describes the potential impact of SIR as "bloodless political genocide."

This is an extremely serious political expression and should be understood as his political analysis, not as an established factual conclusion.

It is easy to dismiss the phrase.

But it is much harder to answer the questions behind it.

If the names of crores of citizens have been removed, we must ask:

Were they actually ineligible?

If yes, where is the evidence?

If not, why were their names removed?

If it was an error, how many names were restored?

And if a citizen has to fight the system itself merely to prove their right, where is the accountability of that system?

Today, the Question Is Not the Election. It Is the Very Existence of the Voter

India's democracy rests on the belief that citizens are equal.

Their votes are equal.

Their political voices are equal.

If this principle is weakened, elections could become nothing more than a ritual.

The ballot box will remain.

The EVM will remain.

Elections will take place.

Results will be declared.

But if crores of eligible citizens are pushed out of the electoral process, we will have to ask ourselves:

Did we save democracy, or did we merely keep the machinery of elections running?

The Time to Remain Silent Is Over

If your name is on the electoral roll, check it.

If your family's names are there, check them.

Ask the people around you.

Ask in your village.

Ask in your colony.

Ask at your polling booth.

And if the name of an eligible citizen is missing, do not leave that person alone.

Tell them:

"Your vote is not a favour granted by anyone. It is your right."

Ask questions of the Election Commission.

Ask questions of political parties.

Ask questions of the administration.

And most importantly, demand answers in documents.

Because in a democracy, a citizen cannot be told: "First prove that you have the right to vote."

The question must be reversed:

"If you have removed my vote, first prove why you did so."

That is accountability.

That is democracy.

And if the country does not ask questions even after the names of crores of voters have been removed, then the danger is not limited to the votes of those whose names have disappeared from the electoral rolls.

The danger is to everyone who believes that their name will still be there next time.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19HMTRViRx/?mibextid=wwXIfr> 

ARE POOR SAVARN SECOND CLASS CITIZENS?

S.N. Shukla

Swami Vivekananda enunciated the axiom of 'Daridranarayan' espousing that service to the poor is equivalent in importance and piety to service to God. Mahatma Gandhi devoted his entire life in the service of Daridranarayan. In March 1931 he wrote "*I am working for winning swaraj for those soiling and unemployed millions who do not get even a square meal a day and have to scratch along with a piece of stale roti and a pinch of salt*". As quoted in the 'Thought for the Day' in the Times of India dated 28.6.2018 Gandhiji also said "*Poverty is the worst form of violence*"

The Preamble of the Constitution of India begins with the resolve to constitute India into a *socialist* republic and to secure to all its citizens Justice, social, economic and political. As put by the late CJI Mr. Justice R.C.Lahoti in his book 'Preamble: the Spirit and Backbone of the Constitution of India', "*This is the sum total of the aspirations incorporated in part IV of the Constitution relating to the Directive Principles of State Policy.*" The concept of the social and economic justice – to build a welfare state has been recognised as a "basic" feature of our Constitution. Without social and economic justice there cannot be political justice. Likewise, a just social order cannot be established without removing inequalities in income and status. Apparently, no social and political justice is possible without ensuring economic justice. The economic justice envisaged in the Preamble of the Constitution can be achieved only thorough the economic empowerment of the poor of **all** communities and castes since poverty transcends religion and caste.

Article 37 of the Constitution of India provides that the Directive Principles therein laid down in Part IV *are nevertheless fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall*

be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws. While clarifying the object and purpose of Article 37, Prof. Sibhan Lal Saxena had said:

"I, therefore, think that *this chapter is not merely a chapter of pious wishes, ...*This is a very important chapter which lays down the principles which will govern the policy of the State and which, therefore, *will ensure to the people of the country the realisation of the great ideals laid down in the Preamble*". (Constituent Assembly Debates Vol.VII date-19.11.1948).

Article 38 of the Constitution provides that the State shall, in particular, strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst group of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations. In this connection the following words of Dr. Ambedkar while replying to the debate on Article 38 are highly significant-

"*The Constitution also wishes to lay down an ideal before those who would be forming the Government.*", and "... our object in framing this Constitution is really twofold: (i) to lay down the form of political democracy, and (ii) to lay down that our ideal is economic democracy and also to prescribe that every Government whatever, it is in power, shall strive to bring about economic democracy," (Constituent Assembly Debates Vol.VII date-19.11.1948)

Article 39 provides that the State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means to livelihood. Article 41 provides for right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases. Article 46 provides for promotion of educational and economic and interests of *other weaker*

sections also besides SCs and STs. Article 47 of the Constitution provides that the State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and *the standard of living of its people* and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties.

In the case reported in AIR 1950 SC 27 the Supreme Court held that the directive principles be regarded as being not temporarily will of majority but as *'the deliberate wisdom of the nation manifested when settling the paramount and permanent law of the country'*. In (1992) 3 SCC 666 the Apex Court held that "The Preamble promises and the directive principles are a mandate to the State to eradicate poverty so that poor of this country can enjoy the right to life guaranteed under the Constitution. *The state action or inaction which defeats the constitutional mandate is per se arbitrary and cannot be sustained*". In AIR 1997 SC 645 (para 38) the directive principles were described as the forerunners of the UN Convention on the Rights to Development as an inalienable human rights.

In the case of Olga Tellis (1985) 3 SCC 545 the Constitution Bench observed as follows-

"The principles contained in Articles 39(a) and 41 must be regarded as equally fundamental in the understating and interpretation of the meaning and content of fundamental rights. If there is an obligation upon the State to secure to the citizens an adequate means of livelihood and the right to work, it would be sheer pedantry to exclude the right to livelihood from the content of the right to life".

Thus, it is the duty of the State to follow the Directive Principles in the matter of administration as well as in the making of laws since they embody the aims and objectives of the Welfare State. The directive principles have been held to supplement the fundamental rights

for achieving the welfare of the people.

In the case of Peerless General Finance and Investment Co. Ltd. Reported in (1992) 2 SCC 343, the Apex Court observed as follows-

"The solidarity of political freedom hinges upon socio-economic democracy. The right to development is one of the most important facets of basic human rights. The right to self interest is inherent in right to life. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, said that "Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary, to clothe and house himself."

Likewise, in the case reported in (1997) 5 SCC 10 the Apex Court held that "Right to life enshrined in Article 21 means right to have something more than survival and not mere existence or animal existence. It includes all those aspects of life which go to make a man's life meaningful, complete and worth living".

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that *"Everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care"*. Right to life includes the right to live with basic human dignity with necessities of life such as nutrition, clothing, food, shelter over the head, facilities for cultural and socio-economic well being of every individual. Article 21 protects right to life. It guarantees and derives therefrom the minimum of the needs of existence including better tomorrow.

According to news paper reports in July 2014, as per UN Study 1/3rd of world's extreme poor were in India and a US government report bracketed UP with Syria and Iraq.

Same year about 22.9% or about 276 million Indians were considered poor as per the estimate of the Planning Commission whose poverty measuring methodology was criticised. Those spending less than Rs. 32 daily per capita

in urban areas and Rs. 26 in rural areas were considered poor by the panel. *Needless to say that these poor did not belong to only certain communities or castes.* As the then President of India put it succinctly:” *Poverty has no religion, hunger has no creed*”.

That poverty directly adversely affects right to life guaranteed under Article 21 is also evident from the fact that as per Table 2.10 of the National Crime Research Bureau Report 2016, out of 133623 persons who committed suicide in the country in the year 2015, more than 70% were having annual income of less than Rs 1 lakh. Not only this, as per Table 2.6 of the said report 18.8% victims were daily wage earners and 8% were unemployed. Evidently, they belonged to all castes and communities and death did not exempt general category persons, unlike the State depriving such BPL persons of beneficiary oriented schemes meant exclusively for certain castes or communities.

Thus, *even after 75 years of independence* a sizeable population of the country is living in pecuniary and sub human conditions without proper satisfaction of even the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Obviously, the efforts made by the successive governments in this regard have not been adequate and inclusive and have left much to be desired. As a result, while the gap between the rich and the poor has been increasing, a very large section of population continues to be poor as per government’s own figures. *Apparently, concerted time bound measures at the level of the Central and state governments are required if India has to translate into reality the theme of the Global Citizen Festival-Removal of poverty by 2030 held in 2015.*

While addressing the BJP Parliamentary party after being elected as its leader in 2014, the present Prime Minister pledged to serve the poor, the youth and women. He was reported to have said “*Sarkar woh ho jo gareebon ke liye soche, jo gareebon ki sune, jo gareebon*

ke liye jiye, nayi sarkar gareebon ke liye samarpit hai.” In his message to Supreme Court Bar Association on the occasion of National Law Day on 26.11.2014 he again expressed his concern for the deprived sections of the Society.

In the webinar organized in 2022 by RSS-affiliate Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, RSS general secretary Dttatreya Hosabale himself flagged the issues of poverty, unemployment and rising inequality in the country. As per the news report “**RSS alarm: Status of poverty, inequality, unemployment**” published in the Indian Express dated 4.10.2022, while the percentage of poor people declined from 55% in 1973 to 21% in 2019, **their absolute number increased** from 321 millions to 346 millions. Likewise, while the average annual income of the bottom **50%** population was Rs. 55,000 that of the top **1 %** population was Rs. 44,44,000. The share of half the population in the total income was only **13%** while the top **1%** population cornered **22%** of the total income.

In view of the constitutional mandate and the law laid down by the Apex Court cited above, provision of State assistance only to SCs/ STs/OBCs/Minorities leaving out poor population of general category (called Savarn) *fulfilling the same eligibility criteria* is, therefore, clearly against the avowed object of economic democracy envisaged by the framers of the Constitution.

Accordingly, this writer sent a representation dated 16.6.2014 to the Chief Secretary of UP Government saying that in view of the provisions in Articles 14, 38 and 47 of the Constitution, the benefit of all beneficiary oriented schemes for poor OBCs and Minorities should also be extended to the below poverty line (BPL) families of all other categories of population who fulfil the same criteria.

However, there was no response to it. Subsequently, he sent another representation dated 8.2.2015 to the Chief Executive Officer

of NITI Aayog, Government of India, requesting that the Aayog may consider extending the benefit of existing beneficiary oriented schemes for OBCs and minority communities to poor persons of general category also and advise the central/state governments to adopt economic criteria, instead of caste/community, as the basis of beneficiary oriented schemes to be introduced in future. Thereafter, information was sought from the CPIO of NITI Aayog about decision of the Niti Aayog on the suggestion contained in the letters dated 8.2.2015 and 4.3.2015 addressed to the then CEO of the Aayog. The CPIO, instead of providing the information simply replied that fund allocation/assistance is not done in NITI Aayog.

In view of the inaction on the part of Central and State Governments in this matter of fulfilling the constitutional mandate in respect of sizeable population of general category (Savarn) poor people, and their failure to even consider the very fair and reasonable suggestion in the aforesaid representations judicial intervention became necessary in this matter of great public and national importance so as to promote equitable growth of the entire indigent population and thereby ensure social harmony and peace. Accordingly, this writer along with the former Principal Coordinator of UP Planning Commission Mr.G.N.Pandey filed in **November 2018** a PIL writ petition No. WPIL 23531/2018 in the High Court at Lucknow.

The said writ petition was filed for fulfilment of the resolve in the Preamble of the Constitution in accordance with the Directive Principles of State Policy and for enforcement of the fundamental rights of the poor persons of general category under Articles 14,15 and 21 of the Constitution. The short, innocuous, fair and constitutionally permissible relief sought in the writ petition was that the benefit of all existing and future beneficiary oriented schemes meant exclusively for SCs/STs/OBCs and minorities be extended to below poverty line (BPL)

persons of all other castes and communities also who fulfill the eligibility criteria under the scheme *since poverty transcends caste and religion*. Provision of State assistance only to SCs/STs/OBCs / Minorities leaving out poor population of general category *fulfilling the same eligibility criteria* is also clearly against the avowed object of economic democracy envisaged by the framers of the Constitution. The petitioners' case was fully supported by the constitutional mandate and the law laid down by the Apex Court cited in the WP and Brief of submissions. If the benefit of 10 percent reservation in matters of public employment and admission in educational institutions could be extended to EWS persons of general category, the Prayer in this writ petition also deserved to be allowed following the same principle which already stands upheld by the Constitution Bench in WP (C) No. 55/2019 reported in [2022] 14 SCR 1.

There could be hardly any objection to the relief sought in the writ petition. Still, having no answer to the petition on merits, counter affidavits on behalf of the state government, and NITI Aayog were filed only after 4 years and the one by the Union of India was filed after 5 years along with applications *seeking dismissal of the written petition*. These belated counter affidavits also did not address the real issue *as to why the benefit of existing beneficiary oriented schemes meant exclusively for SCs/STs/OBCs and minorities should not be and cannot be extended to the below poverty line families/persons of all other castes and communities of general category also* in view of the aforesaid constitutional mandate.. As held in the case reported in (1986)3 SCC 20 (Para1) the Directive Principles are “*fundamental in the governance of the country and are to be applied by states in making laws*”. Evidently, these observations apply with greater force to administrative actions/schemes. In view of the Preamble, Articles 14 and 21 and Part IV of

the Constitution. As held in (2008) 6 SCC 1 (Para 605): “Caste matters will continue to matter as long as we divide society along caste lines. Caste based discrimination remains. Violence between castes occurs. Caste politics rages on. Where casteism is present, the goal of achieving a casteless society must never be forgotten. Any legislation to the contrary should be discarded”

Notably, the 103rd amendment to the Constitution cited in the counter affidavit of NITI Aayog itself supports the case of the petitioners. Hence, the stand of the respondents was clearly unsustainable. The opposition to this writ petition was prima facie untenable since it is against the discrimination among economically backward sections of society *entirely on the basis of caste and creed* which is against the observations of the Apex Court in the following cases-

(1) Ashoka Kumar Thakur vs Union Of India (2008) 6 SCC 1

- (i) “On careful analysis of the Constituent Assembly and the Parliamentary Debates, one thing is crystal clear: ‘our leaders have always and unanimously proclaimed with one voice that our constitutional goal is to establish a casteless and classless society’.” (Para 363)
- (ii) “Once economic criteria remove the relatively wealthy families (from all castes and communities), a ‘class’ will remain. This ‘class’ is known as ‘the poor’. The class would share the same characteristic, irrespective of caste. They would all lack money”. (para 591)
- (iii) “The poor have no caste. A person belonging to a higher caste should not be made to suffer for what his forefathers had done several

generations back. Should this class of people be kept out of the mainstream of governmental priorities and policies because they belong to a particular caste”. (Para 317)

(2) Kerala Hotel & Restaurant Assn. v. State of Kerala (1990) 2 SCC 502, (para 5) : “The emphasis on economic equality in our socialist society has to pervade all interpretations made in the context of any challenge based on hostile discrimination”.

Evidently, the opposition to the non-adversarial PIL speaks volumes about the concern of the Prime Minister and his Central and state governments for the poor. It also exposed the hollowness of the statements of the PM reported in the Times of India dated 8.7.2023 that “Self respect of poor is my guarantee” and that “Poor have first right on resources” and is a glaring example of the chasm between words and deeds and of befooling the poor for political benefit.

However, the writ petition was disposed of *without dealing with the basic issue of violation of fundamental rights of the poor of general category* overlooking that opposition to the writ petition by the Id. Counsel for the respondents was against the repeated public declarations of the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister and completely ignoring the reply of petitioners to the submissions of the Id. counsel for the opposite parties and while relying only on the inapplicable rulings cited by them, *without even noticing*, leave alone considering, *even one out of a dozen and a half rulings* of the Apex court cited by the petitioners in their pleadings and written submissions *on record*.

Thereupon, the petitioners filed the Review Application detailing more than two dozen grave errors of fact and law in the judgment. However, the Review Application was also dismissed by a cryptic order dated 17.11.2025 completely

ignoring the submissions made in it. Notably, the order dismissing the Review Petition says that “The arguments were on the same lines as the grounds mentioned in the review application.” Since the arguments were NOT on the lines as the grounds in the writ petition the observation “Rehearing of the matter cannot take place in the garb of review application” could not follow from it. On the contrary, the order does not even mention, leave alone deal with, the blatant errors of fact and law apparent on the face of the Record detailed in the Review Application and the grounds taken in it clearly fulfilling all the three conditions in Order 47 Rule 1 of the CPC and was passed in total disregard of the case law cited in the Review Application. As such, the conclusion that none of the grounds for review “are attracted in this case” was patently without any basis and clearly unsustainable.

Thereupon, the petitioners filed SLPs D No.807 of 2026 for an authoritative pronouncement by the Apex Court on the issue concerning enforcement of fundamental rights of crores of the poor of the general category under Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution in accordance with the Directive

Principles of the State Policy and the law laid down by the Constitution Bench in the case relating to 10 percent reservation for EWS of General Category. However, the SLPs were dismissed in limine by a non-speaking order dated 12.3.2026 saying:

“We are not inclined to interfere with the impugned judgment(s)/ order(s) of the High Court. Accordingly, the Special Leave Petitions are dismissed.”

Notably, the order did not indicate as to why the Hon’ble Court was not even “inclined” to consider the matter concerning clear violation of fundamental rights of crores of general category poor people in the state, leave alone dealing or even mentioning the irrefutable grounds taken in the SLP. The opposition of the state and Central governments to the writ petition against repeated public declarations of the PM and CM and upholding of their stand by the High Court and even the Apex Court raises a million dollar question as to whether the general category poor people are second class citizens not entitled to state assistance to other poor people. At least, this is the position as of now.

S.N. Shukla is I.A.S.(retd.), Advocate, General Secretary, Lok Prahari 

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- Mahi Pal Singh,
Editor, The Radical Humanist

The Idea of India: Pluralism and Inclusive Nationalism – 2 Articles

Zoya Hasan's Independence Day Speech on Why Pluralism Matters, Which She Was Prevented from Delivering':

Professor Hasan was to deliver this talk on pluralism, democracy, and the constitutional idea of India at Delhi's Sardar Patel Vidyalaya. The school cancelled the talk citing "security concerns" and "VHP goons". Also: Swaraj Is Freedom from Xenophobic Nationalism'.

Zoya Hasan, Faisal C.K.

August 9, 2026.



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The Idea of India: Pluralism and Inclusive Nationalism – 2 Articles

Zoya Hasan's Independence Day Speech on Why Pluralism Matters, Which She Was Prevented from Delivering

Zoya Hasan

[The following is the speech Professor Zoya Hasan, Professor Emerita, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, was scheduled to deliver as chief guest at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya's Independence Day function in Delhi on August 14. She could not deliver it after the

school, citing "security concerns" and "VHP goons", prevented her from participating in the function at the last minute.

A note from Professor Hasan: This is the speech I was to deliver as chief guest at the Independence Day function of Sardar Patel

Vidyalaya on August 14. It would have been a great privilege to speak on an occasion that marks our country's independence and celebrates the values of pluralism and inclusion. I was particularly honoured by the invitation, not least because of the distinguished public intellectuals who have preceded me, but also because of my deep regard for Sardar Patel Vidyalaya and its contribution to progressive schooling and public education. Unfortunately, I was unable to deliver the speech. So, here it is.]

India is the world's most diverse and deeply plural society, home to an extraordinary variety of religions, languages, castes, tribes, communities, customs and ways of life. This diversity is woven into the fabric of our everyday existence. Most Indian households speak two or even three languages with ease. Our national anthem itself celebrates this remarkable plurality, invoking Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Maratha, Dravida, Utkala and Banga in a single verse. The Indian identity has never rested on one language, one religion or one culture. It has always allowed people to be many things at once.

This raises an important question. How has India, despite such immense diversity, remained united as one nation? The answer lies in an idea that has shaped the Republic since Independence. It rests on two closely connected principles: a plural understanding of the people and a democratic state that treats every citizen as an equal, irrespective of religion, caste, language or region. These principles found their institutional expression in the constitution through its commitment to liberty, equality, justice and fraternity.

Pluralism, however, is much more than the coexistence of different communities. Diversity is simply a social fact. Pluralism is a political and ethical commitment. It means ensuring that every citizen enjoys equal rights, equal dignity and equal opportunities, and that

no identity is accorded privileged status over another. It is this commitment that has enabled India to accommodate difference while preserving national unity.

As we celebrate Independence Day, it is worth remembering that these principles emerged from the freedom struggle. India's struggle for independence was one of the largest mass movements in world history. It united people across regions, religions, castes and classes in pursuit of a common goal. Equally important, it articulated a vision of India based on freedom, equality and democratic citizenship. These ideals were reflected in Congress resolutions long before Independence and eventually found their fullest expression in the Preamble and the Constitution of India.

Partition itself demonstrated that dividing territory could not eliminate social plurality. Religious plurality was only one dimension of India's social complexity. Differences of language, caste, ethnicity and region remained. India's founders therefore rejected the search for social or cultural homogeneity. Instead, they undertook the far more ambitious task of building a democratic republic that belonged equally to all its citizens.

In doing so, they departed from a dominant European assumption of the time, that a successful nation-state required cultural or religious uniformity. India chose a different path. It demonstrated that a deeply diverse people could nevertheless constitute one political community, bound together not by sameness but by equal citizenship.

The constitution, which emerged from the freedom struggle, became the institutional foundation of this vision. It guarantees equal rights to every citizen and defines citizenship in civic rather than religious or ethnic terms.

Every Indian belongs equally to the Republic. Although the constitution has been amended many times, its basic structure has

endured. There has never been a wholesale replacement of the constitution, not even during the Emergency. That continuity has been one of the principal sources of India's democratic resilience. Secularism is an essential part of this constitutional vision. It has been interpreted in different ways, but the debates in both the Constituent Assembly and Parliament make one principle unmistakably clear: the Indian state must extend equal respect and protection to all religious communities. This differs from models of secularism that insist on a strict separation of religion and state.

At its core, Indian secularism affirms that people of every faith stand equal before the constitution, the law and the state. This ideal has never been perfectly realised, and deep social inequalities continue to challenge the creation of the inclusive society envisaged by the constitution. Yet the constitutional commitment remains one of equal citizenship for all.

The institutions of the Indian state have also played a vital role in sustaining this vision. The All India Services were consciously designed to strengthen national integration. An officer from Rajasthan may spend an entire career serving in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal or Assam. To serve effectively, civil servants must learn local languages, understand local cultures and become part of the society in which they work.

The armed forces embody the same principle. Although many regiments have distinct historical identities, they serve across the country, reinforcing the idea that service to the nation transcends regional and cultural boundaries. These institutions have helped knit India together.

India's democratic experiment remains one of the most remarkable in modern history. Few countries that emerged from the collapse of European empires succeeded in sustaining democracy. India appeared particularly unlikely to do so. It was vast, poor, deeply unequal and

extraordinarily diverse in terms of religion, language, caste, ethnicity and culture. Its hierarchical social order seemed ill-suited to the principle of political equality.

Yet against all expectations, India not only adopted democracy but sustained it. For nearly eight decades, governments have been elected and defeated, courts have functioned, constitutions have been defended, political parties have competed, and hundreds of millions of citizens have participated in elections. Democracy became much more than a constitutional arrangement. Its diversity transformed the political imagination, allowing citizens to see themselves as equals before the law and as active participants in shaping the country's future.

One important reason for this success lies in India's federal structure. Federalism has given recognition and political voice to the country's remarkable regional, linguistic and cultural differences. India's constitutional design sought to balance national unity with regional autonomy. Federalism was never merely an administrative arrangement; it was a political acknowledgement of the country's plural character.

States provided linguistic and cultural communities with democratic space while keeping them within a common constitutional framework. Federalism and pluralism have therefore reinforced one another, enabling India to remain united without demanding uniformity.

Yet this constitutional vision has not gone unchallenged. Today, it faces its most serious test from the rise of majoritarian politics.

The greatest challenge before India today concerns pluralism itself. Increasingly, India is being reimagined not as an inclusive republic but as a nation defined primarily by a single religious identity. Pluralism is increasingly portrayed as an obstacle to national unity rather than as its foundation. This marks a profound departure from the constitutional understanding

of India. The founders recognised the complexity of India's social fabric and designed institutions capable of accommodating it. The contemporary impulse, by contrast, seeks to privilege one identity over others and to redefine national belonging in narrower cultural terms.

This shift has significant political consequences. Pluralism rests on the principle that every citizen enjoys equal dignity and equal membership of the political community. Majoritarianism, by contrast, privileges the identity of the majority and gradually transforms it into the defining characteristic of the nation. Constitutional rights may formally remain intact, yet the idea of equal citizenship is steadily weakened when some citizens come to be seen as belonging more naturally than others.

A second challenge concerns the meaning of nationalism itself. The nationalism forged during the freedom struggle was inclusive and civic, grounded in the idea of equal political membership rather than a shared religious or cultural identity. It sought to build a common political community across profound social differences, making unity a product of coexistence and common citizenship rather than conformity.

Contemporary political discourse increasingly advances a different understanding of nationalism. It equates national unity with cultural homogeneity and often regards dissent or difference with suspicion. When nationalism becomes identified with a single identity or culture, it can easily slide into majoritarianism. Citizenship is then subtly redefined. Some groups come to be regarded as the nation's natural owners, while others are expected continually to demonstrate their loyalty and belonging.

Comparative experience – from Pakistan and Sri Lanka to Israel – illustrates the tensions and democratic deficits that such arrangements

can produce.

The challenge is not confined to pluralism alone. It also concerns the future of democracy. Universal adult franchise was introduced in one of the world's poorest and most unequal societies. It was among the boldest democratic experiments of the twentieth century. But democracy requires much more than regular elections. It depends upon genuine political competition and the real possibility that governments can be peacefully replaced through public debate and the ballot box.

Majoritarian politics seeks to transform a numerical religious majority into a permanent political majority. It makes electoral success increasingly dependent on identity rather than performance. Once political competition gives way to permanent majorities, democracy begins to lose one of its defining features – the possibility of alternation in power. Elections may continue to be held, but their democratic meaning is gradually diminished if the outcome appears predetermined.

Federalism, too, has come under increasing strain. India's constitutional design balanced national unity with regional autonomy because the framers understood that a country of continental dimensions could not be governed through excessive centralisation. States have provided linguistic and cultural communities with democratic space while remaining integral parts of the Union.

When political and administrative authority becomes increasingly concentrated at the Centre, one of the principal mechanisms through which India has historically accommodated its plural character is weakened. Federalism and pluralism have reinforced one another; weakening one inevitably affects the other.

Apart from all the features I have mentioned so far, public protests have always been an integral part of Indian democracy.

From the freedom struggle onwards, popular movements have expanded rights, deepened citizenship and held governments accountable. Peaceful protest is not a sign of weakness in a democracy; it is one of the ways in which democracies renew themselves. The Indian constitution protects not only the right to vote but also the right to question, debate, dissent and protest peacefully.

India's constitutional framework rests on a distinctive understanding of how unity can be sustained in a plural society. It envisages a political community held together by equal citizenship, democratic institutions and federal accommodation. The alternative vision seeks greater cultural uniformity, stronger centralisation and a more majoritarian conception of political community. This contest lies at the heart of contemporary Indian politics.

History offers sobering lessons about the fragility of political unity in deeply divided societies. Many such states, including Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and Pakistan, eventually fractured or broke apart. India has remained united because it recognised and accommodated its profound social differences rather than seeking to suppress or eliminate them. Its success has rested on political accommodation rather than assimilation, and on constitutional inclusion rather than cultural uniformity.

The defence of the constitutional idea of India is therefore not the defence of an abstract ideal or of a particular political tradition. It is the defence of the constitutional republic itself. India has endured and flourished as one nation because its unity has been built on political accommodation rather than enforced uniformity. That remains the central promise of the freedom struggle, the guiding spirit of the constitution and the most precious inheritance we celebrate on Independence Day.

The question before us, therefore, is not simply whether India will remain democratic. It is whether it will remain faithful to the constitutional vision upon which its democracy was built.

The answer cannot come from institutions alone. Constitutions matter. Courts matter. Laws matter. But ultimately, they depend upon citizens who believe in them and practise their values in everyday life. Respect for difference, a willingness to listen to those with whom we disagree, and a commitment to equal citizenship are habits that every democratic society must cultivate. No constitution, however well-drafted – and ours is a remarkable one – can preserve itself if the values on which it rests disappear from public life.

This responsibility falls especially upon young people. Every generation inherits the constitution, but every generation must also renew it through its own choices. India's future will depend not only on governments and courts but also on the imagination, civic commitment and democratic convictions of its citizens.

As we celebrate our Independence Day, we must remember that the constitution is not simply a document written nearly eight decades ago. It is a living promise that each generation is called upon to uphold. The future of Indian democracy will depend, in large measure, on whether your generation, the Alpha generation, keeps that promise alive.

Happy Independence Day.

[Professor Zoya Hasan is a distinguished Indian political scientist and Professor Emerita at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, where she has also served as Dean of the School of Social Sciences. Courtesy: The Wire, an Indian nonprofit news and opinion website. It was founded in 2015 by Siddharth Varadarajan, Sidharth Bhatia and M. K. Venu.] 

Swaraj Is Freedom from Xenophobic Nationalism

Faisal C.K.

On September 7, 1964, American television screens flickered with an innocent vignette that instantly crystallised the supreme horror of the modern age: a young girl standing in a sun-drenched meadow, plucking petals from a daisy and counting clumsily toward 10.

Before she could complete her tally, her gentle cadence was drowned out by a metallic voice counting backward toward detonation. As the camera zoomed deep into her pupil, the frame was consumed by the blinding flash of a thermonuclear fireball. Over the roaring mushroom cloud, Lyndon B. Johnson delivered an uncompromising ultimatum: “These are the stakes: to make a world in which all of God’s children can live, or to go into the dark. We must either love each other, or we must die.”

The “Daisy” advertisement was conceived as political drama, but it laid bare a fundamental civilisational truth: when tribal hubris commands instruments of total destruction, the margin between survival and obliteration becomes thinner than a flower petal. Six decades later, the mushroom cloud remains an ever-present peril, yet the catalyst accelerating humanity toward the brink is no longer confined to traditional ideological confrontation – it is fuelled by the resurgent virus of xenophobic nationalism.

The pathology of exclusionary nationalism

Across the globe, the foundational concept of the nation-state has increasingly been weaponised into an altar of exclusionary, blood-and-soil dogma. It demands unearned pride in deeds never performed, fuels animosity toward people never seen, and reduces the rich tapestry of human coexistence to a zero-sum siege against an imagined enemy. This pathology continually mistakes belligerence for strength and insularity for pride. When married to nuclear arsenals, border militarisation, and

ecological collapse, such chauvinism ceases to be mere political rhetoric – it becomes an existential death pact for humanity.

It is precisely here that the classical promise of *Swaraj* demands urgent philosophical reclamation. True *Swaraj* – as conceived in the crucible of anti-colonial thought and moral philosophy – was never merely a transfer of power from foreign rulers to indigenous elites, nor was it the erection of higher walls around a fortress state. It was an ethic of inner mastery: a radical refusal to mirror the supremacist, dominating impulses of the oppressor. To achieve true self-rule, a society must first liberate its own consciousness from the violent neurosis of xenophobia.

If *Swaraj* cannot free us from the paranoid hatred of the “Other,” it merely trades external subjugation for internal tyranny. In an interconnected century where humanity’s collective survival hangs in the balance, authentic *Swaraj* requires the courage to choose universal empathy over mutual annihilation – ensuring the child in the meadow finally finishes her count.

Empathetic and syncretic nationalism

As S. Irfan Habib highlights in *Indian Nationalism: The Essential Writings* (2017), while contemporary loud voices would have us believe that Indian nationalism is – and has always been – narrow, parochial, and xenophobic, the subcontinent’s finest political leaders, thinkers, scientists, and writers have debated the concept since the early 19th century and arrived at a vastly different conclusion.

Figures of the Indian National Movement – including Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, C. Rajagopalachari, Sarojini Naidu, Bhagat Singh,

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Rabindranath Tagore, M.N. Roy, Maulana Azad, and Jayaprakash Narayan – articulated an inclusive, emancipatory, and humanistic nationalism. This outlook stood in stark contrast to modern hyper-nationalism anchored in aggressive cultural homogenization. While rigid forms of nationalism existed during the freedom struggle, they remained peripheral.

Speaking in Allahabad, Sarojini Naidu invoked the *Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb* as the syncretic cornerstone of Indian nationalism. She observed that the confluence (*Sangam*) of the Ganga and Jamuna, where two distinct rivers meet without either losing its intrinsic character, symbolises enduring Hindu-Muslim unity.

The pioneering Indian scientist Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray further reinforced the syncretic foundations of the nation. Delivering the convocation address at Jamia Millia Islamia in 1923, he observed: “India, as she has come to be, is a composite nationality- outsiders would say that it is only a heterogenous mass- but that mass, that composite structure is informed and unified with the golden thread of a common loyalty to the motherland.”

Ray noted that while Muslims arrived in India for various reasons at different points in history, centuries of shared life made India their undeniable home and the sole object of their allegiance. Employing an incisive analogy, he added: “with equal reason may the descendants of William the Conqueror in present day England transfer their allegiance to France, and I say with equal reason may the Hindus , as descendants of the Aryans, make Hijrat to Central Asia. The very idea is ridiculous”.

Mahatma Gandhi anchored this ethos in an empathetic nationalism. In his 1909 germinal work *Hind Swaraj*, he formulated a struggle against the British Raj that remains exceptionally rare in world history: a manifesto that sought not the annihilation of the oppressor,

but his moral refinement and salvation. Addressing a gathering in Calcutta in 1925, Gandhi explained that the national struggle against British rule did not require animus toward individual Britons; the battle was waged against the systemic machinery of imperialism and subjugation they administered: “in my humble opinion, it is derogatory to the dignity of mankind, it is derogatory of India to entertain for one single moment hatred towards Englishman”.

For Gandhi, genuine nationalism served as an essential prerequisite for true internationalism—two positions he viewed as entirely complementary. Reflecting on European nationalism, he wrote: “it is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil”.

In this framework, nationalism is merely an evolutionary milestone preparing humanity for an imminent internationalism. As Yuval Noah Harari observes in *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* (2018), confronting unprecedented nuclear, ecological, and technological disruptions necessitates global cooperation over insular posturing; retreating into parochialism risks inviting civilizational apocalypse.

India’s foreign freedom fighters

The moral depth of India’s anti-colonial movement is powerfully evidenced by its capacity to inspire solidarity far beyond geographic and cultural borders, as chronicled in Ramachandra Guha’s *Rebels Against the Raj: Western Fighters for India’s Freedom* (2022). Seven remarkable Western figures – Annie Besant, B.G. Horniman, Philip Spratt, Samuel Evans Stokes Jr. (Satyanand Stokes), Ralph Richard Keithahn, Madeleine Slade (Mira Behn), and Catherine Mary Heilemann (Sarala Behn) – renounced imperial privilege to champion Indian liberation.

Unlike foreign volunteers in conflicts like the Spanish Civil War who returned to their

homelands, these rebels made India their permanent home, crossing profound racial, religious, and colonial divides. Through fearless journalism, political mobilisation, rural reform, and grassroots ecological activism, they endured surveillance, imprisonment, and social ostracism, rejecting the imperialist dogma of racial hierarchy in pursuit of the universal cause of colonised peoples.

Their enduring legacy demonstrates that India's foundational conception of nationalism was never an insular, exclusionary, or xenophobic creed, but a humanistic struggle against systemic oppression. By dedicating their lives to a land not originally their own, these foreign freedom fighters embodied the classical ethos of *Swaraj* as a project of moral universalism and inner liberation. Authentic self-rule cannot simply mean exchanging external domination for domestic chauvinism; it requires dismantling the xenophobic reflexes that divide humanity. Ultimately, remembering those who crossed empires to struggle alongside strangers reminds us that patriotism finds its highest expression not in hostility toward the "Other," but in an unwavering commitment to human dignity, syncretism, and global coexistence.

Reflecting on the wider significance of their lives in the prologue to his book, Ramachandra Guha writes: "The lives and doings of these individuals constitute a morality tale for the

world we currently live in. This is a world governed by paranoia and nationalist xenophobia, with rise of jingoism in country after country, and corresponding contempt for ideas and individuals that emanates from outside the borders of one's nation. Narendra Modi, and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in India, Donald Trump and the white supremacists in America, Boris Johnson and the Brexiteers in England, Xi Jinping and his Confucian Communist Party in China- all see themselves as uniquely blessed by history and by God. No foreigner, they believe, can teach them anything. This book tells us that they can"

As India marks its 80th Independence Day, reclaiming the founding spirit of its freedom struggle is an urgent imperative: an empathetic and syncretic nationalism rooted in universal humanism, mutual respect, and ethical self-restraint. True freedom demands dismantling the parochial and xenophobic impulses that threaten both domestic harmony and global peace, reaffirming *Swaraj* as an enduring promise of collective liberation.

[Faisal C.K. is Deputy Law Secretary to the Government of Kerala. Courtesy: Courtesy: The Wire, an Indian nonprofit news and opinion website. It was founded in 2015 by Siddharth Varadarajan, Sidharth Bhatia and M. K. Venu.]

Courtesy **Janata Weekly** 9 - 16 August 2026 issue. 🌈

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michaelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

Martin Luther King



Wither Democracy: Post Jantar Mantar India

The multiple protests at Jantar mantar have shaken our body politic to no end. While the Cockroach Janta Party precipitated the series of protests, the underlying resistance to Government suppression was very much painful to the society. While the protests had the face of paper-leaks, serious lapses in the social-political system were the foundations on which these protests took the form they took. The orders of pellet guns and guns brought in an element of total revulsion. The issue was so horrific that the ruling Governments major leaders, PM and HM did not dare to attend the Parliament's session. They kept hiding behind the make-believe façade of opposition not letting the discussion in the House.

The protests had three vague poles, The Cockroaches, the left oriented youth and Congress led protests. The outcome was miraculous as the atmosphere of fear created by the regime, which has been best labelled as 'elected autocracy' had snubbed the protests and criticism of Government policy by labelling these as Anti National etc. and using their might as and when possible by suppressing the voices of Human rights activists by all means possible. Umar Khalid and Sharjil Imam being in jail for over six years without trial is the case study to reflect the state of Human Rights in India. The arrests of activist's intellectuals in the Bhima Koregaon case is yet another reflection of the same. The institutional murder of Fr. Stan Swamy shows the nature of cruelty of the system.

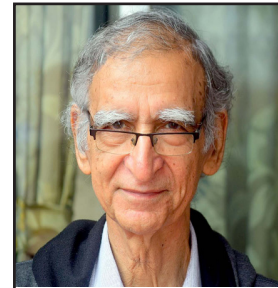
After the protests the pall of inhibition seems to have been lifted. Protests by what is called Gen alpha are spreading at places. While Godi media remains the same, the social media-Instagrams, YouTube videos and twitter-Facebook seem to have come up in their march towards acting as the mirror of the society. The regime which began by labelling the whole

spectacle as being sponsored by anti national, terrorists and all their favourite abuses, which dictators proffer. The intensity of the spectacle was so strong that RSS, the parent of BJP,

Bajrangdal et al changed its language and tried to be champion of upholding protests. Mohan Bhagwt, the RSS Chief, went to the extent of organizing a meeting with 2000 Gen Zees and preached to them the virtues of democracy.

Interestingly in this meeting someone asked him as to why RSS did not hoist the tricolour for 52 long years after Independence, he diverted the question by spinning the tale of some incident related Tricolour in the Indian Nation Congress convention and wriggled out of the uncomfortable situation. Luckily there was no one in the audience to ask him as to why they burnt the effigy of Ambedkar. Anyway, His followers are celebrating it as a great example of democracy. His followers are also telling that places where protests are controlled lead to 'Grammer of Anarchy' (The protests which can upset the appplecart of the ruling dispensation). One recalls that so far, the major protests against Government policy have been suppressed or bypassed by the RSS progeny.

The farmer's movement was totally ignored. In this nearly 600 farmers lost their lives till the Government withdrew the three farm laws for electoral reasons. Case of Shaheen Baugh protests is more painful as the protests were ignored, demonized and communal violence was orchestrated to bypass the Shaheen Baugh protests. One also recalls the JNU protests were suppressed, demonized



Ram Puniyani

(tukde tukde gang) and the attempt to change the nature of the University, converting it into a right-wing den.

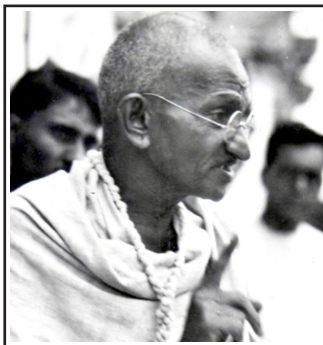
As such the ideology of RSS, the one of Hindu Rashtra has no place for democratic ethos where dialogue with dissidents is the norm rather than something to be done when an unavoidable necessity, as in the case of Bhagwat's attitude this time around. The very concept of Nationalism in the name of religion is totally opposite to democratic ethos. RSS had opposed the democratic Constitution right from beginning as emerging from the feudal remnants of colonial society, it harps on hierarchy at all levels. While we have been identifying caste and gender hierarchy, the one at economic level is being more manifest is the economic hierarchy in the form of nakedly supporting the Crony capitalists and upper layers of society during the last 12 years in particular. Expecting democratic ethos from such ideologies, from those upholding nationalism is totally wrong.

Can we expect a democratic resistance and change of the dispensation from an autocratic one to democratic one, the one upholding Indian Constitution and values secularism, democracy and inclusive nationalism? It appears that at present the erosion of democratic institutions and restoration of democratic norms in the society is a big challenge to be combated. The protests which started from Jantar mantar have gripped the whole country as the basic problems of the

average people have been suppressed. While lots of winds of fresh air are blowing, the deeper rot brought in by the Hindu nationalists runs much deeper. The hate against Muslims and Christians has become fairly well rooted. The infiltration of RSS pracharaks (propagators) is very deep, as witnessed in Election Commission, ED, CBI, bureaucracy, Police and of course in our universities and teaching institutions. These can be undone but a long process of rooting the Indian culture, which developed here in our palimpsests, (according to Nehru, standing for diverse layers living and interacting in peace) which reached a very admirable peak during India's freedom movement has been totally undermined by the 100 years of RSS work which is reached far and wide, and fairly deep.

It is a matter of great relief that these protests have led in dissipating the atmosphere of fear. It will certainly bind us Indians, the way the freedom movement did. The question which we face in the future is the restoration of political parties' power which are committed to the Indian Constitution. While appreciating the present atmosphere where one can breathe, hopefully, the challenge remains of combating the communal capture of the state.

The next step is a very tough task, but crucial for restoring us to the 'Idea of India', which emerged during the freedom movement. One needs to salute the youth who have cracked into an inhibitory atmosphere and also plan for the things to be done at electoral level. 🌈



"Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Why ill-functioning private educational institutions must be nationalised

Sandeep Pandey



Under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, a District Education Officer can impose a fine on a school operating without government approval. Yet a private university can apparently run professional courses without the requisite recognition, leaving hundreds of students to face an uncertain future.

Surajmal University, located in Kichha, about 12 km from Rudrapur, the district headquarters of Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand, is a private institution. Like many private educational institutions, it appears to have been established with the expectation of

generating profits. Among the courses it offers are B.Sc. Nursing and General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM), of four and three years' duration respectively.

When the first batch of GNM students graduated, they discovered that their qualification was not recognised by the Indian Nursing Council (INC), as a nursing qualification ought to be. The B.Sc. Nursing students soon realised that they, too, faced the same predicament. Their future suddenly looked bleak. Who would employ them without a recognised degree?

The university's website mentions "INC

Suitability Approval” for these two courses, whatever that phrase may mean. If the courses do not have the recognition required under the applicable norms, the university has a responsibility to explain this clearly to students and parents. Families are paying substantial fees—often from their hard-earned income and, in some cases, through loans. The annual fee for the B.Sc. Nursing course is reportedly more than Rs. 1 lakh. A primary school cannot function without government approval, yet here we have a university offering professional courses whose recognition is in question.

The students have been protesting outside the university’s main gate for about a month. After the police initially tried to browbeat them, the District Magistrate of Udham Singh Nagar submitted an enquiry report to the state government on 4 August. The state government subsequently issued a show-cause notice to the university.

On 19 August, the Deputy Secretary, Medical Health and Medical Education, Government of Uttarakhand, asked Surajmal University to explain why its Essentiality Certificate should not be annulled in view of alleged violations of established INC norms. The university has also been asked to put admissions for the next academic year on hold.

It now appears that some action may finally be taken against the university. But what happens to the students who have already graduated, those who are about to graduate, and those still enrolled remains unclear. The government must work out a solution that protects the careers of these students. This could involve transferring them to another recognised institution or, if necessary, taking over the university and putting its affairs in order.

The Surajmal University episode, however, is only a symptom of a much larger crisis in Indian education. If we leave aside the country’s elite institutions, the state of

education in ordinary schools, colleges and even universities is deeply disturbing. In far too many places, education has become a farce. Teachers, managements and education department officials have collectively failed students.

Teaching is often only nominal. Where institutions are fortunate enough to have teachers, students may still remain disoriented. Unfair means during examinations are widespread. When students have not been taught properly, copying becomes almost inevitable. External examiners may be willing to award marks in return for money. Education, in such circumstances, becomes synonymous with corruption.

Private universities themselves are established under Acts of state legislatures. There have long been allegations that money and political influence play a role in securing such approvals and appointments. The office of the Vice-Chancellor, which should represent academic leadership and integrity, can instead become entangled in political and financial interests. When universities are treated as sources of revenue rather than as institutions devoted to learning, the consequences are bound to be disastrous.

The same is true of appointments and administration. If academic institutions become instruments of patronage and rent-seeking, those who run them have little incentive to uphold academic standards. The result is a system in which every possible source of revenue is exploited, while the interests of students are relegated to the background.

When privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation became the dominant policy framework, private educational institutions were presented as an answer to the inadequacies of the government-run education system. The assumption was that competition and private investment would improve efficiency and quality. But private institutions

have not necessarily delivered on that promise.

A government institution, at least in principle, is accountable to the public through established administrative and legislative mechanisms. In a private institution, accountability can be far less transparent. Owners may be distant from day-to-day operations, while Vice-Chancellors can be reduced to little more than administrators with limited authority. Students and parents are often left wondering whom they should approach when something goes seriously wrong.

In such a situation, where can one expect honest teaching and genuine learning? Students are increasingly left to fend for themselves. If they learn anything, it is often because of their own efforts rather than because the educational system has enabled them to learn.

The deeper problem is that an education system does not merely produce degrees; it also shapes the values and habits of the people who pass through it. If students grow up in an environment where rules can be bypassed, marks can be purchased and qualifications can be obtained without learning, they may come to regard such behaviour as normal.

When people shaped by such a system eventually occupy positions of responsibility, they may reproduce the same culture in public life. The consequences are visible in the erosion of institutional credibility and the growing perception that money and influence can purchase almost anything.

There is therefore little reason to expect our present education system to produce the innovators, researchers and socially responsible citizens that the country needs. A system designed primarily around examinations, certificates and commercial interests will inevitably encourage mediocrity unless teaching and learning are placed back at its centre.

The movement undertaken by the

Cockroach Janata Party, which began around the issue of the NEET paper leak, has now expanded to encompass broader questions of educational reform. So far, much of the discussion has focused on infrastructure and institutional arrangements. But the more difficult question is how to ensure that teachers actually perform their responsibilities honestly and effectively.

Quality education ultimately depends on what happens inside the classroom. Infrastructure can provide the physical conditions for learning, but it cannot substitute for a committed teacher. And education is not merely the transfer of information. It also involves the cultivation of values. Those values can be inculcated only when teachers themselves practise them.

That is the real challenge. Can teachers who have themselves emerged from a deeply compromised educational system transform themselves into the inspirational, quintessential gurus that a healthy education system requires?

The crisis at Surajmal University should therefore not be treated as an isolated administrative irregularity. It should prompt a larger question: if a private educational institution fails its students so fundamentally that their degrees and careers are placed at risk, should the government merely issue notices and impose penalties, or should it intervene directly to protect the students?

Where private management has demonstrably failed and students' futures are at stake, nationalisation or government takeover may sometimes be the only effective remedy. Education is too important to be left to institutions that treat students primarily as sources of revenue. The ultimate responsibility for protecting the right to meaningful education must rest with the state.

The writer is Secretary General, Socialist Party (India) 🇮🇳

Why an 850-seat Lok Sabha threatens Indian democracy

An oversized legislature where the vast majority of members have no voice suits an executive that prefers compliance over scrutiny

Shashi Tharoor



With an oversized Parliament, a vast majority of MPs will never get to ask a question, initiate a private member's bill, or participate in a substantive debate during their entire five-year tenure. (Source: PTI)

The government's seeming determination to proceed with a revised delimitation that drastically increases the size of the Lok Sabha to 824 or 850 seats marks a disastrous watershed in India's institutional architecture. The underlying justification offered by the government is purely mathematical: The size of the Lower House cannot remain frozen at the 543-seat limit established in 1972, since when the nation's population has more than doubled. Yet, beneath this seemingly democratic argument lies a profound hazard.

Amid all the other major challenges of the looming delimitation exercise — notably the severe political and federal friction caused by penalising southern states for successful population control, while disproportionately rewarding the northern Hindi heartland for its failures — a basic question remains unaddressed: Does it make any sense to have a legislature so massive and structurally unwieldy? No established democracy does.

Every mature democratic system

recognises that a Parliament must be capped at a size that permits genuine legislative scrutiny, cohesive debate, and individual member participation. By choosing to push the Lok Sabha towards 850 seats (a size no other democratic legislature has), India is charting an anomalous and dangerous course. Democratic theory and global practice consistently show that beyond a threshold, a legislature ceases to function as a deliberative body and deteriorates into a chaotic colosseum where only a select few can speak, while the rest are reduced to passive spectators, mere numbers on voting machines.

After all, the United States House of Representatives was legally capped at 435 in 1929, when the United States population stood at 120 million. Today, the American population has tripled to over 335 million, yet the size of the House remains at 435. Americans recognise that increasing the number of representatives to match population growth would paralyse the legislative process. Instead, each member simply represents a larger number of voters, relying

on robust local staff, modern communication, and a highly organised committee system to bridge the governance gap. Indian MPs can do that too.

The realities of an 850-member Lok Sabha are devastating for individual legislators. In a standard parliamentary session, time is an unyielding, scarce resource. Consider the daily Question Hour or a standard legislative debate on a complex bill. If a debate is allocated four hours, and time is distributed according to party strength, at most 15-20 MPs out of 850 will be able to participate. In practice, backbenchers and members of smaller parties will be mostly silenced.

With an oversized Parliament, a vast majority of MPs will never get to ask a question, initiate a private member's bill, or participate in a substantive debate during their entire five-year tenure. They will be transformed into silent placeholders, raising their hands when the party commands. This will worsen an already distressing trend in Indian governance: The shrinking role (and systemic degradation) of Parliament. In recent years, the number of days Parliament meets annually has steadily declined, bills have been passed via voice vote within minutes without standing committee scrutiny, and the Opposition is frequently sidelined. Flooding the chamber with hundreds of additional members will accelerate this marginalisation, burying quality under the sheer weight of quantity.

An oversized legislature where the vast majority of members have no voice suits an executive that prefers compliance over scrutiny. When a Parliament becomes too large to debate, it naturally cedes its oversight power to the executive cabinet. The individual lawmaker loses leverage, and the House is reduced to a notice-board and a rubber-stamp.

This structural transformation bears an ominous resemblance to the authoritarian legislative model in Beijing or Pyongyang.

Specifically, an 850-seat Lok Sabha risks becoming a desi version of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference or the North Korean Supreme People's Assembly — enormous, unwieldy bodies designed to look grand, representative, and pluralistic, but reduced to applauding set speeches by the Great Leader. Their sheer size guarantees they cannot engage in real legislative negotiation or challenge the ruling executive. They exist to perform consensus, not to build it through debate. If India builds a massive legislature where MPs are stripped of their voices due to the arithmetic of time constraints, it will have successfully hollowed out its democracy, replacing a vibrant deliberative body with a performative pageant. Far better to save the extra expenditure on salaries, accommodation, travel and pensions for 300 more MPs and instead build a serious office building for the existing MPs near Parliament, as every other democracy provides its legislators.

The government's primary defence — that a single MP cannot effectively represent two to three million citizens — is a fallacy that misinterprets the role of a national lawmaker. An MP's constitutional duty is national legislation, foreign policy, macroeconomic governance, and holding the Union executive accountable. They are not municipal councillors or MLAs. If India established a sharp, institutional demarcation between the roles of Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) and Members of Parliament (MPs), a smaller, focused group of MPs could easily represent large constituencies. Local grievances, municipal infrastructure, and civic amenities fall squarely within the domain of state legislatures and local panchayats or municipal corporations under the 73rd and 74th Amendments; as population increases, expand the number of MLAs! If local governance frameworks are empowered, the local citizen does not need to look to an MP for everyday civic needs.

(To be Contd....on Page -42)

WHY WE SUPPORT THE WAR

Ellen Roy

(From INDIA AND WAR, M.N.Roy, Pp150-165+)

The case of those opposed to India's participation in the war is based upon the argument that although the war is said to be waged for protecting freedom and democracy, Britain refuses to recognise Indian independence and allow the establishment of democracy in this country.

We do not expect anything or anybody to bring freedom anywhere. Freedom is not brought or given; it is won by the efforts of those who deserve it. We advocate support for this war not because of any expectation that Britain would give us freedom; nor do we wait for her to give us something, not even a promise, before advocating support. It may not be in her interest to give us what we want. But it is in our interest that we advocate support to this war. And that support does in no way prejudice our pursuing the achievement of what we want. There is no contradiction between the two.

The Congress leaders say that they would also like to give their support to the war, but only under certain conditions. We maintain that, on the one hand, these conditions are completely inadequate and their fulfilment is of no avail for the attainment of Indian freedom; on the other hand, if the conditions are rejected, we should have to sit on our prestige and refuse support to the war in spite of our professed opinion that it should be given. The Congress leaders desire "transfer of power" from the British to the Indians, or at least the "recognition of India's right of independence." We maintain that transfer of power cannot take place all on a sudden through a declaration, but is compelled by the development of events influenced by those who want power. And as for the recognition of the right of independence, only facts can be recognised. India's independence is not yet a fact. Nor can this fact be established by the present Congress

policy of "semi-benevolent neutrality," which amounts to nothing in terms of the prosecution of the war and self-immolation and stultification in terms of India's struggle for freedom.

We do not mix up things. We do not maintain that India will gain freedom simply by a victory of the British arms.(152) But we do maintain that the cause of Indian freedom can be better promoted by supporting this war, which, as a war against Fascism, deserves support, than by not supporting or even opposing it. Nor is this war likely to end just with the victory of this or that belligerent, with the *status quo ante bellum* re-established; only the scales tipped in favour either of Britain or Germany. That was so in the case of the previous war. For the small man even in England or Germany, then, it made little practical difference who won the war. This time, we can assume that the small man in Britain knows what difference a victory of the Nazis would mean for him. And what quarrel do we have with the English man-in-the-street? He is not an imperialist. And it is more likely that, if England wins this war, it will be the democratic people who will have won it.

The European *democracies* do not want Fascism. They know to-day that only through a crushing defeat in this war can it be stamped out, and that, unless it is stamped out, they are in for it. The European *imperialists* were not anxious to fight this war. They blundered into it. Mr. Chamberlain might still have corrected the blunder by coming to (Hitler's) terms with Germany, either after the fall of Poland, or of Norway, or of any one of the subsequent victims. Mr. Chamberlain was indeed the better imperialist. But Mr. Churchill does conduct a war against Fascism which the democratic masses must see through, if they want to survive even in their relative freedom, which is still better than

an absolute slavery.

No sane man desires war. But pacifism in the face of Fascism is simply grotesque (ugly). The common people suffer in the war; but they will suffer more if Fascism wins. The imperialists might have avoided this war. But for their complacency and even connivance, Fascism would have never become the powerful menace it is today. That is another matter. They are atoning for past sin, and are paying dearly for it. No use sneering. History is taking its implacable course. Politics, which is the process of history in the making, cannot be done with emotions. Out of resentment (anger) against British Imperialism, we should not allow ourselves to act against our own conviction as regards this war. On the other hand, whatever our attitude towards this war in particular may be, it need in no way interfere with our legitimate fight against injustice. Only, there are ways and ways of doing a thing.

But in order to define our attitude towards this war, we must have an opinion about it. If it is a “bad” war and should not be fought, we should have the courage to say and resist it, and see that our resistance becomes effective. Or, by analysing the character of the war, we come to the conclusion that the best thing to do now that it is on our head is to fight it to the finish and prevent Fascism from winning it. If we do come to this conclusion, we should also have the courage to say so openly and not shrink from acting according to our conviction.

When the Polish “incident” was closed, we suggested that the Congress should appeal for an early termination of the war. We did so because the discrepancy in preparedness for a major war between Germany and the rest of Europe became evident already then, and the perspective of a complete Fascization (turn into fascist system) of Europe was clearly opened up. Not much prestige was yet at stake on either side; and though return to the status quo would not have improved matters much, yet it would have closed, temporarily at least, that immediate and horrible

perspective.

But the war went on. And peace now would mean voluntary Fascization of Europe, which is in effect no better than forcible Fascization. Therefore, this war must go on until the perspective of the Fascization of Europe, and with it, almost inevitably, of the whole world, will disappear with the defeat and overthrow of Hitler. That is necessary in our own interest; and if it happens to coincide with the interest even of the British Government, should we therefore act against our own interest, only to spite the British? After all, anti-Imperialism is not an end in itself. We fight Imperialism in so far as it encroaches upon our freedom. The Fascisation of Europe is the greatest menace to our freedom. Therefore we must do whatever we can to prevent it.

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But the war went on. And peace now would mean voluntary Fascisation of Europe, which is

in effect no better than forcible Fascisation. Therefore, this war must go on until the perspective of the Fascisation of Europe, and with it, almost inevitably, of the whole world, will disappear with the defeat and overthrow of Hitler. That is necessary in our own interest; and if it happens to coincide with the interest even of the British Government, should we therefore act against our own interest, only to spite the British? After all, anti-Imperialism is not an end in itself. We fight Imperialism in so far as it encroaches upon our freedom. The Fascisation of Europe is the greatest menace to our freedom. Therefore, we must do whatever we can to prevent it.

In analysing this war, one must of course agree on the premises. We start from the assertion that Fascism is the greatest and immediate menace to the forces of freedom and democracy throughout the world including India and including Germany. Nobody would reasonably maintain that the Fascisation of Europe in general, including England in particular, would bring India freedom. Nor is it a matter of indifference to India. Fascism is more efficient and ruthless in suppression than Imperialism. And supposing Hitler wants to crush the British Empire, it is not the small island that he covets (greatly desired); we can legitimately assume that India will be the prize. And if it was not possible until now for India to become an independent country, with Hitler on our neck, the perspective will vanish in dimmest posterity. On this question, we can only agree or differ, not argue; because the facts of Fascism are known. One may find them good, another bad, but nobody can dispute them. We find them bad worse than anything, worse even than Imperialism! It is also a fact that it is not generally realised in this country, at a distance, *how* abjectly bad it is, although the facts are there to be known.

There are reasons for mental reservations; there is a traditional pro-German sympathy; and there is the radio propaganda from Berlin promising freedom to India. Such promises from Berlin are not new. 'We have also heard Hitler

praised because he has made Germany great; and is he not a vegetarian and a bachelor, to boot (in addition). He, who approves of the methods with which Hitler is supposed to have made his country great, must be a Fascist believing in the subjugation of other peoples by the cruellest means. As regards greatness, how much greater Germany was in her post-war misery—Germany, the land of poets and thinkers, was never greater than in the period of painful and peaceful reconstruction after the last defeat.

The most facile retort to the contention that the defeat of Fascism is our foremost concern, is: "What do we care? Fascism and Imperialism are one and the same; let them quarrel and ruin each other; or do you want the victory of Imperialism?" No, we are not interested in the victory of Imperialism. Nor do we think that the welfare of the English people is conditional upon a victory of Imperialism. We even think that there may be no Imperialism left if Fascism is finally crushed. But to be quite consistent, let us assume that British Imperialism will be victorious, Germany defeated and under British influence; we shall not have gained anything for India. Still we would at least be left where we are to-day. Under Fascist domination, either through English Petains or, through direct agents of Hitler, we would be worse off. And as for those who think that Fascism and Imperialism are the same, we wish them an experience of the difference. But we do not wish that dreadful experience for the Indian people.

Some argue that victorious Imperialism would be worse than pre-War Imperialism, would even go Fascist itself. Why should it? A count country goes Fascist as the last resort for getting out of the perpetual economic crisis threatening to overthrow the established capitalist system. Fascism is not the product of the wickedness or perversity of an individual, however "great"; nor is democracy the attribute of virtuous people. Fascism is the weapon with which a bankrupt system fights for its life. Therefore, it is so deadly.

So, supposing England would come out of this war victorious and unscathed, the hegemon and patron of all Europe, the restorer of French, Dutch, Belgian, Norwegian, Polish, Czech, Austrian independence and recipient of their tributes in the shape of market monopolies, it would feel safe and strong. Fascism is inconvenient even for the Fascists, unless you assume that a whole section of a people can suddenly go sadist; it is an inconvenient necessity for a certain class of people to cling to their power and privileges. For that purpose, it is a necessity. Without that purpose, that is, if power and privileges are not threatened, it can be a nuisance. A victorious British Imperialism would not feel the necessity.

The worst possible result thus will be the status quo of to-day, minus Defence of India Rules. If all the strategic positions will be occupied during the war, that will not only serve the purpose of democratising certain administrative processes, but also that of strengthening the spirit and organisation of the nationalist forces. We are to choose presently; and our decision will decide much of the future of India.

But certainly, if this war is bad and should not be fought, co-operation, even in the sense of occupying strategic positions conquered by the vote of the people, and in India's own interest, should not be extended, if it also served a purpose which is considered to be definitely undesirable. From no quarters, this view has yet been openly expressed. On the contrary, the Congress leaders have all expressed their sympathy with Britain in this war and abhorrence for Fascism as well as profound regret that Britain does "not give nationalist India a chance" to throw in her lot on the non-Fascist side of this war. The position is queer. They would like (if they would like) Fascist Germany to be defeated without imperialist Britain being victorious. Supposing this to be desirable, how can it be brought about, if it is true that Britain is waging an imperialist war against Fascism?

We maintain that this is not an imperialist war,

because, for the benefit of British Imperialism, this war was not a necessity. Whatever the motive may be or may not be, it happens to be a war against the stronghold of Fascism, and in this sense, logically it is an anti-Fascist war.

Nationalist India wants to see Fascism defeated, but does not want to do so without serving its own freedom; that is the most natural and legitimate thing in the world. The question only is: How to do it? How will the purpose be served by non-co-operation, which can only be a gesture any how, since all are "co-operating": from the princes who give lakhs and soldiers, the mill-owners who produce and sell to Britain all the latter needs for the war, and profit greatly by it, to the workers who produce what the mill-owners sell, and get at least some more, employment and slightly raised wages, down to the rural unemployed, who flock as recruits in the army, where they get at least some full meals a day which they otherwise don't. How would the purpose be served, even if the Congress demand for a National Government at the Centre was accepted by the British Government? What is exactly this demand? The National Government demanded is a contradiction in terms. It is quite meaningless.

We do not regard bargaining as moral turpitude (immoral). But we are against bargaining away our freedom to act according to our conviction for a 'chimeric mess of pottage'. If this war is bad, let us say so and resist it. If it is not, and should be fought to the finish, it does not look well to stand by the whole-sale slaughter and exclaim: "Very good war this, indeed! Go ahead, boys, and fight those nasty Fascists! We ourselves have no time just now, because we must go to jail, so that we may emerge from it as heroes, in time for the next general elections: Therefore, goodbye until after the war, then we shall administer your affairs in India again; and don't forget how well we did it!"

If this war has to be fought, not because the British Government happens to have declared it

and incidentally declared India a belligerent party, but, because Fascism is a menace to the world, and not to the world of the big imperialists so (162) much as to the greater world of the oppressed and exploited in all countries (including Germany and including India) then we must have a place in it. It may sound very nationalistic to argue: "What do we care for Fascist menace to the peoples of the world, when the imperialist menace sits on our necks?". But how will the prosecution of the fight for Indian freedom be prejudiced by making India's participation in the war against Fascism, which is to-day an involuntary fact, a voluntary effort—provided, of course, that we are convinced that this war against Fascism must be fought till the end? On the other hand, how will war resistance or non-co-operation promote the cause of Indian freedom?

Another seemingly patriotic argument is: "Why should India as an enslaved country help her rulers in this war against their enemy?" Well, firstly, we maintain that Fascism is also the enemy of Indian freedom. And then, if a slave is locked up with his master, in the latter's burning house, he will fight the fire together with the master, unless he prefers to die with him, thinking: It serves my master right if I die—why did he not make me free? That is what the Congress attitude amounts to. Is it reasonable?

We maintain, from a knowledge of facts, that Fascism, which the British Government only happens to fight to-day, while we opposed it ever since it came into existence, is our own enemy as much as that of British Imperialism; and that, if Fascism is not defeated, we are in for it. Therefore, we advocate participation in the fight against it. We are of the opinion that, even if India were an independent country, she should join the fight against Fascism in the most effective way.

Here arises the question which has been put to us repeatedly, namely: "Why, if Fascism is the enemy of democracy, and Soviet Russia the

champion of democracy, does not the latter join the fight against the former? And why, if Russia does not deem it necessary, should we go out of our way doing it?" Firstly, we need not go out of our way; the fight against Fascism lies on the road to Indian freedom. And then has not Soviet Russia joined this war, and is she not playing quite a prominent and effective part in it, having inflicted the only defeats on the Nazis in this war, otherwise so dangerously successful for them? But there are ways and ways of doing a thing. This war against Fascism is waged quite successfully on the Russian borders by means of "neutrality".

The effect of Soviet neutrality may be well appreciated by all Anti-Fascists. English Anti Fascists even in this country have done so. Russia's anti-Fascism is proved beyond doubt. The rest must be left to their strategists, trusting that they know their job. If India was one of the three mightiest Powers on earth and had common or near frontiers with a Fascist country, the right policy for her might also be a "neutral" tiger's clasp like Russia's "neutral" bear's embrace. But as she is not, the right policy for her must be something else, the aim of all truly democratic forces being the same, namely, defeat of Fascism, *by their own efforts*. One can expect to reap the fruit only of what one has sown oneself. Imperialism, being not a democratic force, cannot be expected to defeat Fascism ultimately. It has somehow got into this war, and, being a powerful military force, should be welcome as an instrument in the fight against Fascism. But having entered the war reluctantly, in the beginning, still with visible appeasement tendencies, the danger still remains that the defeat of Fascism may suddenly appear too big a victory of democracy for the conscious imperialists to stomach. If the democratic forces will want to carry on in such an eventuality, they can do so only if they are in the thick of the fight themselves.

(To be Contd....on Page -42)

The Humanist Frame **Human Potentialities**

Aldous Huxley

(Summarized by : **Vinod Jain**)

Anatomically and physiologically, man has changed very little during the last twenty or thirty thousand years. The native or genetic capacities of today's bright city child are no better than the native capacities of a bright child born into a family of Upper Palaeolithic cave-dwellers. But whereas the contemporary bright baby may grow up to become almost anything—an engineer, a piano-playing Marxist, a professor of biochemistry—the Palaeolithic baby could not possibly have grown into anything except a hunter or food gatherer, using the crudest of stone tools and thinking about his narrow world of trees and swamps in terms of some hazy system of magic. Ancient and modern, the two babies are indistinguishable. Each of them contains all the potentialities of the particular breed of human beings to which he or she happens to belong. But the adults into whom the babies will grow are profoundly dissimilar; and they are dissimilar because in one of them very few, and in the other a good many, of the baby's inborn potentialities have been actualized.

In the not too distant future it may be that the native abilities of large groups of human beings will be improved by deliberate selection. But until that time comes, we must be content with what we have. And what we have is so rich and so various that to make the best of it, to make actual the native potentialities of all the many breeds of men and women, will keep us busy for centuries to come.

The Palaeolithic {early phase of stone age} baby was as richly endowed with human potentialities as is the baby of today. How, in the course of history, were so many of those potentialities actualized? And what should be done now and in the immediate future to actualize the many and great potentialities which in most

individuals still remain latent?

Let us begin by considering the conditions which make it possible for the inborn potentialities of developing human beings to be realized. Man's needs arrange themselves in a natural hierarchy. At the lower end of the scale are the basic physical needs — the need for food, the need for bodily safety. A stage higher we find the basic psychological needs—the need for love, received and given; the need for belongingness, for acceptance within a community; the need for respect and status. And finally, at the upper end of the scale, there are the least urgent but most specifically human of our needs — the need to satisfy curiosity and acquire knowledge; the need for meaning, order and comprehensibility in terms of a symbol system; the need for self-expression through the manipulation of symbols....Nature and nurture are always synergic {cooperation of two or more things to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects} . Unfavourable surroundings make it impossible for even the most highly gifted individuals to actualize their potentialities. Bad nurture will starve or smother, will mask or distort, the best of natures. Conversely a poorly endowed individual cannot be made by even the best environment to actualize potentialities which he does not possess.

We see, then, that it is only in a favourable environment that the inborn potentialities of the individual can be actualized. Today most of the members of the world's most civilized societies are brought up in the uneasy bosom of a small exclusive family group, within an overcrowded, highly organized, urban-industrial community, geared either to mass consumption or to national aggrandisement and the consolidation of the rule of a power elite, or to both simultaneously. This is most certainly not the perfect, or even a very

good environment. But it is the best we have. And we can improve it — but only if we begin by diminishing the threat of war and solving the population problem. Meanwhile let us see what might be done, here and now, to help children to actualize more of their native potentialities.

Every adult human being is the inhabitant, simultaneously or by turns, of several world's. The most basic of these worlds is the electro-chemical world of our bodies in relation to their continuously changing environment. We can be conscious of the movement of our fingers

as we play a musical instrument. We can never be conscious of the innumerable and inconceivable complex electro-chemical events taking place in our eyes, our brains, our nerve fibres and our muscles as we look at the symbols inscribed on the page before us and translate them into controlled and co-ordinated finger movements on the keys of the piano. It is only inferentially, through scientific research guided by an explanatory hypothesis, that we know how what we feel is related to what is happening on the electro chemical level.

Above the electro-chemical world lies the world of first-order subjective experiences. We have internal experiences of visceral function or malfunction, of hunger, thirst and satiety, of fatigue or zest, of vivid rememberings and imaginings, of hunches, dreams, archetypal symbols, oceanic feelings, of muscular tensions and relaxations, of obviously caused or seemingly causeless joy and gloom, confidence and anxiety. And from the outside we have experiences of weight, heat, cold, colour, texture, form and all the rest.

Our brains, among other things, are instruments for automatically converting the bewildering provision of first-order experiences into manageable symbols. These symbols are organized into systems, of which the most important is language. In the beginning, not of the universe, but most certainly of civilization, was the word. Language makes it possible for us to give meaning to first-order experiences, to classify

and relate them, to explain to our own satisfaction what has happened and why, and to predict what is likely to happen in the future. Literature, science, technology, philosophy, religion, ethical ideals, codes of law, social organizations—all the constituents of civilization are the products of activities directed by language on the higher levels of abstraction. But, alas, literature is more often tedious or vulgar than excellent. Religions, even the highest of them, consist at most times and in most places of one part of spirituality to nine of superstition, magic, priestcraft and bad science. The nature of our philosophy of life and of our legal and social institutions is such that we find ourselves under a compulsion to use our science and technology either foolishly, as in mass consumption and mass entertainment, or destructively, as in war and nationalistic rivalry. Over against the ethical ideals formulated by Gautama, Jesus and Lao-tze must be set the ethical ideals of Jenghiz Khan, of the Puritans, of Hitler and Lenin. Language is like those Indian deities who are at once creators and destroyers. It makes us capable of acting with an almost god-like intelligence, but also with a kind of sub-simian stupidity. Through its formulation of rules, ideals and principles, it gives us the power to persevere in courses of virtue, and also in courses of wickedness.

How can the humans who inhabit these three worlds — of electro-chemical events, of first-order experiences, and of language on every level of abstraction — be helped to actualize more of their inborn potentialities? In its main lines, the answer is clear enough. The infant, who lives only in the two worlds of electro-chemical events and vague incipient first-order experiences, becomes progressively more human and progressively more himself as he is led farther and farther into the world of language. Precisely how human he will ultimately become and how fully himself depends in part upon the nature, propitious or otherwise, of his surroundings; in part on the structure and content of the local language and on the degree

to which the prevailing philosophy of life encourages realistic thinking and appropriate feeling. Every child is educated in a particular language and in a set of basic notions about the world, himself and other people. And along with the basic notions goes assorted information on a great variety of subjects. In civilized societies of the Western type, this verbal and notional education is systematic and intensive. All boys and girls are subjected to ten or twelve years of schooling, and some, the specialists, to as many as sixteen or eighteen years....

For the sake of the community, no less than of the individual victims of an unrealistic ideal that happens at the moment to be fashionable, the enormous spread of human diversity should be recognized, respected and systematically made the most of....

Perceiving is at the root of all our thinking, feeling, willing and acting. It is therefore with perception that any systematic training on the non-verbal level must begin. 'Make the mind-body capable of doing many things.' Make it capable, first of all, of perceiving much, perceiving accurately, perceiving discriminatingly, perceiving with the fewest possible notional preconceptions. This perpetual awareness will 'help you to perfect the mind' — that is to say, the symbol-using, symbol - conditioned side of the thinking, feeling and willing organism.

The value of systematic training in perception as a true yoga, a preparation for enlightenment here and now in the everyday world, was stressed many centuries ago by certain of the Tantric philosopher-psychologists of India. 'What is this life beyond form pervading forms?' the goddess enquires of her consort, Shiva. 'How may we enter into it fully, above space and time, beyond names and descriptions?' Shiva answers her in the most practical and scientific way, with a list of 112 exercises in awareness — awareness of first-order experiences, visual and auditory, tactile and visceral, imaginative and imageless. 'Radiant one, this consciousness may dawn between two

breaths. After breath comes in and just before it goes out — the beneficence.' 'See as if for the first time a beautiful person or some ordinary object.' 'Intone a sound audible, then less and less audible, as feeling deepens into this silent harmony.' 'When eating or drinking, become the taste of the food or drink and be filled.' While being caressed, sweet princess, enter the caressing as everlasting life.' 'Wherever your attention alights, at that very point experience.'

That we shall perish unless we learn to love more warmly and widely than we do at present is only too obvious. All the higher religions have stressed the supreme value of love. Christianity enjoins us to love our human neighbours and to regard as neighbours even our enemies. More realistically, Hinduism and Buddhism extend the field of love into the non-human world. We must love, the Indian prophets tell us, not only our fellow-men, but also our fellow animals. The twentieth century ecologist would add that we ought to love the whole planet and treat it as though it were a vulnerable living organism, refraining scrupulously from all those outrages against nature which have turned so much of the once fertile earth into treeless and eroded deserts, have befouled so much of what was once beautiful with excrement, industrial wastes and slums. Love is as necessary for human survival and growth as are bread on the physical and knowledge on the symbolic level. Buddhism, Christianity and modern science are in full agreement on this point. But how curious and ironical that the only people to devise a method for conditioning children to love more warmly and widely should be a tiny group of savages in the wilds of New Guinea.

A general conditioning of young children to feel more affectionately towards more of their fellow-beings would doubtless improve the moral and emotional atmosphere of the societies in which it was practised....

The knowledge is there; but knowledge, by itself, cannot originate action; its function is to direct the action that is initiated and maintained

by feeling and will. Feeling and will are moved, in their turn, by a philosophy of life and also, to some extent, by the detailed knowledge of what might be expected to happen if a certain course of action were adopted. Knowing the good things we might do, and knowing also the disastrous things that are happening and will happen if we continue to act as we are acting now, we may perhaps be moved to will the consummation which our philosophy assures to be desirable—the realization of our full humanity. 🌈

(To be continued....)

Contd. from page - (38)

WHY WE SUPPORT...

The democratic forces cannot be sure of the outcome of this war, unless they are active agencies in its prosecution. In India, they can, besides what is being done anyhow, do little but mobilise and quicken the consciousness of the people, and prepare them for their role in any development that events may take. And developments may well happen nearer home. Already Hitler is *ante portas* of the East. This war cannot be fought successfully except on the strength of the popular will to fight an enemy of the people; that is true for the people in India as well as in England and elsewhere. If the expression of this popular will in India looks like support for the British Government, which happens to fight the same enemy, is that enough reason for us to act contrary to our conviction (provided we have it)? Can we not think except in terms of "British Government"? That is to deny ourselves even our spiritual independence! And if the popular will to fight Fascism is not there, it is for ignorance of what Fascism is; it is the duty of those who know to make others understand. In India, this is quite a big task, it seems. But the task is urgent.

Courtesy **Anjali Chakraborty,**
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'Meeting Kailas'

Raju Z. Moray



Everyone seems to know
Someone who is lost
And no one knows their fate.

With no news, no calls
There's no resolution on offer
It already seems too late..

Far off terrains come so near
When loved ones disappear
Not to be heard or seen again.

In a beautiful valley they went
Like morsels devoured by a flow
Capturing snaps of joy and pain. 🌈

Contd. from page - (33)

Why an 850-seat Lok Sabha...

By keeping the Lok Sabha compact and focused on national governance, and leaving localised representation to state and municipal levels, India could maintain a highly efficient, effective, and truly participative federal structure, without ruining the functionality of Parliament.

The proposal to expand the Lok Sabha to 850 would create a House that is not a forum for governance but an echo chamber for the government. As we contemplate the future of our

democracy, we must realise that true representation lies in the quality of debate, the rigour of legislative committee scrutiny, and the empowerment of local levels of government — not in creating an unwieldy mega-chamber that replaces democratic discourse with empty theatre.

The writer is a fourth-term Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram

Courtesy **The Indian Express**, 30 July, 2026. 🌈

Judges' Appointments In Past 12 Years Witnessed Unexplained Executive Interference : Muralidhar



29
AUG 2026

POSTOAST



Does making Vande Mataram a national song, and singing it, abolish or reduce the massive poverty and mass unemployment in India? Do they reduce the skyrocketing prices of food and other essential commodities? Do they reduce the appalling level of child malnutrition in India? Do they improve the almost total lack of healthcare and good education for the Indian masses?

**- Markandey Katju
(Former judge of Supreme Court of India)**