

# **SANE LIVING**

**Innaiah Narisetti**

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*Dedicated to :*



PAUL KURTZ

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Founder, Council for Secular Humanism



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# STOP CHILD ABUSE

## Unacknowledged Global Phenomena

Over the years, the abuse of children has received a lot of attention worldwide. The United Nations, through its member organizations such as UNESCO, has focused on this issue, recognizing the worst forms of such abuse, including child labour. Where an estimated 250 million children are engaged in some form of labour; the practice of slavery; bondage linked to family debts; serfdom; forced recruitment and involvement in armed conflicts; child pornography and prostitution; production and trafficking of drugs.

The International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and UNESCO hold regular discussions at various levels organize international conventions and have adopted a world declaration for protection of children.

### **CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

The human rights of children and the standards in which all governments must aspire in realizing these rights for all children, are most concisely and fully articulated in one international human rights treaty; The Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention is the most universally accepted human rights instrument in history it' has been ratified by every country in the world except two, the United States and Somalia. It places children centre-stage in the quest for the universal application of human rights. By ratifying this instrument, national governments have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring children's rights and they have agreed to hold themselves accountable for this commitment before the international community.

While it is unfortunate that a powerful country such as the United States is yet to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNO's efforts are salutary and place much needed emphasis on improving the lives of children globally.

## **INFLUENCE OF RELIGION**

However, despite all the effort and rhetoric about protecting the children and their rights, there is one big gap and a severe shortcoming in the global campaign to protect children; the influence of religion and its continued contribution to many forms of child abuse all around the world.

Such abuse begins with the involuntary involvement of children in religious practices from the time they are born. All religions, through daily practices and through preaching and religious texts, seek to bring children in day-to-day religious practices. This gives holy books and scriptures as well as those who teach them an early grip over the minds of young people, leaving an indelible impression on their developing minds. In many cases, especially in the Catholic Church, this forced and prolonged exposure of children to religious institutions has also been a key reason for the physical and mental abuse of children by priests.

This early grip is so strong that very few people ever get an opportunity to change their mind, despite being exposed in science and rational thinking. Religious beliefs thrive by subtly inculcating blind adherence to certain dogmatic practices on impressionable minds. In some ways this lays the groundwork for sustained psychological abuse of young children by allowing adults the use of religion as a pretext for various other forms of abuse—be it wars in the name of religion and ethnicity. During 2004, about 300,000 children served as soldiers in national armies—or genital mutilation of young girls.

When it comes to the forcible influence of religion and resulting abuse of children in the name of religion, the UN, all its affiliated organizations and almost all national governments, remain steadfastly silent.

## **UN'S RELUCTANCE**

In one form or another, all religions violate the rights of children. Yet a body like the UN, which allows the Vatican to be represented among its member countries, is unaware or more likely, unable and unwilling to stand up to the religious abuse of children. There is significant pressure from the Vatican to pull back on or dilute any resolutions that point to religion as the cause of abuse and strife. And the unwillingness of the UN to face up to this issue member countries, especially those in the Muslim world, can also exert a lot of pressure on issues related to the abuse of children by religious schools, or Madarasaas, where for example, very young children are forced to memorize six thousand verses of the Koran, is a form of both mental and physical abuse.

As a result, the UN and its affiliated agencies tend to focus on addressing just the symptoms rather than the root causes of some insidious forms of child abuse. While everyone speaks out against genital mutilation, the UNICEF is unwilling to acknowledge and condemn it as a religious practice. Instead, it talks about educating communities and spends millions on medical kits to treat those children who have already been mutilated. By not forcefully pointing the finger at the real culprit—religious practices the UN is not only missing a good opportunity to stem the problem at the source but also putting band-aid on a much deeper malaise.

## **GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

Another area where religions contribute to child abuse is through explicit and implicit gender discrimination that leads to

unequal rights between boys and girls and contributes to abuse, especially as it relates to lack of equal opportunity. While economic factors are also to blame, the roots of inequity lie in religious and social mores. How can the UN hope to tackle the problem of child labour or lack of educational opportunity among the 130 million children in developing countries who are not in primary school, the majority of them being girls. In the Islamic world, some female students are also allowed to attend certain madarasaas however they are forced to sit in separate classrooms or buildings.

There is a global unwillingness to acknowledge that all religions use their educational institutions and programmes, be it via Sunday Schools and madarasaas. The Jehovah or Hindu temple programmes are to indoctrinate children. Sometimes this is in the guise of good moral values but while it might be much more overt in say, a madarasaas, it is no less influential on young minds in a Sunday school. Ultimately, all such programmes try to instill a belief in the superiority of their religion and inculcate an unquestioning belief system.

## **CHILD MARRIAGE**

Just as we all stand up against child marriage because it is an institution meant for adults and just as we do not let children participate in certain civic duties – such as voting – until they are of a certain age the time has come to debate the participation of children in religious institutions. While some might see it as a matter left to parents, the negative influence of religion and subsequent contribution to child abuse from religious beliefs, begs the question as to whether organized religion is an institution that needs limits on how early it can access children.

There is no doubt that this will be a controversial position. However, nothing prevents the UN from organizing a world convention on the issue of Religious Abuse of Children, a forum

where the pros and cons of religion and its influence on children can be openly debated. The world body cannot remain silent on this vital issue just because it is a sensitive and difficult subject, especially given its members nations and their religious interests. However, a Convention like this will also be an opportunity for those who might want to argue and prove the position influence of religion on children so the UN should not shy away from debating the issue.

If such a convention clearly shows how religion contributes to child abuse globally, the UN must then take a clear stand on the issue in terms of the forced involvement of children in religious practices; it must speak up for the rights of children and not the automatic right to religious beliefs and reexamine whether an organization like the Vatican should belong to the UN.

Until this happen, millions of children globally will continue to be abused in the name of religion and the efforts of the UN will continue to address the symptoms but not the disease.

# HEREDITARY CHILD ABUSE

## Children must be rescued from religion and restored to humanity

“Our children are our own. They are ours to thrash or kill, if we choose; who are you to poke your nose in?” Yes, millions of parents still feel that way, in every part of the world. They justify harsh punishments with dictums like “you can train a plant but not a tree” or “spare the rod and spoil the child”. Too many traditional religions encourage parents to regard children as their property or to believe that the more children they have, the better.” “A child has not only a mouth but also two earning hands”. Where do sayings like these come? Which social institutions underlie much of the child abuse endemic to world today, yet are scarcely ever accused by name? Religions, of course. Religions inspire and perpetuate much of the abuse that afflicts children around the globe.

Over the ages, religions have exploited the power of the bond between parents and children, fashioning priestly infrastructures that touch every aspect of life, enmeshing families ever deeper in allegiance. In most cultures, this entrapment begins at or soon after birth with the naming of the baby. Parents feel it their duty to abide by religious customs, traditions and rituals. This, in turn, assures a livelihood to the priestly class.

Priests encourage parents to bring their children along when they visit places of worship. Parents obey, often hoping that experiences in the temple, church, mosque, or synagogue and Buddhist Centres will help children develop faith in God and to practice ethical conduct. Children are thus controlled right from birth, in all countries and in all religions. Believing parents do not merely indoctrinate their children on the virtues of their own religions. They warn their young against embracing other

religions, against following their customs and beliefs. Thus are the seeds of hatred sown, directly or indirectly, in impressionable minds.

Children are not born into religion; of necessity, they are born not even knowing what religion is. Yet, the religion of their parents is attributed to them. By the time, they start talking then writing, they can name their religions because it has been named for them. Thus steeped in religion from childhood, most people find they cannot climb free of religion later in life. Many find it impossible to shed this ingrained religious influence, even if they blossom into scientists or technologists. Education helps them carve out their careers, but they practice religion as they always have. Before you believe in anything, science demands that it be subjected to inquiry, analysis, and proof. If something cannot be proven, it should not be blindly believed. However, around the world, the educated exempt religion from the scientific scrutiny they apply to everything else. When religion and science conflict, most people follow religion and give science a pass. Religion stands revealed as a barrier to human development. They do not apply the scientific temperament acquired in the course of their education to matters of religion.

Beholden to their faiths or mired in tradition, parents have too often stood mute, helpless spectators to the religious abuse of children. Examples include denial of health care to children, practices by several Christian denominations, widespread sexual abuse of children by Roman Catholic and other clergy, female genital mutilation as practised under Islam and some traditional African religions, cruel corporate punishment under Sharia law, ostracism of low-caste children, child marriage, and temple prostitution under Hinduism: and male infant circumcision, originated by Judaism. If the civilized world is sometimes outraged by such abuses, it has nonetheless kept quiet, afraid to confront religion head-on, in.

Individuals have dared to criticize religions child abuse, only to be ignored or ostracized as “atheists”.

Fortunately, some light shimmers along this dark horizon.

## **PROCLAIMING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS**

On November 20, 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, proclaiming elementary rights for children worldwide. One hundred ninety one countries have so far adopted it. In many of them, so called Children’s Charters have been established, building key provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into local law. Still, the so called Children’s Convention has not been ratified everywhere, Somalia, wrecked by civil war and without a stable government, has not done so. Nor has the United States of America!

The Children’s Convention covers all children below eighteen years of age, recognizing legal rights whose respect is incumbent upon parents, families, and governments. It forbids discrimination based on caste, colour, creed, or gender in safeguarding children’s rights. Under Convention, every girl and boy, irrespective of territorial boundaries, enjoys freedom of expression and the right to access information. Governments are to safeguard children’s religious freedom, their freedom of thinking, and their right to mix with others. Child rearing is recognized as the primary responsibility of parents, but governments must extend a helping hand when needed. Children are not to be treated as the personal property of parents, and they are not to be abused.

Obviously Children’s Convention describes the way things should be, not the way they are in most parts of the world. To its credit, the United Nations has recognized that the Convention’s ideals are often violated. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has launched a movement to safeguard children from

abuse—but this movement is of limited effectiveness because it has tried to proceed without blaming religion. Religion's influence is strong, even at the UN. For example, the Vatican has co-opted UNICEF, convening a recent conference at which religious leaders shed crocodile tears over children's plight but took no substantial action. Child abuse rooted in religion was described in sanitized language as a "cultural crisis".

UN agencies have recognized that children are being used as bonded labour, abused in wars, sexually assaulted, and more. They have striven to rescue victims in some places. However, they will not identify religion among the principal causes of abuse. Child abuse is impossible to resist when the principal perpetrator cannot -must not-be named. We cannot expect religions to condemn themselves. It is like handing our house keys to a thief with a request to stand guard.

## **CHILDREN AND RELIGION: SOME IMMODEST PROPOSALS**

Those who escaped from religion have contributed disproportionately to progress and development in all ages. The urge to learn new things, to study, to conduct research, and to live in tune with nature.. . all of these things belongs to a level above religion. When children are inculcated in religion and compelled to adhere to it, this thwarts brain development. It is crime to warn children that they will lose their sight or fall ill if they refuse to worship god or raise unpalatable questions-or if should be. Brains that should blossom with each passing year are instead blunted. In addition, the priests have no objection because a thinking soul is a threat to every religion.

Religion should be taught on scientific lines in schools. Children should learn about all religions, their own and others. They should be taught that gods and demons, devils and apparitions, heaven and hell are all human creations, and that

the world's scriptures are all human works. They should learn that life is supreme and it should be respected. Children should have the freedom to choose any religion or none once they reach the age of maturity.

For their part, parents should realize that religion ought not to be ascribed to children as a hereditary trait. Indeed, they should be kept at a distance from religion, just as parents keep them away from politics, obscenity, pornography and marriage. Taking children to temples, modifying their bodies (whether temporarily or permanently) in accord with ritual, encouraging blind worship, and terrorizing them in the name of a deity are no longer acceptable. Parents need to appreciate and accept that children have inherent rights.

One hundred and ninety one countries have signed the Children's Convention and their parliaments have begun to adopt charters and other legislation to implement it. However, it has yet to be adopted by a developed country like the United States because of religious opposition. Even parents hesitate to support to the Convention, for fear of losing their grip on their children. Parents may have been brought up entangled in a religious tradition. However, they should not impose their rituals, customs, habits and superstitions on their children as a forced legacy. Now is the day to break with this unhealthy past.

Ultimately, human progress depends on the recognition that all religions are ultimately opposed to human values. The very assertion that we live for God is contrary to human values. Children should be rescued from religion; only then, they can be restored to humanity.

# ELIMINATING THE CULT OF NATIONALISM

*Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of humankind*  
—Albert Einstein

## NATIONALISM

Manabendra Nath Roy (1887-1995) the humanist revolutionary and Philosopher, called Nationalism an antiquated cult (in 1938 on the eve of Second World War II). A person who is born by accident in a country is taught that his birthplace is pious and holy and that the person must be prepared to sacrifice his or her life for the motherland. In the cult of Nationalism, geography is given religious sanctity. “Right or wrong, my country first” becomes the slogan. When national hysteria is whipped up, only demagogues profit, and many will seek to justify their actions in the name of patriotism. Politicians and rulers use nationalism for perpetuating their own ends. People are fooled with all sorts of national slogans. No wonder then, that Samuel Johnson (Lexicographer in England) cautioned that patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel!

Extreme nationalism as seen in Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy were the bloodiest (and most crudely capitalist) phases in Europe in recent history-they were also reactionary. While extreme nationalism led to fascism, the cult of Superman itself grew out of Fascist and Nazi philosophies. Earlier philosophers such as Schopenhauer provided the philosophy for the cult. There were literary people like Carlyle who justified the cult of hero and superman. Spiritualism added the necessary pep to the cult of the national. Thus, the cultural groundwork

was laid for the triumph of this authoritarian, collectivist, irrational ideologies. Fascism and Nazism swore by nationalism, sought the people's support and exploited their weaknesses by pandering to their prejudices. In the case of Hitler, (Committed suicide in 1945) the National Socialists came to power through democratic means of voting, showing that an entire people can be manipulated into supporting a self-destructive ideological and cultural dictatorship.

Setting aside extreme forms of nationalism, I believe that even moderate nationalism is not compatible with internationalism. As long as nation-states continue, it will not be possible to create world government, an institution desired by many humanists. This is because nation-states defend and promote their own interests in arming themselves and guard their own economic interests by imposing trade barriers. Often, their acts are against the interests of other nations and peoples, and at times against the interest of their own military interests by arming themselves and guard their own economic interests by imposing trade barriers. Often, their acts are against the interests of other nations and peoples, and at times against the interests of their own citizens. The international order is damaged by nations singularly pursuing their own interests, as we see all too often happening in the modern world. During wars, national frenzy is rampant everywhere. People die for the sake of their country. One's own country is placed above all else. Even children are dragged into war and abused by making them accept this ideal of sacrifice for the nation.

If the history of nations is traced, it is easy to understand that national boundaries often change and then the loyalties of the people must change, as well. After each war, national boundaries are redrawn, especially if the war involves territorial dispute. What happens to the previous piously held nation's geography?

The history of the former superpowers that divided the world is instructive to show that national boundaries are temporary and constantly evolving.

The Soviet Union, of course, no longer exists. After the Communists established their mighty government in Moscow in 1917, they redrew the map of many nations forcibly. Many neighbouring nations were amalgamated into the Soviet Union under one red flag. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, and Kazakhstan came into the Soviet fold. Again after glasnost and perestroika (under Gorbachev), the Communist world shrank, and nations redrew their boundaries.

The United States of America is also very different today from what existed when the Pilgrims entered America from Europe in the seventeenth century. The union began with thirteen states. Much later, the United States of America emerged with fifty states. It developed a national anthem, a national flag, and several slogans that are inscribed on coins and paper money. The United States put the nation above the individual and demanded the sacrifice of the sovereign individual at the altar of nationalism.

Yugoslavia has totally changed since the death of its Communist ruler, Marshal Tito. Serbia, Montenegro, and Croatia became separate nations. Also in Central Europe, Czechoslovakia was broken into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. Before these events, the great Berlin Wall crumbled, and the two Germanys reunited as soon as East Germany's Communist Government collapsed. In Asia, the two Vietnams have become one country. Most national identities have been shaped by history and many kept in place by force. The reality is that everywhere, national boundaries are redrawn, and as anthems and maps change, so do national virtues. The myth of eternal nations is solely a creation of rulers.

There are 191 member nations in the United Nations. Each nation has its own flag, anthem, and geographical boundaries.

Every nation claims greatness on many accounts, though many nations cooperate more internationally than they did before the advent of the international institutions.

## RELIGION AND NATIONALISM

It is true that the sanctity given to a nation may play some role in consolidating some forces in society and even yield some benefits, as happened in the twentieth century when many nations rebelled against colonialism, imperialism, and foreign dominance and exploitation. However, soon after a people achieve political independence, nationalism develops into a myth and a cult.

A typical example would be India. Historical India is quite different from the present-day geographical and political entity. Conquest brought vast areas of land under the rule of emperors. Under colonial British rule, India changed its geographical boundaries radically after a period of consolidation. At the time of World War I, there was no Pakistan, no Sri Lanka, and no Myanmar: the whole land was India and all nationalists offered their loyalty to India. However, by the time the British left India in 1947, those three nations had been carved out of the India. Still later, Bangladesh emerged out of Pakistan. All these countries now have their own nationalist rhetoric, and citizens swear loyalty to the new political entities.

In India, as in Pakistan, nationalism uses religion as a tool and an instrument to consolidate its position.

Humanists recognize that nationalism and religion have the same appeal. Both are based on collective identities and marginalize the individual. They treat the individual as of no consequence. They seek to mediate with a mythical entity on behalf of the people for a supposed better future for the people. While political parties are the instruments of nationalism, priests are the instruments of religion; and together they make a potent

combination. As radical humanists often point out, the freedom and sovereignty of human was robbed by religions in earlier days and political parties in modern days. Religions did it in the name of God. Political parties do it in the name of delegation of power. While religion theoretically can go beyond nationalism, in practice nationalism and religion are hand in glove, because religion adapts itself to suit national needs.

After independence, extreme Hindu nationalism in India—which had long existed—started gaining strength and took the name and shape of Hindutva. Because Pakistan was created based on Islam, many Indian extremists would like to see India as a Hindu homeland. In their minds, Indian culture is equated with Hinduism. A leading ideologue and political leader from the extreme right calls for cultural nationalism, in which Christians and Muslims in India would be asked to, adopt Hindu culture to prove their identity and national spirit. The advocates of Hindutva claim that they are democratic and that their ideas have popular support.

Many religions treat humans as sinners or as unworthy of any dignity other than that which is given them by a god. The morals, values, and principles of religions are oriented toward service of God. The intermediary institution of priesthood was created to negotiate, to interpret God's commands to humans. Most religions are obstacles to implementing human rights, children's rights, human values, and morals. It is an uphill struggle to break the religious chains around humans and make them free. The minds of humans are polluted with religious superstitions, blind beliefs from childhood. Even scientists are sometimes unable to overcome the indoctrination of their childhood and are caught in these religious cobwebs. This is antithetical to the concept of modern society, but the intimate connection between religion and the identity of a nation makes reform very difficult.

Nationalism presents similar problems. A scourge of nation-states is the system of political parties. Political parties are created to capture power, claiming to represent the best interests of the people. They appeal in the name of the nation, attracting voters with manifestos and promises of a bright future. Elections are held periodically to get the consent of people and elect the representatives. In this process, the sovereignty of people is delegated to the representatives. Political parties vie with each other to lure the votes with all sorts of slogans. People cannot go and sit in parliaments or senates to monitor their day-to-day affairs. Hence, they prefer the representatives to act on their behalf. In this process, the elected representatives become powerful and, in due course, act as though they are the masters. Ultimately, a leader emerges as a very powerful charismatic person with enormous powers. That process leads to corruption. To remain in power and to win elections continuously, the persons in power compete in raising more attractive slogans and give false promises. Visions of great nations and great history are propagated.

Political parties enter into every walk of life. In due course, they also enter religion. Political parties forget the secular principles of separating religion from state. Religion, in turn, demands promises from political parties during elections. Thus, religion enters politics indirectly. Religion wants the political parties to respect beliefs, holy books, and superstitious commands. Most religions obstruct the laws of abortion and oppose birth control.

Religion opposes euthanasia. Religion opposes teaching of evolution in schools. Religion demands prayers in primary schools. There is no end to religious demands from political parties. To get votes, the parties promise whatever the religion demands. Thus, the collective notions and irrationality that power either a nation-state or a religion are detrimental to human

freedom. These myths should end so that humanism can help create world citizens and a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

We have a long way to go, but that is a desirable and prosperous way, indeed.

(Manabendra Nath Roy, *Nationalism: An Antiquated Cult* 1[Bombay]: Radical Democratic Party [1942]).

# WHY I AM NOT A MUSLIM

## A Review Article

“The ability to listen to a story” said the late renowned Telugu writer Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastri “is as important as the genius for writing one.” Similarly, if writing a book is one dimension of the effort, publishing is another. These days, it often takes courage to publish a controversial book. In the wake of the persecution of Salman Rushdie and the Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasreen, many publishers have become reluctant to bring out controversial books. They are particularly chary of publishing anything that is critical of Muslims, Prophet Mohammad, the Quran, or Islamic Laws. In the circumstances, the courage shown by Prometheus Books in bringing out Ibn Warraq’s *Why I am Not a Muslim* is praiseworthy.

The author Ibn Warraq (a pseudonym) was born into a Muslim family, but became a severe critic of Islam. There are many works critical of Islam written by non-Muslims. Most Muslims routinely ignore these. However, when a book such as the one under review authored by one of his or her own faith appears, the reaction is swift and inhuman, and may even mean death for the author. The late Ayatollah Khomeini, the ‘spiritual leaders’ of Islam, issued a fatwa or death sentence against Salmon Rushdie, the author of ‘The Satanic Verses’. After the publication of her book *Lajja* (shame) Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh was forced to leave the country and live in exile in Sweden. These are only two of the best-known cases of authors persecuted in the name of Islam. Yet, all these countries are signatories to the Declaration of Human Rights!

The book under review, Ibn Warraq *Why I am Not a Muslim?* is a work of great depth, based on intensive study and analysis of a large number of scholarly works on Islam? After this research (and

his own experience), the author has declared himself unable to continue as a Muslim. His willingness to share his findings and views on their highly combustible topic bears testimony to his extraordinary courage.

Sources: Facts and Fiction. When Bertrand Russell published his *Why I am Not a Christian*, it was whole-heartedly welcomed by adherents of other faiths. Ibn Warraq makes the insightful observation that if Allah were to be substituted for Jesus in Russell's work, it would still be substantially on the mark. The same in fact may apply to all religions. Recently, Dr. Ramendra (a Rationalist from Patna, Bihar, India) has written a book called *Whir I am Not a Hindu* which may be said to be in the same vein as the books of Russell and Ibn Warraq.

In his book of seventeen chapters, Ibn Warraq has examined every aspect of Islam both its doctrine and its application. The book opens with the Rushdie affair. The details are well known; in February 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa for his Satanic Verses. As Ibn Warraq notes, almost as reprehensible as the conduct of some Western Liberals some of whom even justified Khomeini's fatwa; no less a person than the French author Michael Foucault welcomed it. One can only speculate as to the causes; greed for favours, or fear perhaps.

At a doctrinal level, Christianity is as dogmatic as Islam. However, as Ibn Warraq has noted, to some extent at least, Christians have begun to take notice of academic progress and the results modern science and research, something that Muslims have yet to do. He has also observed that the Quran does not tolerate any academic examination of its claims. Progress in Christendom is due to the rise of secular humanism in the West; it is not due to any inherent tolerance of dissent or growth of scientific spirit within Christianity.

The second chapter discusses at length the origins of Islam and the influence of Christian and Jewish source books from which

the Quran has heavily borrowed. The author points out that though supposedly opposed to idolatry, Muslims have installed and worship a Black Stone at the Kaaba, their holiest shrine. (Astrophysicist Carl Sagan and others have identified it as a meteorite. Before Islam, the Kaaba seems to have been known to Hindus of India as a place of pilgrimage.) According to Ibn Warraq, the choice of the spot for the Kaaba was in all probability due to its proximity to the well of Zam Zam a precious water source on the caravan route that passed through Mecca on its way to Yeomen and Syria.

The third chapter examines the problems associated with the sources of Islam. It shows that many of the traditional beliefs about the Quran have little or no historical basis.

The fourth chapter takes a critical look at the message and teachings of Mohammad. The author highlights the fact that many who have criticized the Prophet were not necessarily non-believers, but sincere scholars who nonetheless stated simply as facts many things that the orthodox may find unpalatable. During the first period in Mecca, Mohammad appears to have been religiously motivated, sincerely seeking truth. His attitude seems to have undergone a sea change in subsequent years as he gained in power and influence.

The fifth chapter presents a critical overview of the Quran. For Muslims, the Quran is holy. Wholly God-given, and every word true to the letter. The author demonstrates that this has no basis in reality. On the other hand, the Quran is fully of inconsistencies, with many contradictions, later textual additions, and variant readings. All this is supported with the help of profuse examples.

What is particularly telling is the author's observation that all Islamic countries are signatories to the Declaration of Human Rights, while their sacred book the Quran is filled with teachings that grossly violate human rights. In addition, like the Bible, the Quran too rejects the Theory of Evolution and other findings of science.

## ISLAM AND THE STATE

The author next brings out the uncompromisingly totalitarian nature of the religion of Islam: democracy and Islam are fundamentally incompatible. It is full of 'do' and 'don't' injunctions, which it uses to regulate the whole of human life from birth to death. It is not just democracy, which Islam is opposed to; Islam has no place for secularism. It does not separate religion from polity.

The Islamic law or Sharia rests on four pillars: the Quran, the Sunna (sayings and tradition of the Prophet), the Ijma or the consensus of orthodox scholars, and the Qiyas or reasoning through analogy. However, according to the author, the Quran was written down over a period from the seventh to the 9th century CE, appropriating large portions from apocryphal Christian, Zoroastrian, and Samaritan traditions. It is filled with countless irrationalities, grammatical errors and self-contradictions hardly living up to the claim of the infallible Word of God.

There are occasional homilies about the need for generosity and kindness towards parents and so forth, but these are greatly outnumbered by its voluminous negative outpourings of extreme intolerance towards pagans and other non-believers, calls to violence and slaughter, gender inequality and other similarly inhuman teachings. The prophet of Islam expresses his disgust at human reasoning the enemy of blind faith.

Orthodox Muslim scholars stoutly deny the existence of a priestly order in Islam, but the reality is different. In the name of Ulema its priesthood has held on to a monopoly over the interpretation of Islam and has for centuries been a barrier to progress, from the spread of rational thinking to the growth of science. The author is uncompromising in his indictment of Sharia; it was drawn up over a thousand years ago and can hardly be used as a panacea for very human situation today. Such obstinacy, he argues, can only retard moral and every other kind of progress.

Human rights Muslim countries have signed the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 while at the same time professing unwavering loyalty of Islam. They also continue to be members of the United Nations. However, Islam violates human rights at every step men and women are treated as unequal in Islam, and the testimony of a woman in Islam, and the testimony of a woman in a court of law is worth only half of that of a man.

To begin with, the Declaration of Human rights does not countenance gender inequality, But Islam restricts the freedom of women in almost every respect; the insistence on the veil (*purda*) is only one example of it. For another, Muslim women cannot marry non-Muslims. The Declaration of Human Rights is also against religious discrimination, but non-Muslims living in Muslim countries have almost no rights sometimes not even the right to life. Persons belonging to other faiths are forbidden from offering their prayers, building temples and churches, or reciting their sacred texts. Slavery is legal (according to the Quran); men are allowed to cohabit with any number of concubines.

Torture and degrading punishment are also against human rights, but they are commonplace in Islamic societies. Such savage punishments as public flogging, scores and even hundreds of Lashes (in public) for women, amputation of limbs, and stoning to death are freely prescribed.

Human rights imply universal equality as fundamental principles, but Islamic countries flagrantly violate this principle, but Islamic countries flagrantly violate these principles. For instance, conversion to Islam is permitted and even encouraged, but apostasy or leaving Islam is forbidden under pain of death. Islam does not recognize freedom of conscience; in fact, it sees it as a great evil.

The author has provided pages upon pages of testimony showing that human rights have no place in Islam. According to him, secularist

reform is unavoidable if Muslims are to keep pace with the rest of the world means religion and polity must be separated. (However, if that happens, will collapse. Islam without the power to control and regulate the people is inconceivable.)

## WOMEN IN ISLAM AND OTHER TOPICS

The author devotes a whole chapter to the attitude of Islam towards woman. Islam, like Christianity, believes that the creation of man came before that of woman. (They both borrowed that idea from Judaism) It gives precedence to man, and as the author shows with numerous examples, Islam has been savage in its treatment of women. Here are few examples.

A woman during the menstrual period is not permitted to touch the Quran. She is not allowed to go anywhere near the Kaaba. She can neither pray nor fast. In all this, regarding woman as inferior to man is both axiomatic and mandatory (Quran 2.282) Even in matters of division of property; the daughter is entitled to only half of what a son is assigned. Pursuit of vengeance is also sanctioned in the Quran (Quran 2.178) Muslim Jurists have declared that man possesses greater wisdom than woman does. The author discusses the dominance of man in sexual moral and how Muslim women themselves treat other women.

Women best exemplify rewarding women as slaves, keeping them strictly confined to the home and treating them as inferiors in the practice of wearing the veil (*purda*). It is mandatory; women have no choice in the matter. In some countries, Muslim women have discarded the veil, but both Islam and clergy look down upon such a practice. In addition, whenever the clergy manage to gain control of the state as in Iran they invariably reverse the trend by reimposing the veil. The author provides many such instances.

The author has also dealt with the poetic tradition in Islam, and the role of women and wine found therein. Here also there are inconsistencies. In one place, Prophet Mohammad refers to

wine as of divine origin (Quran 16.69) while he prohibits it elsewhere (5.92). (The Prophet was himself said to enjoy a drink of wine occasionally, as do many of his followers, especially in the West).

All religions impose certain restrictions in matters of food and drink. Hinduism and Christianity are no exception. Islam regards pigs as unclean and has banned pork in any form (again borrowing from Judaism). However, Muslims in China consume pork while calling it mutton. Even in the staunchly Islamic Morocco, pork is eaten widely if clandestinely.

Personality of The Prophet Ibn Warraq devotes a full chapter to the personality of the prophet Mohammad, including positive traits in his character, which made him stand out in history. During the Mecca period, his conduct appears to have been marked by sincerity and even nobility. However, his personality and attitudes seem to have undergone a radical change during the Medina period. He began to see himself as the infallible Messenger of God and intercessory. (In other words, he became a megalomaniac.)

Muslims hold that there is no salvation for non-Muslims that is, for those who do not believe that Allah is the only God and Mohammad is his (Last) Prophet. They also believe it is the sacred duty of every Muslim to spread this message to the whole of humanity (by the sword if necessary).

The author has convincingly argued that there can be no greater hallucination. Bertrand Russell bears testimony to the untenability of such a stand.

The author has also shown that the growth of fresh ideas and intellectual freedom have suffered grievously because of Prophet Mohammad's declaration that the Quran is divine in origin, the sole repository of ultimate truth to the exclusion of everything else. (His followers have ensured that this claim is not questioned by anyone concerned about one's life).

## SUMMARY AND WARNING

*Why I am Not a Muslim* is not a book of fantasy or of veiled attack, like Salmon Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. It is a deeply felt intellectual tour de force by a great Muslim scholar whose heart bleeds for the fate of his fellow Muslims, and whose thirst for knowledge has led him on a path of incomparable research and study. Because of the well-known (and widely feared) Muslim proclivity to violence, the book had to be brought out by Prometheus Books in the USA rather than by any of the commercial major publishing houses. It is doubtful that there exists another work on the subject as scholarly, as detailed or as comprehensive, not to say as courageous.

If Ibn Warraq's book were to be made widely available in Islamic world and other parts, it might serve to open the eyes of the people further. After placing before us the Quran in its true colours, the author has highlighted the danger of continuing the practice of dinning into the impressionable minds of innocent Muslim children the contents of the 6000-odd suras of the Quran, forcing them to commit them to memory to exclusion of everything else.

(*Why I am Not a Muslim* was translated into French recently. It was translated into Telugu in India by Dr. Innaiah and is published by the Hema Publishers, Chirala, India 523 155 A.P. Rs. 200.)

# EVELYN LEONORA TRENT

## (Founder of Indian Communist Party in Exile)

Evelyn Roy, first wife of M.N. Roy, faced the problem of all wives of celebrities, that of being overshadowed by their more famous husbands. But Evelyn Roy on her own played an important role in international politics and also in nurturing the Indian Communist movement. Yet her centenary in 1982 had gone unnoticed, much less celebrated. Understandably, she would not figure in the who's who of the US since she was a Communist! Humanists in India did not particularly care for her because she had parted with Roy long before he evolved into a humanist. Despite all this, Evelyn contributed considerably in shaping the life and thought of Roy in the early stages.

Evelyn Trent was the seventh child in the family of Lamartine-Mary DeLome Macleod. She was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the US on 20 October 1882. Her father, Lamartine Cavaignac Trent, was a mining engineer distinguished in his profession and his neighbourhood. Scion of Edwin and Augusta S. Lockett of London, he migrated to the US at the age of 12. It was not known why he left London at such a tender age and sailed to the US as a cabin boy and worked on the high seas for three years. Lamartine also participated in the civil war and was wounded. Then he worked in engineering firms and became an engineer. He perfected the Frue Vanning machine, which he introduced in the US and abroad. He visited Japan, Australia and Tasmania on invitation.

At the time of Evelyn's birth, Lamartine was organizing his own engineering firm L.C. Treat & Co. that he sold away later. As Lamartine was constantly moving from place to place, Evelyn had her schooling at several places as her father was often moving

from place to place. Evelyn joined Girls' Polytechnic high school in Los Angeles in 1908 and completed the course in 1911. Then she joined Stanford University.

That was a turning point in her academic career. Her brother Edwin Walter was already at the university. Stanford was a prestigious university, though conservative in certain respects. David Jordan Starr was the Chancellor. He was a scientist and a peace lover. Evelyn later developed rapport with him. That was the time of the suffragette movement because women did not have the vote in the US then.

Evelyn belonged to the Alpha Phi sorority along with her close friend Ethel Rae Dugan. Evelyn was also a director in the women's athletic association. She played tennis and was also good at swordplay, unusual for a woman to opt for as a sport. She was associate editor of Quad, the annual journal of the university in 1914 and 1915.

Evelyn took English as her main subject and philosophy and French as optionals. Her histrionic ability was demonstrated during her second year, when she acted as Duchess of Carbondale, in the three-act comedy, "On the Quiet" by Augusts Thomas. She made a deep impression on the spectators and her performance was rated very high. Evelyn discussed Tagore with Bengalis and Mexicans at the university. Evelyn's social activities included teaching poor children for an hour daily. She pitied the poor children at the campus. She lamented the system that poured millions of dollars into the munitions industry but did not have resources to provide for needy children. Evelyn and Ethel Rae Dugan fraternised with Jessie Louise Knight, second wife of Chancellor Starr. They were friendly with the Chancellor, too.

Evelyn's letters to her mother were full of her experiences at the university and her thoughts on them. After graduation, she looked for a job at the university in early 1916. She was a

prolific writer concentrating on problems unemployment, poverty and other socio-economic issues and thought she would live by her writings. At that juncture, she met Roy and the events took a different turn

Evelyn and Roy would meet at the residence of Dhan Gopal Mukerji where their courtship began and blossomed. They were dating for one year before marriage. Mukerji and Ethel Dugan also were dating and they got married in New York in 1918. After meeting Roy in Palo Alto, Evelyn changed her plans, stopped applying for jobs. Instead, she planned to go to Europe with Roy. Roy was then in the thick of international Communist activities and was in touch with his German friends for support in promoting Communist activities in India. But he got neither the promised money nor arms from the Germans.

At one stage, Roy planned to go to Germany in a U-53 submarine. However, when Evelyn's parents did not like that idea they dropped the plan. Evelyn applied for a passport to visit the European countries. The 1914-19 world war was at its height, which made the US Government reluctant to issue passports to its citizens to travel to Europe. America was then neutral in the war. Evelyn requested Chancellor Starr for a recommendation letter to the State Department for her passport, which he readily sent. Even before receiving that letter, she had formally applied for the passport. She thanked Chancellor Starr for the letter and said she would retain it as a memento.

Roy was busy with his political activities at Palo Alto. S.P. Sarkar, an Indian revolutionary, was staying with him then. Roy was also in touch with other Indian revolutionaries in the US. Bengal was then the hotbed of extremist movements and many overseas Indians supported them. Roy was also in regular correspondence with Kelly in the UK. After a stay of six months at Palo Alto Roy moved to New York with Evelyn in January 1917.

The police were on the look out for him, which required his shifting his residence from place to place in New York to escape police surveillance.

Roy was close to Dhan Gopal from whom he wanted to know the whereabouts of Sailen Ghosh, another Indian revolutionary. Sailen would invariably demand money from Roy and would get angry if Roy was not able to meet his demands fully and on time. He would express his anger through telegrams addressed to 2117 Daly Avenue in New York, which was one of Roy's many residences then. Roy himself was hard-pressed for money but still managed to find \$25 to Sailen Ghosh.

Evelyn's brother Walter was in New York then but was reluctant to help. So Evelyn had to take up odd jobs. For a while American Society situated at 131 E. 23rd Street employed her. Roy who had to change his residence as often as possible stayed for a while at 239 E 19th Street, not far away. He later rented an apartment at 19th west 11th Street but gave his address as care of Ceylon Restaurant at 672, 8th Avenue to receive his mail.

Roy came in touch with Lala Lajpat Rai, later hailed as the Lion of Punjab in the struggle for Indian independence and attended some of his meetings. Roy was also a regular visitor at New York Public Library. Meeting professors of Columbia University and a few other intellectuals in New York was his other favourite activity. Lala Lajpat Rai was impressed by the Roys and also briefly employed Evelyn to help him in his literary activities in return for small amounts of tokens of help.

Meanwhile, the net was closing round pro-German Indian revolutionaries who-were being rounded up as 'enemy nationals' for internment. Some were also being booked under the sedition law. Roy was also arrested and taken into custody for questioning by the US attorney of New York district. Sensing danger, Roy and Evelyn hastened their marriage, which was solemnised while Roy was in goal. Soon after when Roy was enlarged on bail for

want of evidence in the sedition case the Roys seized the opportunity to escape and for that purpose travelled to the border State of Texas to acquire a false passport. They then crossed over to Mexico on 15 June 1917. It was exactly one year since Roy had come to USA.

The efforts of the New York police to obtain information about the Roys from their housekeeper did not succeed. Pretending to be journalists from the *Saturday Evening Post* the sleuths said they needed clarification about an article, which Roy had sent to the publication and so wanted to meet him. The housekeeper could not help. She told the police that the Roys no longer stayed with her. So the San Francisco court indicted Roy in absentia on 7 July 1917. Lajpat Rai perhaps tipped Roy of it and prepared him for possible arrest. The British Consul in Mexico promptly intimated the US police of Roy's arrival there so that they could seek his deportation from Mexico to the US but the Mexican Government put its foot down. The Roys were then staying in Mexico City (Calls Cordoba 33). Hirendranath Sen, a revolutionary from India was with the Roys there for some time.

Mexico was a safe place even for Germans. Roy also received the promised money \$ 6750 and 15,000 pesos (Mexican currency) were kept in the bank in the name of Evelyn Trent. Evelyn artfully juggled aliases like Martin, Roy, Allen, Trent, etc. to keep the police at bay. lie formed "the Friends of India League and started campaigning for the freedom of India. Evelyn was director of the League. Evelyn correspondence with her mother mentioned, among other things, Roy's lectures in support of Indian independence, which evoked much sympathy for the cause from the Mexicans. Evelyn also wanted to visit India and to secure investment for building schools, hospitals, factories and universities in the country.

Dr. John Mex, a German socialist who was in Mexico, became a close friend of Roy. However, he soon left Mexico to escape the Kaiser's army. Roy learnt the Spanish language and even wrote a number of articles and a few pamphlets in that language for his Mexican friends. Roy was in touch with Lajpat Rai in New York and was constantly contacting other Indian revolutionaries like Chandra Kant Chakravathy. Roy was an aggressive Indian nationalist while in Mexico until Michael Borodin arrived there.

Roy sent an article to Lala Lajpat Rai's monthly journal *The Young India* that touched off a heated debate between the veteran Punjab leader and Roy. First, Roy advocated independence for India instead of Home Rule or self-government being sought by Lala Lajpat Rai and other leaders. He pointed out that the journal was only voicing the opinions of Lajpat Rai's party and not the ideals Indian people. He said that leaders like Annie Besant who launched the Home Rule Movement could not faithfully reflect the needs of the people of India. Lajpat Rai countered that India was not yet ready for full independence. Roy disagreed saying that leaders like Lajpat Rai were "damming" the flow of the movement for Indian independence. As for Lajpat Rai's idea of putting forward a proposal for Home Rule for India at the forthcoming 'peace parliament' after the formal end of the hostilities, Roy said that Britain could "dismiss such begging" by placing two Indian dummies in the lobby of the Peace Parliament. That would be Britain's response to the representation envisaged by Lajpat Rai and others. Roy thought Britain would never concede real Home Rule for India nor fiscal autonomy because it was the economic, not political, control of India which was vital for England's position as a great power. He urged Lajpat Rai to stand up boldly for complete independence for India. Incensed by Lajpat Rai's charge that those working for the overthrow of British rule over India were

'ramifications of a German conspiracy' Roy said that the 31,50,00,000 people of India were human beings and did not need Britain or any other nation to grant them home rule, autonomy, self-government or any other political concession. Only a revolution would make India a free and self-respecting nation. No wonder, Lajpat Rai did not publish the article.

Roy developed close relations with the President of Mexico, Enustiano Carranza. The Germans and the Mexicans generally opposed the United States. Roy was getting German funds and support. After German defeat in the war the flow of funds stopped. However, he had enough resources for his political activities. Several radical Americans arrived in Mexico, with whom Roy developed close contact. They often met at Roy's place; the Roys being good hosts. Simultaneously, Roy and Evelyn were slowly and gradually absorbing socialist ideas. It led to Roy launching the Socialist Party, the convention of which was held in Mexico City from 25 August to 4 September 1919.

Michael Borodin arrived in Mexico as a pauper and Roy took him under his wing. On the suggestion of Borodin, the Mexican socialist Party was converted into the first Communist Party outside the Soviet Union. Borodin was also instrumental in introducing Roy to Lenin who invited Roy and Evelyn to the international (Com-munist) congress in Moscow. Roy attended it as a Mexican delegate whereas Evelyn was there as a delegate from India!

Roy and Evelyn followed it up with launching the Communist Party of India in exile at Tashkent on 20 October in 1920. They also attended a rally in Petrograd. Evelyn's letters to her mother, containing her views and experiences were all praise for the social conditions in the Soviet Union. Evelyn's parents were then staying in Washington DC, the federal capital of the US. Evelyn also expressed her desire to work for the Indian Revolutionary Party in her letters to her parents. Ten years after

the Roys left Mexico, Serge Eisenstein (1898-1948) visited Mexico and made a film *Que Viva Mexico* on the social conditions of the country, which showed Roy shown as one of the main builders of the Mexican society. Not long afterwards, Stalin lost interest in Eisenstein and Roy as he himself stated in a telegram to the eminent American author Sinclair Lewis. The picture was not released during the lifetime of Eisenstein, though he was honoured with a Lenin award in Russia. Later, it was released and won awards.

### **EVELYN IN ENGLAND – WHY?**

After the formation of the Communist Party of India in exile at Tashkent Evelyn started taking active interest in Indian affairs. Several scholars extensively recorded the role of Roy as a Communist but Evelyn's activities were not properly appreciated. Then on May 21, 1921, Evelyn suddenly landed in England by a ship from the Estonian port of Revel (Tallinn). Evelyn adopted the alias of Allen and travelled on a Mexican passport. The British police were not fooled. They recognized her as the wife Roy, the famous Soviet Communist and did not allow her to land in the UK. She was deported from Plymouth itself to Panama.

W.E. Kasper, an Estonian Communist, sent telegrams his Panamanian counterparts about Evelyn's deportation and asked them to take care of her. He arranged for the transfer of her bank account to New York and informed her sister, Helen Power who was in Piedmont, California, about it. He also informed Menbroson in Montreal about Evelyn's bad health saying that she was travelling alone and needed to be looked after carefully.

Similar telegrams went to Mexico too. The mention of Evelyn's bad health was only feint to divert the attention of the American authorities. Ramirez the Mexican delegate to the Third International in Moscow also sent telegrams to Valodes in Mexico about Evelyn. But Evelyn did not go to the US or Canada. Instead,

she returned to the Soviet Union and plunged into hectic Communist activity, along with Roy. However, her mission in England has remained a mystery to this day.

Stalin and Roy founded the University of the Workers of the East in Moscow. It was meant to train Communist cadres of different parties of various countries. Both Roy and Evelyn taught at the university. Roy was its director. The university ran for 17 years from 1921 to 1938. Roy and Evelyn were constantly touring the European countries to establish contacts with Indian Communists living there. They were also publishing journals in English under various titles and dispatching them to India. Evelyn adopted the name of Shanti Devi for articles to the journals. Her famous article was on Lenin when he died. Entitled "The loss of Lenin to world revolution", it evaluated the contribution of the father of the October Revolution in Russia.

Evelyn also wrote a critical article on Gandhi. She wrote another on the "Hindu-Muslim question". She addressed a lengthy letter to the AITUC under the caption "Where are the Masses?" during its Lahore session in 1923. Her article "Will the British Labour Government stand forthis?" was illustrated with brief life sketches of S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Nalini Sen Gupta, Singaravelu and Roy. Evelyn also wrote about the Bombay textile strike under the caption "Long drawn Bombay textile strike, 1924." Simultaneously, Evelyn was editing journals like *Vanguard*, *Advanced Van Guard*, and *The Masses of India* (all launched by Roy, and assisted him in his writings and political activities. Since Roy held a top position in the international Communist movement, he was frequently travelling in the Soviet Union. Hence, very often Evelyn brought out the journals on her own and also dispatched the copies to India.

Evelyn and Roy were in touch with their American friends through *Vanguard*. As many as 127 persons in the US received *Vanguard*. They included Chandrakant Chakravorthy, Bhagawan

Singh, and S.I. Parekh. *Vanguard* was also sent to China to Sun Yet Sen and one copy was sent to Persia. Evelyn arranged to dispatch large bundles to India through sailors. Roy and Evelyn were busy rallying Communists in exile under the banner of Comity Pro Hindu.

Roy was arrested and deported to Luxembourg on 30 January 1925. Evelyn too was arrested with him but was allowed to stay in Paris. Famous French Communist leader, Henri Barbusse helped the Roys in their secret activities. Evelyn participated in the colonial conference held at Amsterdam on 11 and 12 July 1925. On that occasion she met several Communist leaders also from India and discussed with them plans for sending material to India through the sailors. Among them was P.C. Joshi. She also wanted to meet Chamanlal but he refused as he belonged to the Saklatvala group, opposed to Roy. Evelyn tried to bring about reconciliation between the two but without success apparently. What happened between the Amsterdam conference and 30 July 1925, we do not know but Evelyn left Paris on 30 July 1930 for the US saying that she intended to visit her mother there.

Georges Agabekov, former chief of the Eastern Section of the Communist International wrote in his book, *The Russian Secret Terror*: "The first intimation of the bad faith of the Indian Communist Roy came through Farvuki. He suggested that Roy's wife being an English woman might be an English spy. When the suspicion was confirmed, Roy was separated from all political activity." The Federal Bureau of Investigation of the US recorded a secret entry of Evelyn into the country in October 1925. They wanted to deport her but later dropped the idea. They observed her activities closely for some time and left her alone afterwards.

Evelyn returned to her motherland after eight years. She began hectic political activity, which she carried on for eight years. Evelyn was 32 when she returned to the US in 1925. She plunged into political activity at once by joining Indian

Communists in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys near San Francisco. She was also in touch with her mother and her sisters, Meredith and Helen. She renewed her contacts with her estranged brother Walter in New York, who disapproved of her marriage with Roy.

Nor did Evelyn lose time in renewing personal contact with her beloved teacher David Jordan Star. At his instance and with his help, she became a feature writer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and continued to be so until 1935. She was also the anchor-person for the "World Topics" feature of KPO radio station, which attracted the attention of several intellectuals in the US. Her work involved travel across the Atlantic several times to cover world topics during 1928-30. She moved to New York in 1929 to be better able to handle her journalistic assignments. She also became a feature writer for the *Herald Tribune*.

She was quite versatile in her choice of topics for treatment from dance to politics. She wrote on Agnes Boone the western pioneer dancer of California as well as Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha, Palestine, Rare manuscripts of Chinese Jews, Samoa, New Caliph of Islam, Argentina, Reclamation plans of Egypt, the leading role of women in the Kuomintang, the Balkan monarchy, feminist activities, Hungary, Napoleon and so on.

Just as she was settling down to her routine in New York she had several shocks in 1931. Her mentor David Jordan Star died. She was worried about his deteriorating health and had been she had been expressing concern about it in her correspondence with him until the end. Then Roy was arrested in India and treated badly. Evelyn reacted spontaneously. She wrote an article in *Revolutionary Age*, the Communist weekly of New York, condemning the British Imperialist regime in India She signed it as "E.R.". Then came the death of her mother in July 1931 at Auburn in California. She rushed to Auburn and suspended her journalistic and political activities to take care of

her aged father. He too passed away in 1935. After the death of her parents, Evelyn left Auburn for Sacramento. While there she would write for local publications. Then on 10 October 1932 she married Dewitt Jones.

Roy was released from prison in the same year. There was no correspondence between Roy and Evelyn since 1925. We do not know whether they were separated or divorced legally. Evelyn and Dewitt Jones lived a happy life. They had no children. Dewitt was also a writer and a business-person. Evelyn moved to different places along with her second husband and wherever she was, her talent as a journalist was recognized. She wrote frequently for the *State Emergency Rehabilitation Bulletin* of San Francisco with which her husband was connected.

Dewitt Jones died on 20 February 1949. Evelyn then permanently returned to her parents' place Auburn and settled down there doing odd jobs and writing occasionally. She led a peaceful life until her death on 21 November 1970.

Albert Einstein pleads for release of M.N. Roy. Following Roy's arrest and implication in the Meerut (Cawnpore?) Conspiracy Case, Albert Einstein issued the following statement from Princeton University on 26 September 1931:

"M.N. Roy, in a cultural point of view, a valuable personality, is threatened with the death. In the general interest of humanity, it is essential that the political fight, inevitable in its way, avoid the primitive method of extermination. Only in this way the political fight can be beneficial in longer term for the general public."

Roy, a Communist intellectually, returned to India after 16 years. He was touring India under the name of Mahmood and campaigning against British rule in India. He was already indicted in several cases in absentia and the conviction was pending. The Indian Communists were launching a vicious

campaign against him under the direction of Moscow. They leaked out to the British police of his whereabouts leading to his arrest in July 1931. Roy was charged with "waging war against the King."

American Communists (majority group) reacted immediately. The weekly *The Revolutionary Age* published the news of the arrest and commented sharply "on the shameful silence of official Communist press in India and Russia". The International Communist opposition took the initiative to "save Roy from the bloody claws of British Imperialism." *The Revolutionary Age* commented that "the Indian agents of English" Labour government have arrested Comrade Roy and have thrown him into prison. They appealed to international opinion to assert itself so that it would be able to restrain "the heavy hand of the Britishers."

The official Communist Party of India had been carrying on the most shameful attacks on Comrade Roy who was working illegally in India. The paper said that "these 100 per cent Communists" declared that renegade Roy must be fought with all the means at hand, even denunciation to the police! "The International Red aid, organized especially to defend revolutionary and class war prisoners, refuses to do anything about the arrest of Comrade Roy. "Let the renegade rot in prison" is what a responsible official of the German Red Aid remarked. The Red Aid is ready to help German fascists but can do nothing for Comrade Roy!

In spite of the fact that the official Communist leaders have organised a veritable conspiracy of silence about the case, the *Revolutionary Age* revealed that a large public meeting called in Hamburg under the auspices of the Communist Party of Germany voted unanimously in favour of a resolution against the arrest of Manavendranath Roy. Resolutions for the release of Roy poured in from Germany, Sweden, Alsace, Czechoslovakia and

Communist opposition organizations. *Revolutionary Age* requested that every labour organization, every organization of oppressed colonial peoples or national minorities, every liberty loving man and woman should unite to demand the release of M.N. Roy from the claws of British imperialism. (Sept. 12, 1931). When Roy's trial was set for October 1931, several intellectuals, including Einstein, appealed for the release of Roy. They were "Henri Barbusse, editor and French Communist leader, Prof. Jerome Davis of Yale University, Dr. W.E.B. Dubois, editor of *Crisis* and Black leader, Waldo Frank, author, Garfield Hays, attorney, John Haynes Holmes, minister of the community church, Prof. Robert Morss Lovett, University of Chicago, A.J. Muste, Brookwood Labour College, Julia Lethrop, former chief of Federal Children's Bureau, Norman Thomas, director of the League of Industrial Democracy, Oswald Garrison Villard, Editor *Nation* and Roger E. Baldwin, issued an appeal which was carried by the *Revolutionary Age* (Nov. 14, 1931).

Several organisations also demanded the release of Roy: The teachers and students of Public high school of Tinz, the functionaries conference of the chemical workers union, the Braunschweig teachers union, the Nuremberg building traders, workers union, the metal workers union of Sommerda, the central traders and labour councils of Schoningen, the Nature-friends of Jena, the League for the Struggle against Reaction and Fascism.

Roy appealed from Cawnpore prison to the workers, peasants and radical intellectuals of the whole world to come to the support of the Indian masses striving for freedom and to demand the release of thousands of Indian revolutionaries from the dungeons of the British prisons. He also condemned the crimes of the British Labour Government. He pointed out the suicidal policy of the executive of the Communist International and of the "Loyalite Communists" of India. Roy sent out this message on 23 August 1931, which was fully carried in the *Revolutionary Age*, New York.

The American Communists (majority group) cabled to Gandhi in London with a request to intervene on behalf of Roy but he declined. He would not also issue a statement to demand Roy's release. Gandhi was attending the Round Table conference at that time. Roy's arrest was discussed in the Canadian Labour Defence League where they wanted to wire to Berlin to ascertain the facts. Frederick Inter-Racial club of Brooklyn, New York, and Boo Park Workers Youth Club of Brooklyn in New York too passed resolutions for the release of Roy. Revolutionary age carried articles from Independent India, a weekly from Bombay about defence committees formed to fight for Roy in India. AITUC established a defence fund in support of Roy. The paper also carried the news how the police in India suppressed demonstrations and agitations in favour of Roy. They have noted the details of the various defence committees organized in Cawnpore, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, and Delhi. B. Singh, the secretary of Roy defence committee informed the world about the condition of Roy and the ill treatment to him in British prisons. In the various defence committees, there were Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Tayyab Shaik, V.B. Karnik, R.S. Ruikar, Purushotham Trikamdas and several prominent leaders. B. Singh also revealed how Roy was treated in jail, and condemned the attack on Roy in the German press that Roy was arrested as an accomplice of imperialism and for purely diplomatic reasons.

He stated that Roy was not permitted to receive books, newspapers and even a typewriter was refused though the court sanctioned one. Roy was not allowed any ventilation into his room and even ice and hot water were not allowed. Roy was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment. American Communists described the sentence as savage and a severe blow to the liberation movement. They resolved to continue the struggle for the release of Roy. Ajoy Kumar Ghosh gave details of Roy's trial.

The magistrate went to the jail instead of taking the prisoner to the court. The local bar association took up the case of Roy's defence. Viceroy Lord Willingdon himself personally took interest in deciding the prison cell of Roy.

The Communist parties appealed for books and donations to help the legal defence of Roy. When the money came they sent some amount to Roy—in prison—but the postal authorities returned it saying that Roy refused it. Actually, the authorities never brought this to the notice of Roy. The class distinctions in the prisons in India were also exposed abroad, when Roy was treated as a third class prisoner, forced to wear heavy prison clothing, eat coarse prison food. Roy lost much weight in prison and suffered physically as well as mentally.

When rumors spread that Roy was being shifted from Cawnpore jail, thousands of railway workers gathered at Lucknow station and demonstrated. When they found that the prisoner was not Roy they raised slogans in support of Roy. The Communist press in the US carried the news of Roy until the sentence was reduced to six years and Roy was treated as a political prisoner. The Workers Age carried full reports about Roy.

Evelyn was not ignored either but she was not given the importance due to her. After the demise of her second husband, she returned to Auburn and settled down in her ancestral home. Albert Einstein, in his capacity as chairperson and trustee of emergency committee of atomic scientists requested Evelyn's help and she responded at once. Einstein thanked her on behalf of his colleagues for her generous response for the great educational task undertaken by the committee. He appreciated her practical support and goodwill. Einstein expressed the hope for a reasonable solution of the problem of nuclear bombs.

Evelyn was keen to read the memoirs of Roy serialised in the *Radical Humanist*. Roy did not mention anything about Evelyn though the memoirs also covered the period of their joint

activities in the Communist movement and their marriage. We do not know her reaction to it because she had never said anything about it. Richard Park, an expert on Indian Communism wanted Evelyn's assessment of his work. She responded saying that there were many misinterpretations and errors. She questioned the sources and said that simply because something appeared in print, it should not be taken as authentic unless verified. She pointed out glaring mistakes in the book to Park. She denied "the false accusations of Chakravarthy, an Indian revolutionary, and described his writings as imaginary.

Commenting on Roy in her letter to Park, she said Roy played a an important role in the Indian revolutionary movement at an intellectual level. She added that Roy was the first Communist intellectual to ennoble Communism with a philosophy and literature, which got became widely recognised. She pointed out that though Roy passed through many evolutionary phases in his own development he had the capacity to learn. Evelyn condemned those who accepted the biased views of the British police agent, Lt. Col. Kaye. She asked Park not to do disservice by hostile interpretation of Roy's integrity and sincerity in the development of the Indian revolutionary movement.

Robert C. North who published the mission of Roy in China approached Evelyn for details of Roy's views and activities and sent a lengthy questionnaire for him to answer. Evelyn asked him to meet her personally for discussions instead of putting anything in writing. Accordingly Prof. North visited her and held discussions with her in Auburn.

Evelyn lived in Cognito and did some petty jobs for survival. She married again in 1935 but her second husband died in 1949. Her papers were destroyed in a fire accident during 1962. She died in 1970.

## A.B. SHAH (1920-81)

Amritlal Bhikkubhai Shah was a rare intellectual who founded the Indian Secular Society. He was an outstanding critic of communism, communalism and obscurantism in India. Shah stood for human values and freedom. He applied scientific method to every field and came to rational conclusions on critical matters. Perhaps A.B. Shah was the first critic of M.N. Roy's Radical Democratic principles, later called "22 Thesis". He never accepted any theory or principle without scrutiny. A.B. Shah hailed from a Digambar Jain family of a small town of Gujarat. He was born in 1920. Until 17 years Shah followed the Digambar Jain way of life. Shah came to Pune in 1937 and took his B.Sc. degree from Ferguson College in 1941. A.B. Shah taught mathematics in S.P. College, Pune and played an active role in the teachers' union. Introduced to M.N. Roy during 1946, he attended the study camps conducted by Roy in Dehra Dun and other places. It was in those study camps that Shah for the first time met Prof. Shib Narayan Ray. From then on, they remained life-long friends.

While in Pune, A.B. Shah came close to several intellectuals like Tarkatheertha Laxman Sastri Joshi, M.P. Rege, V.M. Dandekar, V.M. Tarkunde and others.

### **THOUGHT AND CRITICISM OF A.B. SHAH**

Perhaps he agreed with only the broad principles of Roy. As soon as M.N. Roy formulated the "22 Thesis", A.B. Shah criticized it and published his views in Roy's own journal *Independent India* (later *Radical Humanist*).

M.N. Roy encouraged criticism and asked Shah to contribute more articles. From then onwards Professor Shib

Narayan Ray and A.B. Shah developed intimate friendship. A.B. Shah says that Roy is unique in recognizing the need for a philosophical and cultural revolution accompanying a political and economic revolution. Roy advocated politics without parties whereas Shah opined that parties in some guise are a must to mediate between the citizen and the State. Shah also doubted the co-operative economy of Roy.

A.B. Shah says that Roy's ideas are valid at least in three spheres. The major one is to approach human problems with a rational outlook. Even emotions can be tempered with reason. Scientific method can be applied to every situation. Shah says that there is no leader who can be compared with Roy in India in this field.

Roy advocated decentralization of administration. Concentration of power even at village level should be opposed and participation of citizens encouraged. Shah says that Roy's decentralization of power leads to equality where genuine freedom of the individual is possible. Royists did not like the criticism of Shah and his alternative thesis. Shah suggested certain amendments to Roy's philosophical principles also synchronizing with the latest scientific developments. For example, Shah suggested that man is capable of being rational instead of being "essentially rational".

## **CHALLENGE TO PURI SANKARACHARYA**

A.B. Shah published his views on cow slaughter and beef eating in ancient India and supported his views with scriptural authority. These articles appeared in Marathi magazine *Lok Satta*. Puri Sankaracharya offered to withdraw his agitation for a ban on cow slaughter if Shah could prove his point. Shah accepted the challenge and arranged a meeting with Tarkatheertha Laxman Sastri Joshi to show scriptural evidence. Ultimately, Puri Sankaracharya backed out with some lame excuses.

## **TRADITION AND MODERNITY**

Shah published his views on Modernity and Tradition in a book, which led to many controversies. He differentiated modernity from modernization. He also wanted to separate the outdated, useless ancient traditions and adopt modern human values and ethics. Applying technology to several aspects of life comes under modernization whereas accepting and implementing human values, ethics and freedom comes under modernity.

## **RSS**

Shah wrote without mincing words that Vivekananda is the real inspiring spirit for RSS. It is a real threat to all liberal Indians (*Secularist*, 1979, Nov.-Dec.).

## **CRITIQUE OF MUSLIM OBSCURANTISM**

A.B. Shah, with the support and help of Hamid Dalwai, led a crusade against orthodox, fanatic Muslims and tried to liberate Muslim women. The elite Muslims played a dubious role while lower class Muslims and their womenfolk liked Shah's approach. Shah appealed for a bold approach to face the crisis in Islam. Shah traced the absence of modern trends, values and ethics in Islam. He also pointed out the failure of the Ram-Rahim approach of Gandhi and the critical assessment of M.N. Roy. Shah showed how Islam is anti humanistic in all walks of life. He pleaded for uniform civil code without any religious bias. He organized a society called Satya Shodak Mandal to educate Muslims and Hindus. Shah also worked with Samaj Prabhodan Samstha.

## **WORK WITH DALITS AND CHILDREN OF PROSTITUTES**

Shah worked for the uplift of the disadvantaged. He wrote the history of the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra. He wanted the educated Dalits to come forward to work in all fields. Shah

strongly felt that lower class Dalits are not inferior to any one but their social and cultural conditions put impediments in their progress. Shah wanted to remove those obstacles. Shah also worked on another project to help the children of prostitutes in Maharashtra. He evolved a project called Renuka Devi Association to educate the children of prostitutes. The results can be seen in Bookamb village near Pune. He organized agricultural societies for Dalits.

### **GOOD SPEAKER AND WRITER**

A.B. Shah toured India extensively, organized the Indian Secular Society and conducted seminars, symposia and public discussions on the issue of separation of State and religion. Similarly, Shah actively participated in numerous projects on education including the Kothari Commission. A.B. Shah was a good speaker and a writer in English. Shah edited and published several books. Seminar proceedings were published as books. The books included Gandhi, Nehru, Gokhale, Roy, Communism, Humanism, Secularism, Obscenity, Modernity, Challenges to Secularism, Tradition, What Ails Muslims, Scientific Method etc. He also contributed many articles to standard journals. Shah was precise in his exposition and very scientific in approach to problems.

After the death of M.N. Roy and Ellen Roy the burden of editing and carrying the intellectual journals of the Humanist movement fell on Shib Narayan Ray and A.B. Shah. They jointly edited the weekly Radical Humanist. A.B. Shah shifted to Bombay at the instance of Prof. G.D. Parekh, the then rector of Bombay University. A.B. Shah was Principal of S.I.E.S. College, Bombay. Prof. Shib Narayan Ray joined the college to teach English literature. A.B. Shah also joined the *Quest* Editorial board and later started *New Quest* from Bombay. He soon resigned as Principal to shift to Pune where he worked vigorously for Renaissance and Secularism.

## ORGANIZER AND PUBLISHER

From 1964 onwards Shah aggressively worked in several fields including education, secularism, humanism and modernity. Shah tried to rally all the Muslim organizations and Hindu fundamentalists to discuss and thrash out some agreeable formula for secularism. However, he found that it was not possible and discarded that attempt. Shah started his own publishing house called "Nachiketa Publishers" and brought out many books. Later it was bought by Statesman. Shah's Scientific Method was published by Allied, Bombay. Shah worked with V.V. John, J.P. Naik and conducted many discussions on education. A.B. Shah came close to Edward Shills, the famous sociologist of Chicago University. Under his impact, Shah started a quarterly journal "The Humanist Review," but could not continue it due to several constraints. A.B. Shah laid solid foundation for the Indian Secular Society and its bi-monthly journal, which is continued now under the editorship of Prof. V.K. Sinha.

A.B. Shah participated in international seminars in Seoul, and Mexico and presented papers. He opposed the Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. At that time Shah distributed the prison diary of Jayaprakash Narayan and stood by him. A.B. Shah served as General Secretary of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom for a decade during 1960s. A.B. Shah was always opposed to dictatorship. He was a critical Marxist. He published Victor Fic's two volumes on Indian communism. He died on October 11, 1981 in Pune, India.

# A.G.K. MURTHY

## Humanist Pioneer in Andhra

Avula Gopala Krishna Murthy, rather "A.G.K." as he was more popularly and affectionately called, was born on April 29, 1917 at Mulpur village near Tenali of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh. He hailed from a middle class agriculture family. He graduated in Law and Literature from Andhra and Lucknow Universities. He settled down for law practice at Tenali and made it a centre of activities in the field of Humanism, influenced as he was by M.N. Roy.

For about 8 years he was in the forefront of the Radical Democratic Party in Andhra Pradesh, as secretary and member of its central executive. After the dissolution of the Party, he was acknowledged as the foremost leader of the Radical Humanist movement in Andhra Pradesh until his death in 1967.

In 1949 he associated himself with such great rationalist personalities like Dr. R.P. Paranjape, Gora, C.N. Annadurai and S. Ramanathan in starting the Indian Rationalist Association. He was a member of the first working committee of the Indian Rationalist Association. The association's first conference was inaugurated by M.N. Roy. A.G.K. inaugurated the 6th convention of the Rationalist Association held at Madras. Elected Vice President of the Association, he held office until his death in 1967 at the age of 49.

His passion for social reforms and compassion for the downtrodden were proverbial. He pioneered the backward class movement in Andhra. He was the champion and protagonist of inter-caste marriages. He officiated hundreds of such marriages. People used to gather in large numbers to hear his speeches on such occasions.

He was elected Municipal Chairman of Tenali and during his tenure; he laid roads and provided electricity in slum areas. He visited the USA in 1964 at the invitation of the US Government. The fanatic Hindus including the editor of *Andhra Prabha* Mr. Neelamraju Venkateshaiah demanded the government to call him back when A.G.K. commented that he would tell the truth about Vivekananda if someone asks for details in USA. During his tour in USA he made certain remarks against Jawaharlal Nehru which made the then ambassador B.K. Nehru furious but he could not do anything. After his return from USA, A.G.K. gave his impressions in public meetings which were hailed as excellent assessment. He translated M.N. Roy's work "New Humanism" into Telugu and published "My Tour of the USA".

A.G.K. studied Roy's principles thoroughly and extensively propagated them but did not blindly follow them. In fact, he propagated the principles scientifically. He did not accept Roy as a Communist. A.G.K. often said that Roy was afraid of the Communist Secret Police chasing him, as he knew well how they eliminated their opponents in the international Communist movement. A.G.K. used to heckle Roy for keeping the photo of Stalin in his drawing room even in the last days of Stalin.

A.G.K. realized that Netaji turned to be a "Social fascist". When Subhas was defeated as president of Congress none received him in Lucknow but A.G.K. received him and maintained cordial relations. A.G.K. was studying postgraduate course in Lucknow and staying in hostel. He wrote that Netaji committed a blunder in seeking the support of Nazis and fascists in his fight against British imperialism.

A.C.K. used to write articles in both small and big newspapers whichever was willing to publish them. He was popularly called a 'theoretician' in Radical circles. His general speeches were ferocious, and attracted special attention.

Mr. Abburi Ramakrishna rao complained against A.G.K. to M.N. Roy when A.G.K. wrote bitter criticism against Gandhi during war days.

When no magazine came forward to publish some of his thoughts, he launched a Radical magazine from Tenali during the Second World War.

He tried his best to bring several persons involved in social and women emancipation in Andhra region under the influence of Roy. As part of his endeavours, he could make the famous feminist writer Chalam meet Roy. However, it was a failure as Chalam was not fluent in English and did not have modern views on various subjects. Chalam could not rise to Roy's level of thinking.

A.G.K. thought that a meeting of Tripuraneni Ramaswamy with Roy would be fruitful. Ramaswamy did not possess in-depth philosophical knowledge. In addition, he could not come out of Hindu mythologies and caste inequities. Hence, here also A.G.K. was dissatisfied. Ramaswamy did not live long afterward and there was no occasion for A.G.K. to try 'again for their meeting.

## **HUMANIST**

By 1948, A.G.K. played a prominent role at the national level in the Radical Humanist movement, worked together with Mr. Ramanathan, Vice-President and invited Annadurai from Tamil Nadu to Andhra Pradesh. He continued to be National Vice-President for about ten years.

He wrote a number of articles and addressed several meetings. He propagated the thoughts of eminent humanists like Ingersol, Bradlaugh, Thomas Paine and several others in Andhra areas.

After Independence, A.G.K. excelled as a full-time Radical. While practising at Tenali as an advocate, he conducted many training camps and imparted knowledge to youth.

## MARRIAGES

He cultivated the art of delivering speeches at the time of marriages. He also organized several humanist weddings. Even people who did not agree with his ideas heard him in rapt attention.

## FRIEND OF DALITS

A.G.K. prepared Dalits in Andhra Pradesh to fight for their rights. Former Chief Minister Sanjivaiah visited him frequently for advice. Many Dalit poets had the privilege of his doing the 'foreword' for their works. A.G.K. waged a relentless fight against untouchability.

On a visit to Vijayawada as Chief Minister, Sanjivaiah had to cancel his engagements at a Harijan Hostel located atop a hillock as he could not climb. When the reporter of *Andhra Patrika*, Telugu daily, brought the issue to A.G.K.'s notice by, A.G.K. remarked that when Sanjivaiah could climb up to the position of Chief Minister, how was it he could not climb up to the Harijan Hostel on the hillock. *Andhra Patrika* carried a story on the subject. Reacting to it immediately, Sanjivaiah offered apologies to A.G.K. He later attended the hostel function. Sanjivaiah was a generous politician who received criticism in its true spirit. From Athota Venkata Ratnam to Jashua, many Dalit poets were A.G.K.'s friends.

## AGITATIONS FOR SECULARISM

The then Endowments Minister Kalluri Chandramouli spent Government funds in the name of renovation of temples lavishly. A.G.K. wrote a number of articles and delivered speeches objecting to this and suggested that the Government should maintain a distance from religion.

During the tenure of Pattabhi Ramarao as Education Minister, textbooks were nationalized and A.G.K. opposed the

move. In the 5th standard textbooks, a piece written by Viswanadha Satyanarayana in which Budha was described as Satan was published. A.G.K. agitated against it as a result of which the Government was forced to remove it from the textbook. This was a victory scored by Humanists under the leadership of A.G.K. against the State Government. Pattabhi Ramarao frequently entered into arguments with A.G.K. but could not succeed.

Viswanadha Satyanarayana afraid to attend any meeting attended by A.G.K. He could not face the rational literary criticism of A.G.K.

At a farewell meeting organized by the Advocates Association on the eve of his American tour, many requested A.G.K. to lavishly praise Swamy Vivekananda but A.G.K. said that he would state only the facts about Swamiji.

Andhra Prabha, under the editorship of Neelamraju Venkata Seshiah, started a big campaign seeking the recall of A.G.K. Many fundamentalists cried foul about his speeches in the States. A.G.K. did not have an occasion to rebut their contentions.

Several Humanists right from M.V. Sastry used to consult A.G.K. because of his position in the movement. Gopichand and others were afraid of A.G.K. People, who often change their views as easily as changing parties, were afraid of him.

A comprehensive book on A.G.K.'s efforts to propagate Humanist, secular and radical movements in Andhra is warranted.

A.G.K. turned Tenali into an important Humanist centre. From M.N. Roy to A.B. Shah, hundreds of Humanist leaders visited Tenali and had discussions with A.G.K. People acquainted with A.G.K. felt that they were in the company of a great intellectual.

A.G.K. edited *Radical, Radical Humanist, Sansiksha*—all Humanist journals in Telugu published from Tenali. He also edited souvenirs on Tripuraneni Ramaswami, Etuduri Venkata Narasaiah and a few other literary giants in Telugu. He associated himself with famous journalists like Narla Venkateshwara Rao and influenced their thoughts. A.G.K. turned out hundreds of Humanists through training camps and study centres.

# BIOGRAPHY OF NARLA

Narla Venkateswara Rao (V.R. Narla, 1908-85) started as journalist and ascended as humanist. That was great evolution that has to be emulated by future generations.

Rising from a middle class agricultural family. V.R. Narla underwent hard life in early days and struggled to meet both ends. His ancestors migrated from Andhra area to Madhya Pradesh and settled in Khatni. *They* worked as food suppliers to army. Later Narla came back to Andhra and studied unto graduation. He was inspired by national movement and participated in it. He had flair for writing from early days.

V.R. Narla had two phases in his life. The first part is fully occupied with journalism. He was a force in daily Telugu journalism. His influence and impact was tremendous during Second World War period and post independence era. It is small wonder that readers looked for his opinions on various matters. The morning daily newspaper (Andhra Prabha from Chennai) had such charisma in those days that the reader first opens up for editorial before reading news!

He also toured abroad 4 times and covered several countries. He studied libraries, museums, public national parks. Art and literature. After leaving Andhra Prabha, V.R. Narla established *Andhra Jyothi* another Telugu daily with the help of industrialists, zamindars, politicians and some personal friends. Soon the daily got established as reputed Telugu daily with single edition from Vijayawada.

During late 1960s V.R. Narla shifted to Hyderabad and continued as Editor of Andhra Jyothi. Then, he changed a lot—

both mentally and physically. He stopped chain smoking after heart attack and systematized his library with 25 thousand English and Telugu books. His house had become a visiting place to eminent journalists and intellectuals. Slowly and gradually V.R. Narla emerged as professed rationalist, Humanist and great thinker. V.R. Narla gave lectures in universities and all of them were published as monographs. His research on Gita, Upanishads and Indian Culture converted him into committed Humanist.

V.R. Narla developed friendship with Prem Nath Bazaz (Kashmiri Pundit, author on Gita and follower of M.N. Roy) Sushil Mukherjee (Minerva Associates, Kolkata, radical humanist), Niranjana Dhar (author of controversial book on Vivekananda wherein the shallowness of the seer was exposed), V.M. Tarkunde (judge in Mumbai High Court, human rights fighter, recipient of international humanist awardee), A.B. Shah, (founder, Indian secular society), Avula Gapalakrishna Murthy (advocate, leader of humanist movement in Andhra and editor of humanist journals in Telugu). He studied M.N. Roy and his ideas. In those days Roy opposed M.K. Gandhi and suggested, alternative plans to revitalize Congress Party. He also criticized Gandhi's religious approach to politics. Roy returned from abroad after 15 years and jailed in India for 6 years. Hence many journalists could not study Roy's ideas with deep knowledge. When Roy addressed a press meet in Chennai, Mr. Khasa Subbarao, editor of *Indian Express* made certain sarcastic remarks about Ellen, the wife of Roy. That made him furious and he castigated "Subbarao with harsh words. The journalists including V.R. Narla could not take it and boycotted the press meet. From then onwards no news of M.N. Roy appeared in *Andhra Prabha* daily as long as Narla was the editor. Entire nation paid tributes to M.N. Roy after his death in 1955 Jan. 25 but *Andhra Prabha* did not write editorial. Mr. A.G.K. Murthy reacted and commented on this in a public meeting at Guntur. That was reported to Narla.

Immediately Narla contacted Mr. Guttikonda Narahari (prominent humanist, orator, secretary of Radical Democratic Party in early 1940s) and obtained as many books on Roy as possible. Next year (1956) V.R. Narla wrote editorial on M.N. Roy. Not only that. He studied M.N. Roy and started liking his thought very much. That led to close friendship between A.G.K. Murthy and V.R. Narla.

V.R. Narla disproved the popular belief that as age advances, cynicism, pessimism sets in and that people start believing in Karma, fate, almighty with all sorts of superstitions, worships and prepare for heaven. His writings are full of life, hope, optimism and above all humanism.

V.R. Narla had to good habit of maintaining his diaries and writing notes meticulously. That gave him much advantage. He had to habit of going round the libraries, second hand bookstalls and search for the rare books and also latest ones. Thus he made his research update on his favourite topics. Narla wrote monographs on Kandukuri Veeresalingam (Brahmo Samaj critic of superstitions) Gurjada Apparao (Kanyasulkam fame who ridiculed the dowry system). Vemana (the crusader on blind beliefs). He did thorough research before undertaking his writings and finally produced excellent works on them.

The V.R. Narla scrutinized the various works including original texts on Indian Culture, History, Philosophy, and Theology along with western counterparts. On Gita alone he collected different editions, various authors and rare books. From various angles Narla examined Gita since it is considered to be holy to Hindus and its impact on India is tremendous. Similarly he studied the texts of Upanishads, their interpretations, and different exposures. He did not leave any source untapped including the foreign authors like Max Muller, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche etc., V.R. Narla broadly understood the Indian culture

from two angles. One is positive and another is negative. Narla published his observations into several volumes: *The Truth about the Gita*, an essay on Upanishads, *The Poverty of Intellectualism in India* (Mysore University Lectures), *The East West* (lectures in University lectures). Narla also brought out his stray thoughts in two volumes. *Gods Goblins and Men: Man and his universe*.

## NARLA'S OPINIONS

During 20th century M.N. Roy (Manavendranath Roy 1887-1955) pleaded for human values, ethical norms, co-operative economy, decentralization of political structure with power spreading over in vast villages, renaissance, critical outlook towards life, scientific nature in understanding every aspect of Nature, putting history without myths and stories, secularism where in separation of state and religion is possible so that religion is confined to personal level without bringing it into administration. M.N. Roy gave utmost importance to the value of FREEDOM. Narla wanted these positive aspects to be adopted by modern India so, that it can discard the old superstitions and blind beliefs.

Narla studied the negative aspects of India both in the past and present. He thought that Yagnavalkya the seer was the stumbling block for free thought in ancient days. He stood firm against questioning and probing. He was, authoritarian. He wanted to thrust the dictatorial attitude of holy books without raising any doubt. That was the root cause of India's backwardness in the past. In the modern days Mahatma Gandhi brought religion into politics to achieve independence. He depended upon his inner voice, which is unverifiable. He flawed often in decision-making. Gandhi encouraged law breaking to oppose the British rule in India. His Satyagraha led to violence. His food faddism also restricted healthy body-building. Gandhi had no scientific outlook on any aspect of life. He depended on

Gita and everyday recited it in prayer meetings. V.R. Narla while admiring Gandhi's role in freedom movement condemned his religious approach in solving the problems. Narla pointed out the defects of Indian culture in various angles. He appealed to the younger generation to discard the belief in KARMA, REBIRTH that already ate the vitality of Indian spirit. The religious attitude of Hinduism particularly stood in the way of India's path towards renaissance, scientific revolution, and humanism. Hence Narla appealed to one and all to adopt humanistic value where humans rely on themselves in solving problems and stand on par with any developed country.

### **REACTION DURING EMERGENCY: 1975**

As a conscientious journalist V.R. Narla was upset when fundamental rights were suspended in India and Emergency was imposed in 1975 by the Prime Minister India Gandhi. He wanted to keep the editorial column blank as a mark of protest. However, the management of the daily had close links with the ruling Congress Party and hence did not allow Mr. Narla to have his way. As a result Mr. Narla left the country to USA. His 7 children are in USA as practising doctors. Hence he could spend time with them while touring historical places. He came back after some time when the matters were subsided, then resigned as Editor of Andhra Jyothi. This was not the first time that Mr. V.R. Narla asserted the right of the journalists and opposed the management. During late 40's when he had tussle with the management of Andhra Prabha, he submitted his resignation and supported the journalists. Mr. Ramnath Goenka was manager at that time that induced Mr. Narla to withdraw the resignation while conceding the demands of journalists. Mr. V.R. Narla also developed contempt towards Congress Party for its demagogic attitude in solving problems. As a member of Rajya Sabha he watched closely the functioning of corrupt politicians.

## HELP TO ACADEMICIANS

Mr. G.V. Krishnarao the famous author and critic of Marxism in Telugu submitted his thesis of KALAPOONODAYAM (in English) to the University of Madras in early 1950s. The examiners being Telugu pundits from Andhra were very much prejudiced and narrow-minded. They want to stall Mr. Krishnarao getting the degree. Caste factor also played some role in this. The examiners could not find fault with analysis or criticism of the author. Hence they tried to find some loopholes in the English language of the scholar. Mr. Krishnarao was only graduate but exempted to submit the thesis. Mr. Narla studied the problem and found howlers in the language of examiner reports! He pointed out them and wrote strong worded letter to the vice chancellor Mr. Govindarajulu Naidu (Vice Chancellor, Sri Venkateswara University) about the mischievous role of the caste-minded examiners. He also warned that the whole affair would be exposed to the public if they procrastinate further. At that juncture the examiners conceded and recommended the degree to Mr. Krishnarao. Andhra Prabha published several critical articles of G.V. Krishna Rao on Marxism, Marxian approach to literature, art and aesthetics.

Mr. V.R. Narla introduced Mr. Suryadevara Sanjiv Dev (Tummapudi village in Guntur district, A.P.) through his dailies. Sanjiv Dev serialized his early life memoirs in the daily and thus the art lovers and pen friends in Andhra Pradesh rallied round Sanjiv Dev. That credit goes to Narla.

V.R. Narla was relentless fighter against injustice in society and politics. He faced the wrath of Chief Ministers like Tanguturi Prakasam, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, P.V. Narasimharao on various matters.

Mr. Kasu Brahmananda Reddy wanted to check Andhra Jyothi daily during 1969 by introducing a bill in State Assembly

to curb the freedom of the press. Journalists fought back and won against the Chief Minister. He had to withdraw the bill. Narla stood firm on this affair.

Mr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy as Chief Minister indulged in regional feelings between Rayalaseema and Andhra. Narla campaigned against Sanjiva Reddy through his daily *Andhra Jyothi*.

Narla's house was delight to many book lovers and art critics. Mr. M. Chalapathi Rao (Editor *National Herald* daily was frequent visitor to Narla), Gutaa Krishna Murthy (Publisher of Sri Sri Audio in London) was in touch with Narla regularly and stayed with him whenever he visited Hyderabad. Narla specialized in Buddhist sculpture collections from various countries and studied them deeply.

V.R. Narla addressed several public meetings, study camps, conferences but he was not an attractive speaker. He only provoked thought through his dynamic approach to problems. In his last days he actively participated in Radical Humanist, Rationalist, Atheist, Inter-caste functions, gatherings and addressed them. His deep study of Gita, Upanishads, Puranas was published posthumously.

V.R. Narla had produced Telugu play entitled SEETHA JOSYAM (Prophecy of Seetha). It was published by Sahitya Akademi of Delhi. The play was much discussed among the religious and literary circles. The magazine of Sahitya academy published adverse remarks on the play. Narla objected seriously saying that while welcoming any criticism on Seetha Josyam, the same publishers have no moral right to criticize it. On that pretext V.R. Narla rejected the Sahitya Akademi award which created sensation in the literary circles of India. Narla's monographs on Vemana, Veerasalingam, Gurajada were translated into several Indian languages.

V.R. Narla in his last days condemned the revivalism of Viswanatha Satyanarayana. He also disapproved the writings of Chalam (who published several books on free sex, women liberation etc.). Till the end V.R. Narla was writing Telugu plays too. He wrote on such play entitled NARAKAM LO HARISCHANDRA (Harischandra in Hell) with long preface. (He dedicated that play to Mr. N. Irinaiah.) He wrote another play Draupadi (originally titled as PANCHALI) but could not complete the usual lengthy preface. Paatha-Kotha, essays of Narla also selected as one of the best books by C. Dharmarao. These books were brought out posthumously by N. Innaiah (published by New Student Book House, Vijayawada). There is an incomplete essay on PURANA VAIRAGYAM. V.R. Narla was aiming to complete one thousand verses in Telugu—*Narla Maata*. He ended each verse with Navayugaala Baata Naarla Maata. These verses are pungent with social criticism, satire and stress on human values.

V.R. Narla wanted to write his experiences, encounters with several persons and his opinions on various matters. He could write some of them in Andhra Prabha weekly but even they could not continue them due to pressures from managements for withdrawing them. For brief period V.R. Narla was advisor to N.T. Rama Rao government on cultural affairs.

Narla was fortunate in marrying Sulochana in 1938. She stood behind him in all pressures and stresses. The couple had 8 children. The eldest one is Sarada, married to Kolli Gangadhar Rao. Both are doctors in Guntur. The second daughter is Meenakshi. She married Dr. Sharad from Maharashtra. V.R. Narla felt happy with such intercaste marriage for his daughter. They settled down in phoenix, USA. The third daughter is Chandralatha (Flint, New York). The fourth one is Uma (Ithaca, New York). The fifth daughter is Rama in Niagara, USA. All of them married doctors. Narla often used to say that except himself

all his family belongs to medical professions. Of course universities honoured him with doctorates but he never used them unlike many others who put Dr. before their name though it is not advisable to do so.

The eldest son Mahan Das is a Professor in cell biology (now in New York city). The second son Durga Das is cardiologist in Detroit, USA. The third son is Lakshman Das practising in Richmond, Virginia USA. Except the eldest daughter Sarada, all others are settled in USA. They insisted several times that the parents should spend their time with them but Narla stayed back in Hyderabad. As long as Narla was alive he refused to dispose his library or his precious art collections. There were several offers from universities, museums with prize money but resisted. After his death his wife preserved the library carefully. At last the library found its place in Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad.

V.R. Narla stood for human freedom, scientific approach to problems, and humanism.

# SECULARISM - INDIAN STYLE

“India is following its own peculiar secularism. Often the political parties, especially the religious oriented dub Secularism as “Western”.

It all started with the perverted interpretation of Secularism by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (the former President of India and interpreter of Hinduism).

Dr. Radhakrishnan defined secularism as equal respect to all religions and never should be considered as irreligious. Political parties in power follow this definition and take advantage of the situation to their advantage.

Mahatma Gandhi in the last days of his life realized the *need* for separation of religion from politics, especially the state. Gandhiji always practised religion in politics through prayers. He followed the principle for equal respect to all religions. At the far end of his life Gandhi wanted non-interference of State in the religious matters. He also emphasized the separation of religion so that it can be practised only at personal level. However, that was too late. He did not live longer to propagate the separation of religion from politics.

Jawaharlal Nehru as first prime minister of India always stood for secularism. However, he could not take it to the logical end due to pressures from political and religious lobbies. He even failed to bring uniform civil code in the country.

## INDIAN CONSTITUTION

The founding fathers of Indian Constitution clearly stated, “that nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the state from making any law regulating

or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice.” Article 25 (2) (a) of constitution.

Through 42nd amendment to the Constitution in 1976, the preamble clearly stated: “We the people of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Secular Democratic Republic”.

Yet the political parties who oppose the secular principle and who support the parties of Secularism dare not interpret in proper perspective.

## **CONGRESS PARTY**

Generally the Congress Party is considered to be secular — by and large. Barring Jawaharlal Nehru, all the Congress prime ministers, ministers, and others at various levels followed religious practices “officially”. They invite Hindu priests on the occasion of oath taking ceremonies, inaugurations, opening of new projects, laying foundations, etc. To avoid criticism they involve Christian priests and Muslim Mullahs too. They visit temples and receive honours “officially”. They exhibit their faith publicly at the cost of government funds, which means people’s money. The government officially declares holidays to all religious festivals. Temples, Masjid and Churches are allowed in the premises of government offices. During office hours the prayers are allowed. Persons bring their own individual Guru’s pictures, images into the offices. Government officially patronage the pilgrimages, provide all facilities and extend financial concessions. Government lands are allotted to religious purposes.

Each religion took advantage of the weakness of political parties and gained much to benefit in several ways. Religious establishments became powerful institutions with huge amounts accumulated. All religions get exemptions from taxes. There is no accountability either for the illegal money or business affairs conducted in the name spiritual activity.

Cult Babas, holy women gather around politicians and built empires of ashrams. Even criminal activity of holy persons goes undetected except in rare cases.

Dhirendra Brahmachari a cult person was very powerful during Mrs. Indira Gandhi's tenure of Prime Ministership. Chandra Swami, a cult person emerged as spiritual ambassador during the time of Mr. P.V. Narasimharao's premiership. In each state several holy cult persons amassed wealth and established powerful empires. They developed connection with politicians who always come to their support in need.

Presidents of India prostrated before the holy persons and visited several of them "officially". Similarly prime ministers, ministers, judges, officials made their religious visits official. All these practices made secularism more difficult in public life.

The confusion about secularism percolated to all levels. The compulsion of elections, made the political parties impotent before cults, religious holy persons.

## **COMMUNIST PARTIES TOO!**

The left parties are supposed to be secular and non-religious, if not irreligious. However, this is not so. Communists gained power in states several times. They did not practice secularism. Take the example of Kerala. Communists ruled the south Indian state quite for some time. There is Ayyappa cult in Kerala. People annually visit the Ayyappa temple located on the top of a hill Sabarimalai. Neighbouring state devotees visit in lakhs. On the last day of the visit during January month, the government officially involves electricity department, forest department, and temple administration in the function. On the other hill near Sabarimalai, the government arranges to light camphor so that devotees see the light. It is described as Divine Light. Of course it is make belief. This practice is going on every year. Communists also practice this anti secular make belief.

When there were protests, the chief minister of Communist Party defended the practice saying that the state gains much through revenue from pilgrims and hence there should be no protest.

Communist Party (Marxist) is in power in West Bengal state. Every year Durga cult religious sacrifices were performed for 9 days with all pomp. The State government makes all arrangements and encourages the religious practices. The Communist government described this practice as “cultural” and continues to gain popularity among people. This is another compromising attitude to perpetuate political power. Communists never tried to educate people about wrong notions of Durga cult, lest they should lost cheap popularity.

Mr. Harikishan Singh Surjit, Communist Party leader from Punjab state wear Sikh turban, grows beard and moustache. He looks like typical Sikh religious person. Sikh religion insists that hair should not be cut; turban is must and so on and so forth. The Communist leader never resisted this Sikh religious practice nor tried to educate the Sikhs that dress is personal. On the other hand they defend these cult practices in dress, food as “cultural” and follow them!

### **SCIENTIST PRESIDENT KALAM’S SECULARISM**

Mr. Kalam is the scientist from South India. When he was elected as president of India, secularists felt happy and expected genuine secular practice from the highest dignitary. However, Mr. Kalam started visiting cult persons like Sai Baba, Amrithananda Mayi and Brahma Kumaris. This practice of encouraging cult persons started with the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad. The first president not only visited the religious persons but also even went to the extent of washing their feet in public. The Presidents Shankar Dayal Sharma, Venkataraman officially exhibited their faith.

The Bharatiya Janata Party was in power for some time in the centre and in some states. They stood for religion and hence there is no expectation from them to practice secularism. The disappointment came from Congress Party and Communist parties.

Muslims and Christians, Sikhs etc., took advantage of misinterpretation of secularism and gained much for their religious practices Muslims started ignoring the rulings of Supreme Court regarding noise pollution at the time of prayers. Muslims use mikes and loud speakers as though god is deaf! Religious churches, masjids, Hindu mandirs are built obstructing the roads and traffic. In the name of religion it is shown as though anything and everything is possible.

Thousands of religious persons emerge to earn illegal money, property since exemptions are there and accountability is absent. Most religious place involve in business that has become very lucrative and powerful centres. Tirumala-Tirupati has become largest pilgrimage centre with enormous amounts of income. The money source at this temple is not questioned. Hence much illegal amount reaches the holy place and government accepts this practice in the name of religion. All such illegal and anti secular activity is rampant throughout the country, shared by all the political parties.

## **FUTURE OF SECULARISM IN INDIA**

India has to begin the practice of Secularism, somewhere. To start with there should be clear understanding that Secularism means separation of State and religion in all matters. Religion is faith based and hence confine to individual belief related to god and supernatural spirituality. In the matters of state the law should be equal to all irrespective of religion. There should be no exemptions to the principle that all are equal before law. Some people including religious persons should not be kept above law under any circumstance.

In India some judges visit cult persons “publicly”. This creates problems. It would be difficult for victims of these cult persons to fight against injustice when judges openly prostrate before them. Justice cannot be expected from such persons.

Similarly law officers, Police should not exhibit their personal faith openly. Holy persons who indulge in criminal activity take shelter with the support of police devotees. These things are happening continuously in India. Religious crimes also are crimes. There should be no exemptions to spiritual and religious persons so far as crimes, misappropriation of funds, sexual abuses are concerned.

Religious practices of untouchability, castes, child marriages, burning of wife when husband dies, oppression of minorities, discrimination against women, child labour should not be tolerated and there should be no exemption to those who practice them.

In the field of education, scientific method should be inculcated from primary level. Religious instruction should not be included in texts, curriculum since that belongs to faith and belief.

Holy loafers should not get any exemption from law, answerability and accountability.

Rights of minorities so far as religion is concerned should be confined to personal level. This includes prayer, holidays, dress, food habits and civil law. They must not be brought to the streets.

In India religion encroached into politics and public life. Thus religious belief system vitiated the moral life of the people.

Religious morality should not be confused with values and ethics. Religious values, morality are strictly confined to divine laws and supernatural realm. There is no verification, nor proof

fro-religious belief systems and religious values including moral faith. They should not be confused with human rights, human values and human morals.

Secular values are moral, and human. Secular values are not in any way connected with supernatural and Para normal systems.

Human rights and religions often do not go together. When human rights and values emphasize that all are equal, men and women have the same rights, religions do not accept. That is the crux of the point. In such cases religions with to follow their holy texts like Gita, Koran, Bible which preach inequality between men and women. Secularism stands for sincere equality and genuine practice human rights and values.

India needs secular practices in all walks of life. That will put India in futuristic stance.

All State and Central governments can observe secular holidays leaving the religious holidays to those who observe them that will make a good beginning for secular practice in India.

The fighters for Dalits, depressed groups, scheduled castes think that temple entry on equal footing with Hindus will solve the problem. Some reformers mistakenly think that if Dalits can be taught to become temple priests and marriage performance priests that will uplift them. They are mistaken. In fact that are leading blindly into the Hindu caste system, gradation method and accepting Karma theory! Exactly that is the reason why B.R. Ambedkar wanted the Dalits to leave Hinduism so that they can bid good-bye to untouchability, caste degradation. Temples, priesthood and religion will not uplift the Dalits and suppressed classes. On the other hand those deceitful practices lure the weak minds to accept suppression.

Secular practices with human dignity, human values and human morality will alone bring them into great future.

# ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES- INDIAN STYLE

In 1978, Dan Rather, on CBS's 60 Minutes, interviewed Desai, who spoke at length about the great value of drinking urine. Morarji Desai was prime minister of India (1977-79). On the occasion of his 99th birthday in 1995 he attributed his longevity to drinking his morning urine on a daily basis. The world Urine conference was held in Delhi in 1966. Now Government of India officially declared the unscientific nature of Urine therapy and ordered all state governments to stop giving financial aid and prohibit the usage. Along with Urine therapy, 10 more alternative therapies were prohibited officially.

India has borrowed several alternative medicines from other countries apart from the native systems. Some holy persons add the touch of religion to the medicines while persons in government offices support their personal beliefs with public funds.

All the quack medicines escape taxation, get exemptions from drug control authority and attract patients with false I propaganda.

## INTERESTING DEVELOPMENTS

Electropathy and Electro-homeopathy claimed recognition and financial aid from the governments. When the government refuses to help, they approached the court of law to help them. The High court in Delhi asked the government to consider making legislation to grant of licenses to the existing and new institutes to control and regulate the various unrecognized streams of alternative medicines.

The government of India constituted a standing committee of 16 experts under the chairmanship of Director General, Indian

Council of Medical Research and members drawn from various fields of medicine to recommend on the efficiency of various streams of alternative medicines (1998). The experts are drawn from the field of Medical research, as well as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Naturopathy.

The committee studied the systems for five years and submitted the report, (2003) which was accepted by the ministry of health and family welfare.

The Scrutinized systems are:

Electropathy, Electro-homeopathy, Magnetotherapy, Reiki, Reflexology, Urine Therapy, Auto Urine Therapy, Aromatherapy, Colour Therapy, Pranic Healing, Gems and Stone Therapy, Music Therapy.

To justify the scientific nature of alternative systems, the committee set few conditions: They are:

Alternative system of Medicine must be a well-established method.

The system must be prevalent with widespread network of practitioners.

The system should have its own fundamental principles of health and disease with comprehensive health care without any restriction on diseases.

Substantial literature on concepts, aetiology, diagnosis and management of diseases including pharmacopoeia, formularies and journals should be available.

In the country of origin of the system, it should be recognized officially.

Produce documented information on uniqueness of treatment, drug devises, methods, diet, massage, exercise should.

Standardized methods of preparation of drugs, devices used in the therapy, and quality control procedures should be available. Details of continuing medical education programmes

and available research facilities must be available, including Infrastructure, teaching methods, examination system, course of curriculum, texts, practical training.

After thoroughly examining the criteria set for the scrutiny, the experts rejected the claims of alternative medicines.

The committee did not recommend recognition to any of these alternative medicines. The committee suggested not all those systems of medicine not recognized, as separate systems should be allowed to continue full time bachelor or master's degree courses. The term "doctor" should not be used by the practitioners.

The central government (federal) asked all the state governments to give wide publicity to the recommendations of the experts committee on alternative medicines and specifically asked not to give grant to the diploma and degrees.

The experts committee clearly stated that electropathy and electro-homeopathy are not recognized in the origin of the country namely neither Italy, nor anywhere in the world. Electro-homeopathy use the guise of Homeopathy though both are not the sane. Electropathy medicines are herbal without any quality control. The scanty literature available is not standard by any criteria. Electropathy divides all diseases into positive and negative. They also state the diseases into lymphatic and blood disorders.

Positive drugs are given to negative diseases and negative drugs are given to positive patients!

According to electropathy, two types of aetiology are mentioned. Predisposing and exciting. The diagnosis is based on aetiology and history of patient including previous state of body, and physical examination and laboratory examination.

Electropathy is based on the books written by Dr. Count Caeser Mattei (1899 born). According to him lymph and blood is

the two basic circulating fluids. Diseases appear due to impurity of these fluids. Electropathy is meant to purify these fluids. Lymphatic temperament is treated with scrofloroso group of remedies. Circulatory ailments are treated with angioticos remedies. Electropathy claims treatment for preventive, palliative, expectant, hygienic, dietetic and climatic diseases.

Dr. J.S. Chawla is mentioned as research programme expert in Mumbai, India. However, his electro-lab manufactures drugs for electropathy. There is no research in his electro-lab.

Electro-homeopathy has nothing to do with homeopathy. The Central Council of Homeopathy in India denied electro-homeopathy connection with Homeopathy.. It uses electrical gadgets for diagnosis. Dr. Stephen Barret exposed the fraudulent method of Electro-homeopathy.

Electropathy medicines are given either in dilutions, globules, compressions, lotion, cream depending upon the age, sex, duration of the disease.

The use of electric charges is made keeping in view the polarity of the diseases part of the body and kind of electric charges required whether positive, negative or neutral. The dilutions are generally given in sugar or water.

The Health Ministry accepted expert's committee observations on alternative medical systems in 2003. The Supreme Court also asked the government to make legislation for implementing the recommendations of the experts committee. However, the state governments kept orders on paper only.

## **AYURVEDA**

Ayurveda is, ancient Indian medical system, which provides raw material for scientific theory of the diagnosis and cure. However, no such theory developed in Ayurveda so far. It postulates three humors namely cough, wind and bile. It also

mentioned seven essences—food juices, blood, muscles, fatty tissues, bone, bone marrow, semen, which are not compatible with findings of modern physiology. Ayurveda, is incompatible with positively established knowledge. The terms used in Ayurveda namely, humor and essence as basic postulates are unacceptable to modern science. Yet the government strongly supports the ancient system. Yet people like Deepak Chopra popularized it in USA with his attractive style of writings. Ayurveda depends on ancient texts written by Charaka and Dhanwantari. These writings are not subjected to scientific tests but believed to be gospel truths.

Mr. P.V. Narasimharao, late Prime Minister of India (1991-96) provided all support to the system and propagated it as great Hindu way. When he suffered heart problems, Mr. Narasimharao went to USA for allopathy treatment instead of undergoing ayurveda.

There are Ayurveda colleges and couple of universities in India, which confer degrees, and practitioners thrive on the belief system. In ancient days fundamentalist Hindus looked down Ayurveda. Hindus prohibited dissection of the dead body. It is considered as sin. Hence, Ayurveda practitioners used to obtain dead bodies from untouchables of the village and dissect during night-time to know the inner parts of the body. Later Hindu revivalism came to power and claimed Ayurveda as their pious system. That notion continues until today. Apart from the ancient texts of Ayurveda, it is possible to put the drugs and raw material for rigorous scientific test. However, that may take long time.

## **HOMEOPATHY**

India imported homeopathy and owned to the extent that several people think that it belongs to India. Every nook and corner in India, Homeo is popular. Books are translated into all Indian languages (14 main languages recognized by constitution). The government established Homeo board and colleges, which

confer degrees. However, Homeo drugs have not material content. The basic principles of Homeo are not proven as scientific. Apart from the degree holders, several school teachers, government office clerks practice homeopathy. It has spread into rural areas. There is strong oral propaganda that homeo is cheap, every disease is curable, it is harmless and it suits for poor people. These superstitions are spread every where.

Dr. Pushpa Bhargava, Vice-Chairperson, Knowledge Commission; former Director of Cellular Biological Laboratories challenged homeopathy to come out with scientific evidence. Homeo students attacked his office and ransacked in Hyderabad, India in 2005. There is no attempt to put homeo for rigorous test. On the other hand, homeo claim cure for brain fever, and for every disease including AIDS. It is interesting to know that some MBBS medical doctors switch over to homeo practice and earn enormous amounts in India. Government refuses to put any scientific test for Homeo due to its powerful lobby.

The drugs are sold freely in the market. There is no insurance system nor do the doctors own any responsibility for the patients. Government is funding homeo system with tax payer's money. Media also supports homeo. Sceptics are not encouraged to question the scientific nature of homeo. Homeo is thriving on romours and oral traditions. When homeo fails, patients curse themselves as Karma (sins of the past) and opt for allopathy. Thus homeo suits in the belief system of India. Often palliative relief with homeo drugs helps the Homeos to propagate that homeo works. They never report the failures.

## **YOGA**

India is exporting Yoga to USA and other countries. The cult gurus, holy persons establish yoga centres and earn money. Mahesh Yogi is one such living example who claimed even levitation through yoga. He faced legal punishment for false claims in USA.

Yoga is very popular in India. It is very ancient practice. Now a days yoga centres emerge with the claim to cure several ailments like obesity,diabetes,blood pressure,heart troubles and others. Yoga conceals its ultimate aim,which is salvation and reaching heven through eight-fold path of yoga.

Yoga is part of six systems in ancient theology. Patanjali founded yoga with the aim to lead to heven through eightfold path. It has two broad principles called Yama and Niyama. Under Yama principle, non-violence,truthfulness,non stealing,chastity,greedlessness are to be practised. Under Niyama, Cleanliness of thought,action and speech must be followed. Then follows physical-mentaldiscipline, self-study,and devotion breath control, discipline of sences, concentration, meditation,supreme bliss and lastly experience consciousness.

Modern Yoga centres avoid all these principles lest they should become unpopular. Yoga centres propagate only on physical exercise and breathing exercises.

There is one Yoga system, which practices sex with the partner. It is called TANTRIC YOGA. India banned such practices now and hence they practice secretly. Late Agehananda Bharati, cultural anthropology professor in Syracuse University exposed these methods thoroughly.

Government in India is supporting Yoga practices. It is very lucrative business. Holy men and women established centres and earn enormous amounts with Yoga. Ram Dev, Ravi Shankar are the two popular cult gurus in India for yoga therapy.

Indira Gandhi as prime minister of India encouraged one Dhirendra Brahmachari to propagate yoga through official media and popularized yoga through Television.

Indian Constitution envisages promotion of scientific temper as fundamental duty. It is observed more in breach.

# UNBELIEF IN INDIA :

## Introduction

Unbelief in religion has never been strong in India. In ancient times (approx. third century B.C.E.) materialist thought prevailed for a brief period under the name of CARVAKA. The movement was also known as Lokayata. Religious fundamentalists destroyed most of the Carvaka movement, including its writings. There were periods when Buddhist philosophies held sway (see BUDDHISM, UNBELIEF WITHIN), but these lasted only as long as they enjoyed the favour of local rulers. Eventually Buddhism became nearly extinct in India, even as it metamorphosed into a religion which spread to other parts of Asia.

Centuries would pass before further attempts could be made to re-launch organized unbelief. When the opportunity arose, it would be in consequence of Great Britain's occupation and subsequent rule of India. A small number of Indians who travelled abroad brought back Western ideas about the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the scientific world view.

Throughout the nineteenth century, India underwent nearly continual religious reform, but most of these efforts were unsuccessful in bringing about radical or deep-rooted social change. Harmful institutions, including India's strong caste system, untouchability, the practice of Sati (burning the widow alive on her husband's pyre), and a demoralizing belief in Karma or fate, were based directly on ancient Hindu scriptures. While some nineteenth century reform movements—including Arya Samaj, Brahrno Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, and even THEOSOPHY in its reformist aspects—brought about some social change, their impact was shortlived because none of them questioned the prevailing belief system in a

fundamental way. So long as no reform movement dared to confront messages of India's so-called holy scriptures, the social evils opposed by reformers would always endure in some form, enjoying popular support on the false grounds that they embodied India's tradition and heritage.

## **INDIAN UNBELIEF IN THE EARLY TO MID 20TH CENTURY**

Only with the beginning of the twentieth century did a more resilient and dynamic form of unbelief emerges. It began in southern India, not surprisingly as this region was then at the forefront of efforts to force drastic changes in India's social structure.

E.V. Ramasami, better known as PERIYAR (1879-1973), launched an anti-Brahmin movement in what is now the state of Tamil Nadu. Tripuraneni Ramaswami (died 1942) in Andhra Pradesh simultaneously started anti-Brahmin movements, publishing literature in Tamil and Telugu to spread iconoclastic ideas against oppression of upper caste Brahmins. They also questioned the unchallenged supremacy of Sanskrit language, which was used as yet another tool to promote social differentiation, and suggested the replacement of Brahmin priests with non-Brahmins.

Both Periyar and Ramaswami did not mince their words, using strong language to express atheistic ideas and questioning the prevailing rituals, customs, such as child marriages, and taboos of Hindus. Ramasami organized nursing homes, charitable institutions to help the downtrodden people. Both of them challenged the holy scripts of Hindus and organized training camps to educate a small number of middle class people with rational outlook. They officiated inter-caste marriages, which raised eyebrows in early 20th century. Ramasami organized sensational processions against the Hindu God Rama while hitting the Rama photo with shoes! Ramasami moved the masses with his speeches and rallied large number of people.

S. Ramanathan, a prominent politician who was a minister in the state government, showing the deep influence of the movement in the state's intelligentsia, carried Periyar's mantle until the early 1980s. While Periyar's Dravida Kazhagam movement would attract charismatic leaders such as Annadurai and Karunanidhi, both of whom were later to become chief ministers of the state, they ended up taking the organization into politics, pretty much ending the movement started by Ramaswami

Some followers, such as Veeramani tried to continue the "self-respect" movement of Dravidar Kazhagam and would later join India's humanist movement. Others, such as Ravipudi Venkatadri, meanwhile carried the rationalist flame in Andhra.

One of the shining lights of southern India's unbelief movement was Gora (died 1975), or Goparaju Rama-chandrarao. He was a Brahmin who stood against the supremacy of Brahmins and hence excommunicated from the caste. He hailed from Andhra Pradesh and was closely associated with M.K. Gandhi in the freedom fight against the British.

Gora never compromised on the principle of atheism and established a hermit in Mudunur village where untouchables were living. His wife Saraswati, who also came from orthodox Brahmin family, was an active participant and together they led the atheist movement. In 1940, Gora established an atheist centre in Vijayawada, a coastal town in Andhra Pradesh and spread the ideas through magazines, literature and meetings. Gora toured many countries of the world and contacted world atheist leaders such as Madalya O'Hair. He made a point, Gora organized beef and pork dinners, targeting both Hindus and Muslims who considered both products as sacred or unclean. He wanted party less democracy, simple living and the spread of positive atheism, which asserts ethical life. His entire family is still promoting his ideas: his sons Lavanam, Vijayam and Samaram, his daughter Chennupati Vidya, his daughter-in-law, Hemalatha, and even his grandson, Vikas Gora.

Gora also officiated several inter-caste and inter-religious marriages and both his son and daughter married spouses who came from the untouchable castes, showing by example what their father preached.

The international atheist centre established by Gora and managed by his family is well known throughout India as well in rationalist circles around the world for its path breaking activity.

Andhra Pradesh's atheist movements spawned several splinter groups, often with their own magazines and literature. Jayagopal, Katti Padmarao, B. Sambasivarao, Ramakrishna, Gutta Radhakrishna Murthy, Saraiah, M. Subbarao, I. Muralidhar, C.L.N. Gandhi, Siddarth Baksh, M. Basavapunnarao, M. Sharif, Pasala Bhimanna, Vikram and others continue to fly the flag of atheism, however small or localized their efforts might be.

Other Southern and Western Indian states of Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra also saw a splurge in rationalist activity in the early 20th century with skeptical and agnostic ideas. Abraham Kovoor electrified the skeptics movement with his speeches and demonstrations, touring several states in India as well as Sri Lanka to spread the movement. His books—debunking astrologers, god men—were popular. Another active member of the rationalist movement in Kerala is Govindan, who edits the magazine, *Sameeksha*. The duo of Joseph and Sanal Edamaruku were also instrumental in challenging god men and exposing fraudulent “miracles,” touring intensively to demonstrate the falsehood of miracles.

Sanal Edamaruku would later shift to Delhi where he started international rationalist organization with a web site, journals, books and an active campaign.

In Maharashtra, a big campaign was organized to convert the Hindus into Buddhists so that they get rid of inequality,

untouchability and attain human rights with dignity. B.R. Ambedkar led the movement though without much success.

Meanwhile, skeptics groups began working in states such as West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Punjab, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. B. Premanand arranged for a Federation of all the groups and conducted several meetings at the national level, personally training several people in magic so that faith healers and god men and women could be easily exposed. State level federation in Andhra Pradesh (FARA) actively fought against fraudulent claims of god men, alternative medicines and supernatural claims under the coordinator N. Innaiah.

The Rationalist Association, which started in Bombay during 1930s slowly, picked up the momentum. Abraham Solomon, Lokkiandawala, M.N. Roy, M. Ramamurthy, R. Venkatadri, Avula Gopalakrishna Murthy, Innaiah Narisetti were all active participants and advocates of the movement.

M.N. Roy gave philosophical and scientific outlook to unbelief movements at India level. He organized re-orientation study camps where scientific orientation was promoted for renaissance, scientific study of history and asserting sovereignty of the individual in political field. Roy also established Radical Humanist, Renaissance and Rationalist organizations and elevated them at international level, often questioning the prevailing Gandhian spiritual ideology.

## **UNBELIEF IN INDEPENDENT INDIA**

As the first prime minister of an independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru established a secular framework for the country but too had to compromise on several occasions due to political pressures, including giving up on the idea of a uniform civil code applicable to all Indians. The Congress Party, which is by far the most liberal and secular in its stated outlook, continues to compromise with all religions even as the BJP, a Hindu fundamentalist party

that was in power recently, strongly reversed the rationalist trends in public life and educational fields.

Meanwhile, Communist parties won power in three states— West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura— raising hopes that rational and scientific thought will take root. But in all the states, the Communists compromised with the religious sentiments of people and never encouraged the efforts of rationalists, humanists and skeptics.

Communist leaders encourage popular religious festivals such as Durga Puja in West Bengal, Ayyappa festival in Kerala so that they get pilgrims and tourist revenue, not counting votes in elections. The fundamental Marxian principle that “Religion is opium to the people” was not implemented during Communist rule in India.

After the death of M.N. Roy in 1955, several intellectuals carried the spirit of inquiry through study camps, training classes, publications, seminars, and magazines. They diversified the activities into the fields of Human Rights (V.M. Tarkunde), equality of women (Indumati Parikh, Malladi Subbamma, Gauri Malik), publications (Shib Narayan Ray, Prem Nath Bazaz, Philip Sprat, Ram Singh, R.M. Pal, R.L. Nigam, C.R.M. Rao, Balraj Puri, Professor Niranjan Dhar (Vedanta and Bengal Renaissance), civil liberties (N.D. Pancholi, C.T. Daru, Jayant Patel), international organizations (G.R.R. Babu), secular activity (Avula Gopalakrishna Murthy).

V.B. Karnik and Maniben Kara concentrated their efforts among labour and humanist movement. Prof. A.B. Shah (died 1982) founded the Indian Secular Society and tried to educate Muslims with the help of Hamid Dalwai. He also established Satya Shodak Mandal for bringing the Muslim youth into mainstream of secular society. His book “Muslim Politics” provoked much discussion.

A.B. Shah faced the wrath of many Hindus by questioning the ban on killing cows but he vigorously propagated the scientific

method as a solution to several problems facing obscurantist India. His book *Scientific Method* made a rare breakthrough in Indian academia when it was prescribed as a text book in Bangalore University when H. Narasimhaiah was the vice chancellor. Shah started several publications, magazines (*Humanist Review*, *New Quest*, *The Secularist*) and educational reform campaigns for humanism and secularism.

## UNBELIEF IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

Much of the effort to promote unbelief in India has become a regional effort with pockets of resistance to the continued lack of scientific thinking and fundamentalism within the country.

In West Bengal, for instance, Prafulla Kumar Naik under local humanists and rationalists has questioned the claims of miracles by Mother Theresa. Over in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, focus has been against god men and women who claim to provide miracle cures. Andhra rationalists opposed unscientific alternative medicines (Homeopathy), exposing the bogus claims of Alex Orbito (psychic surgery), the swallowing of live fish for asthma cures, the hugging of Matha Amrithananda Mayi in order to obtain prosperity, Geomancy (Vaastu).

Several books have been published with documentation about fraudulent god men such as Satya Sai Baba (*Murders in Sai Baba Ashram* by Premanand), *Jilh'llamcidi Ainnin* (by M.V. Ramamurthy), *The Truth about Bible* (N.V. Brahmam), *The Falsehood of Geomancy* (R. Venkatadri), *Lie Hunting* (N. Innaiah), *The Unscientific Nature of Astrology* (Dr. Narasimhaiah), *Why I am Not a Hindu* (Ramendra), *Be Gone Godmen* (Abraham Kovoov). Books exposing the holy scriptures (*Critique of Hinduism* by Laxman Sastri Joshi, *The Truth about the Gita* by V.R. Narla, *Gita* by Premnath Bazaz, *Critique on Ramayana* by P.H. Gupta, *Ochre Robe* by Agehananda Bharati, writings of Khushwant Singh also helped spread of skeptical thinking.

Basava Premanand, Sanal Edamaruku, Innaiah Nariseti, and G.R.R. Babu continue to question the authenticity of holy persons and have taken their message to an international level, drawing considerable media attention to what is going on inside India. *Charvaka*, Telugu magazine edited by Mr. Thotakura Venkateswarlu from Vijayawada had great impact on youth in early 1970s.

Increasingly, the movement is also getting help from Indians who are now living abroad, people such as Aramalla Purnachandra, Nirmal Mishra, Jyothi Sankar (died in 1998) in USA who are providing key intellectual backing to India's small number of humanists, skeptics and rationalists.

Despite their efforts, these miracle cures continue to draw thousands of believers, many of whom are conned into making financial donations in the hope of curing their ills.

## UNBELIEF IN THE 21ST CENTURY

India entered the 21st century without much success in achieving a basic scientific society. While groups of people in various states continuously fight traditional and fundamentalist—mostly religious—groups, skeptic, rational, secular, atheist, humanist groups face an uphill task of modernizing Indian society into one that has a scientific outlook. Indian Secular society (V.K. Sinha editor *The Secularist*), Radical Humanist association (Managing I:ditor, Saraswati Rekha) Indian Humanist Union (leader I'rakash Narain), Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj (leader Dr. Ramendra), Satya Shodhak Sabha in Surat, and Babubhai Desai in Gujarat state, Anti superstition organization (Maharashtra under the leader ship of Dhabolkar), Muhonat (leader in Rajasthan humanist group), Rationalist groups (leaders Srini Pattathanam, Oomen), Manavatavadi Viswa Samstha (leader Manavatavadi in Haryana state), N.irendra Naik in Mangalore for Indian Sceptic Society (FIRA), Subhankar, Manoj Datta, Ajit Bhattacharjee, humanist group in West Bengal,

Civil liberties group and Renaissance association Mr. N.D. Pancholi, Mahipal Singh, Mr. R.B. Rawat, Gauri Malik, B.D. Sarma, Vinod Jain are functioning in their regions.

All these movements have little membership and remain an almost insignificant minority among India's millions. But they continue to express their views and raise their voices, often using local media to try and push back the onslaught of religions and dogmatic thinking.

Centre for Inquiry India started in 2006 with Dr. N. Innaih and Mr. I. Muralidhar from Hyderabad as directors. Other organisations like Jana Vignana Vedika, Manava, Vikasam, Bharat Nastika Samajam cooperate in agreeable areas.

Over time, the humanist, rationalist, atheist, and skeptic movements in India established many contacts and connections with international, like-minded organizations, organizing international conferences in India and inviting foreign experts and thinkers to share their experiences.

Rob Tielman, Jim Harrick, Paul Kurtz, Larry Jones, Roy Brown, Madalya O'Hair, Fred Edwards, Matt Cherry, Fenneth Hiogarth, Levi Fragil, Barbara Smoker and Herman Bondi, among others, participated, enriching Indian associations in many ways. At the same time, key Indian leaders began actively participating in overseas conferences and conventions.

Another avenue of helping spread unbelief in India has been the translation of key books and articles into India's myriad languages. Books by Paul Kurtz, M.N. Roy, A.B. Shah, R.G. Ingersol, V.R. Narla, Agehanand Bharati, Laxman Sastri Joshi, Premnath Bazaz including titles such as *Living without Religion and Courage to Become, Why I am Not a Muslim, The Truth about the Gita, Memoirs of a Cat, Scientific Method* are popular in southern Indian languages- such as Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. Skeptics in India have also benefited greatly from the populist writings of James Randi and have taken

advantage of his \$ 1 million challenge to go after India god men, none of whom are yet to come forward.

International organizations such as the International humanist and Ethical Union, Centre for Scientific Study of Paranormal Claims, Centre for Inquiry, as well as Humanist and Rationalist associations of various Western countries continue to provide help in this important fight.

# WOMEN AND SECULARISM

Secularism is separation of state and church. State should be impartial to all religions and keep equidistance towards them. State is concerned with all people who profess different faiths and non-faiths. Religion should be treated as purely personal belief and should not be brought into public.

Persons at the helm of affairs should practice their personal faith privately without using their official positions and office.

The President of India, The Prime minister, Judges of Supreme court, High courts, chief ministers, governors, officers at various levels often exhibit their personal faith publicly and also use their official machinery for that purpose. That should be avoided to keep up secular practice and constitutional obligation of spreading scientific temper as fundamental duty.

Religious practices of all sorts must be avoided during official ceremonies, inaugurations, state functions and ground breaking occasions.

Religious holidays should be confined to those who practice their religion and should not declare as public holydays to all. This applies to Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Jain and similar other religions. Thus, state would leave the religious persons to observe their religious festival by applying leave and celebrate while others work as usual.

If religion is not dragged into streets, then several tensions would be reduced and conflicts are avoided.

Similarly, public offices should not be used for propagation of religious faiths of the individuals. Avoid all the symbols and pictures of religious persons in the offices.

All exemptions to cults, religious holy places, babas, mathas, should be removed. Taxes should be collected without any discrimination. Money and properties should be treated in secular manner. Any exemption of taxes in the name of religion leads to corrupt practices and leads to unsocial things.

## **THAT IS SECULARISM IN PRACTICE ROLE OF WOMEN**

All scriptures—Vedas, Koran, Bible etc. are created by men at various periods. They put all restrictions on women at various levels. Without exception, all religions treat women as second-rate persons. From birth to death, women are relegated to subservient role to men. All the rules and restrictions are justified in the name of holy books, God, tradition and law. Women, largely accept their secondary role and follow the rules. Secularism is nowhere applicable to women while treating all religions as equal.

Women blindly follow the Holy Scriptures and without questioning, accept their slavish role. Religions tamed them into that humiliating position.

Few outstanding women rebel against the slavish rules of religions. Whenever women try to change the religious rules, men are curbing them.

Women, who accept their slavish role, naturally pass on their customary rules and regulations to their children. That sort of child abuse is going on hereditarily.

Women are treating religions as separate from the government.

All religions are patriarchal. That makes the role of women difficult in practising secularism. Male domination dictates women the dos and don'ts.

Take for example the Indian women with particular reference to Hindu women. Indian constitution provided equal

rights to women under the articles 14 and 51. However, these fundamental rights and civil liberties are denied to women. Dowry prohibition act is practised more in breach. Sati prevention act is there to be violated in Rajasthan with the support of Hindu fundamentalists and even temples are erected for Sati.

Bhagavad-Gita treats women as born out of sinful womb. *Manu Dharma Sastra* treated women very cruelly. When there is conflict between the religious duties and rights of women, the preference is given to religion and not to equal rights of women.

Women are denied rights even to read *Vedas* and punishments are prescribed for those who violate. During marriage, the brides are donated as gifts, which are described as *Varakatnam*.

UNESCO listed female genital mutilation as child abuse but refuse to name religion to avoid delicate situation.

Koran treats the witness of two women as equivalent to one man.

Roman Catholicism refuses women's rights to reproductive autonomy. Christians relegate women into second-rate citizens based on *Bible*. They are born from rib of man.

Whenever human rights are denied to women, religion prevails. In the name of modesty, women are subjected to dress restrictions among Muslims. Dissenting women are attacked everywhere.

Several reformers attempted to bring changes into religious practices and save women but failed. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Subrahmanya Bharati, Karve, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, and several others tried to uplift women. Yet they failed. One main reason is that they all shy of touching the holy books and religious dictates. This happened in Christianity and Islam too.

Time has come to think seriously and attempt to implement equal rights of women. If religion is the obstruction, women should give serious thought about it. Feminists also should work on these lines.

Religion should not be treated as above law. Religions are obstructing the implementation all human values and human rights in every religion. Religion stands for divine values, which undermine human values and equal rights. That is the crux of the issue.

If religion is the stumbling block for women everywhere, what is the alternative?

To start with, religion should be treated as private belief and should not bring into public life through governments and institutions.

Religion should not be treated as hereditary right and hence the children should not be dubbed with the religion of parents. Let there be freedom of choice for children when they become adults. That would be proper course to implement secularism in public life.

Can women take up such step to protect equal rights in all occupations?

# M. N. ROY

M.N. Roy cannot be compared with any leader in the world. He was unique. Without formal academic degrees, he rose to the impressive heights.

M.N. Roy was born on 21st March, 1887. His original name was Narendranath Bhattacharya.

During M.N. Roy's childhood, India was under British rule as a poor nation, but a strong nationalist sentiment was predominant. Colonial India missed renaissance, enlightenment, industrial and scientific revolutions.

In the last days of the 19th century Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi went to South Africa where he fought against racial discrimination and for the rights of ethnic Indians. Swami Vivekananda, the Indian seer, turned from aggressive skeptic to be the disciple of Ramakrishna Parama Hamsa. Vivekananda toured to United States of America, after speaking about the concepts of Hinduism at a Parliament of religions in Chicago. His aggressive nationalism inspired many leaders in India to first against the British rule. The famous novel of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee *Bhavani Mandir* was published and it provoked several leaders.

Aurobindo Ghosh was later became a seer, returned to India after withdrawing from civil service examinations in England. He started a national school to train students.

In 1898, Naren's parents moved to another village Kotalia. Naren studied in Harinabhi Anglo-Sanskrit school, between 1899-1905. By that time Naren was influenced by national fervour. The British Government took to wholly unpopular decision to divide

Bengal. Naren opposed the partition of Bengal and was expelled from School for doing so. Naren developed contract with the local revolutionary groups.

A turning point in the life of Naren came in 1905 with the death of his father Dinabandhu Bhattacharya. In 1906, Naren joined Bengal National College (founded by Aurobindo) after passing the entrance test and studied in Bengal Technical Institute for two years.

- 1907 : Naren was very active in revolutionary terrorist group activities against the British rule. He participated in the robbery of a Railway station (Chingripota village in Bengal in 1907 December).
- 1908 : Naren was arrested but the authorities could not establish enough evidence and hence he was released. Naren lost his mother Basant Kumari in 1908. Naren became very active in the local revolutionary movements under the inspiration of Aurobindo, Naren could complete only school education and never entered any College.
- 1909 : Naren indulged in a dacoity at Netra. He was arrested in January 1910 but again released due to lack of evidence.
- 1911-14 : Naren was very active tinder the leadership of Jatin Mukherjee. The Bengali revolution-aries attempted to contact the Germans for help against the Britishers.

Naren went to Batavia under the Pseudo name of Charles A. Martin in April 1915. He returned in June that year, only to go back to Batavia for acquiring arms, ammunition and money from the Germans. However, in September 1915 Jatin Mukherjee was shot dead by the British police. That was shocking news to Naren who was determined not to return to India until he achieved his aim.

From September 1915, to May next, Naren wandered in Asian countries, desperate to get help from several leaders including Sun Yat Sen. The Germans advised him to come to Germany for help. Thus the adventurous journey of Indian revolutionary commenced abroad. Naren posed as a catholic priest from Pondicherry, the French colony in India. He grew a beard and carried a Bible in his hands. He also acquired a false passport and travelled from Japan to USA in a ship. That was a hazardous journey. By the time he landed in the port of San Francisco in USA (1916 June) the local press published news about him. Naren did not wait any longer in San Francisco. He rushed to the Stanford University campus. He met Dhan Gopal Mukherjee, the Indian student in the university. He had introductory letters with him. Dhan Gopal was a writer from Bengal. On the suggestion of Dhan Gopal, Naren adopted a new name, and thus Manavendra Nath Roy (M.N. Roy) emerged in 1916 in USA.

During the First World War M.N. Roy was in America while Gandhi returned to India from South Africa. That was how Roy missed the nationalist movement in India, but gained international reputation as a Communist and a rationalist. M.N. Roy met Evelyn Trent, a Stanford University graduate who fell in love with him. Despite the bitter opposition from her family, Evelyn married M.N. Roy in New York in 1917. Roy started to see the cosmopolitan life and Bohemian culture in New York. He met Lajpat Rai, the lion of Punjab, who was in exile from India. Lajpat Rai helped Roy in New York. He liked Roy's sincerity and devotion to the cause of Indian freedom.

The British police were after Roy in USA too. He was arrested in 1917 but again released after a warning. Both Evelyn and M.N. Roy travelled to Mexico to escape the British police in USA. Till then M.N. Roy was a nationalist. Gradually he was changing. While in Mexico, Roy saw the socialist trends.

Surprisingly he received the promised help from Germany during his Mexican days. That helped him to lead a comfortable life and made him work for the cause of India and for the promotion of his socialist ideas. Borodin, a Communist from Russia came to Mexico. He was in desperate state with bankruptcy, having lost all his money. M.N. Roy hosted him and helped him. Borodin acquainted M.N. Roy with the theory and practice of communism.

M.N. Roy and Evelyn established the Communist Party of Mexico, the first such party outside Russia. Roy played an important role in Mexican politics and moved among higher power circles. He also contributed theoretical articles in Spanish.

M.N. Roy was quick in learning languages. He mastered Spanish soon and contributed articles to *El Pueblo*, a daily from Mexico City. He came in contact with the President of Mexico, Carranza. They became friends. Roy has written for *El Heraldo de Mexico* which had English sections too. Then Roy started publishing pamphlets in Mexico on political matters. M.N. Roy addressed an open letter to the American President, Woodro Wilson. He did not forget his own country and had written articles and books on the cause of Indian Freedom. M.N. Roy organized the Socialist Party of Mexico and became its General Secretary.

From August 25, 1919 to September 4, Roy organized the marathon session of the national congress of the Socialist Party of Mexico. This was converted into the first Communist Party outside Russia, which brought him to the attention of Lenin. M.N. Roy was invited to attend the second congress of the Communist International in Moscow. That was a big turning point in the life of M.N. Roy. The world witnessed great changes during the First World War. Russia saw the first revolution launched by the Bolsheviks in 1917 which saw the overthrow of the Czar and the capture of power by Lenin. The Russian Communist Party established contacts with revolutionaries throughout the world,

and started setting up of the Communist Party outside Russia. M.N. Roy and Evelyn accepted the invitation of Lenin and travelled to Moscow via Cuba, Spain, Germany. M.N. Roy met several revolutionaries on his way to Moscow. He became a friend of Thalheimer in Germany and H.J. Sneevliet in Holland. Some Indian revolutionaries were already working in Germany at that time. Roy met them on his way in 1920 May. M.N. Roy reached Moscow. Great thinkers like Bertrand Russell visited the Soviet Union to see the achievements of the Communist world. When Roy met Lenin for the first time in Moscow it was a surprise for both. Lenin was under the impression that Roy was an elderly person but found a bubbling youth with an intellectual flash. Roy quickly made friendship with the r top leaders of the Communist Party, including Trotsky, Stalin, Bukharin and met the famous writer Maxim Gorky. In the very first Congress, Roy submitted an alternative thesis on the national and colonial question. It was discussed and accepted by the Congress. Lenin saw the point in Roy's thesis and allowed for voting. Roy had his first victory.,

M.N. Roy at once started working for the establishment of the Communist Party in India. He was elected chairperson of Central Asiatic Bureau of the Comintern. He along with Evelyn travelled to Tashkent with full load of arms and ammunition in a train. They established an Indian Military school in Tashkent and trained some Mujahirs who travelled from India.

On October 17, 1920, the first Communist Party of India was started in exile. M.N.Roy and Evelyn played a key role in setting up the Communist Party of India in Tashkent. They sent money, literature and advice to the Indian communists at a great risk. The British rulers in India scented the role of M.N.Roy and again started hunting for him. M.N.Roy established contacts with the top leaders of Indian National Congress too and addressed letters to Chitta Ranjan Das, the Congress president. Between

1921 and 1929 M.N.Roy had a meteoric rise in the international Communist movement. He played significant role in China and India. In 1921, M.N.Roy along with Joseph Stalin established Communist University of the Toilers of the East. Future Presidents and Prime Ministers of colonial countries underwent training in this Institute where Roy and Evelyn taught. Ho chi Minh, later the supreme leader of Vietnam, studied in this school. Brushing aside all opposition from Indian revolutionaries in Russia and Germany, M.N.Roy firmly established his supremacy in the Communist movement. He proved his ability through his writing like "India in Translation" where in he analysed the solution in the British India with utmost understanding and clear analysis. Roy started a fortnightly magazine from Berlin "The vanguard of Indian Independence." Evelyn Trent helped him in editorial work. Evelyn published her articles in the name of Shanti Devi.

British rulers India proscribed the Journal. Roy started another magazine. "The Advance Guard". M.N.Roy was expelled from Berlin and France, while he was engaged in the Communist activities. He tried to help the Indian Communist movement from Europe. He had to move around constantly. While playing key role in the international Communist movement, M.N.Roy rose to the top positions and held many posts. He was in the Comintern Executive, Politburo, Presidium and Colonial Commission.

M.N.Roy edited another magazine. "The masses of India" and dispatched to India clandestinely. In 1925, M.N.Roy was separated from his wife Evelyn, who left permanently to USA. She died in 1970.

Conspiracy cases were booked against M.N.Roy in India by the British Police.

In 1927 M.N.Roy was asked to help the Communist Party in china. He went there along with Louise Geissler, a prominent

Communist from Switzerland. Roy met Mao Tse Tung, Chou En-Lai, and other top leaders. Roy propose agrarian revolution and creation of a revolutionary army. There were differences with Borodin, another leader from Russia. Stalin supported M.N.Roy. Kuomintang government in China hunted the Communists and M.N.Roy had to escape via Gobi desert to Russia.

Leadership quarrels in Russia cropped up, and Roy was kept away from the mainstream. He fell sick and went to Germany for treatment. Roy wrote articles in Thalheimer's journal which angered the Stalin group. Roy was expelled from the Party. M.N.Roy decided to return to India after a long gap. He travelled under pseudo passport as Banerjee and arrived in India secretly in 1930. While in Moscow the only Indian leader who met Roy and appreciated his intellectual brilliance was Jawaharlal Nehru (1927) M.N.Roy joined Nehru camp and worked secretly. The British police scented his presence after seeing the resolution of the Congress Party at its Karachi session about fundamental rights. M.N.Roy was in that session along with Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi never liked M.N.Roy and his role in politics. Mahmood was the pseudo name of M.N.Roy. They followed the Stalinist propaganda line at that juncture. He was arrested and tried. In the beginning 12 years imprisonment was given to him. On appeal it was reduced to 6 years. The author of the theory of relativity, Albert Einstein, appealed to the British rulers for kind and humane treatment of M.N. Roy.

During jail days M.N. Roy had corresponded with the political leaders and the intellectuals. Ellen helped him in this aspect. M.N. Roy produced extensively political, philosophical and social criticism during his jail life. His monumental work "The Philosophical consequences of Modern Science" was an outstanding contribution. His letters from jail addressed to his second wife Ellen in Germany were appreciated as literary

masterpieces by persons like C.R. Reddi, the vice-chancellor of Andhra University, India. Some of his other writings from jail are "*Heresies of the Twentieth Century*," and "*Materialism*".

1936 November 20: After 6 years of imprisonment, M.N. Roy was released. Even in jail he played a historical role. M.N. Roy changed a lot in his ideas. His experience and understanding of Marxism and communism led him to critical thinking. 1937 March 10, M.N. Roy and Ellen got married. Since then Ellen became a great comrade to Roy in all aspects. Roy joined the Indian National Congress and played an important role. However, he was unfit in national politics. M.N. Roy declared Nationalism as an antiquated cult in 1938. During the Second World War M.N. Roy understood the great danger of fascism and warned India against it. Communists failed to recognize this danger and made a temporary pact with Hitler. Roy opposed it. M.N. Roy supported the Britishers in war saying that after the war the Britishers would leave the country. His prediction came true. Yet Roy became unpopular with nationalists. M.N. Roy came out of the Congress Party and started his own party the Radical Democratic Party. For the first time in India, Roy gave new orientation to a political party with scientific politics. Later he recognized the defects in a party system and abandoned it. M.N. Roy toured throughout India, lectured and organized intellectuals for a Renaissance movement, which India needed badly. He started journals like "*Independent India*", "*Marxian Way*", "*Humanist Way*" and "*Radical Humanist*". Gradually M.N. Roy became critical of Marxism and communism. India got independence in 1947 and Roy's prediction came true. M.N. Roy with all his experience-evolved humanist thought in India. Then he wrote extensively about scientific politics, need for the study of history in a scientific way, and gradually evolved the humanist movement.

In 1948 the Humanist theory was published as 22 thesis. The International Humanist and Ethical Union formed in 1952

in Amsterdam, elected M.N. Roy as its vice chairperson (in absentia). By then Roy met with an accident which damaged his brain. M.N. Roy in his last days serialized his autobiography in the journal "Radical Humanist" but could only cover upto 1925. He also wrote a book titled "Reason, Romanticism and Revolution" which was appreciated by the eminent humanists like Erich Fromm. On 25th January, 1954 Roy died in Dehra Dun, India. Several of his writings were published after his death. Oxford book publishers brought out 4 volumes edited by Prof. Sib Narayan Ray.

# MANUFACTURING SAINTS-MOTHER THERESA

Remember Bhopal Tragedy in India? (Dec. 3, 1984). 3,800 thousand workers died in their sleep due to leakage of methyl isocyanate gas from Union Carbides. This happened early morning. It was a shock to the civilized world. At that juncture mother Theresa flew from Kolkata to Bhopal. Has she come to console the families of the victims? No. Mother Theresa came to request that the management of union carbides at Bhopal may be forgiven! That is Mother Theresa. At the time of her death, Sushan Shields revealed that \$ 50 million were in the New York Bank. Sushan worked with Mother Theresa for 9 years and dealt with donations and cheques. The money, which was supposed to be spent on poor kids in charity homes, remained in the Banks. Why? Mother Theresa received enormous amounts from various sources. She never observed ethics in receiving funds.

Robert Maxwell, the mega publisher who embezzled the employee's funds to the tune of 450 million pounds, liberally donated \$ 1.25 million to Mother Theresa. She knew the facts about Robert Maxwell. The dictator of Haiti honoured Mother Theresa. She flew all the way from Kolkata to Haiti to receive the Honours from Jean Claude duvalier family who tortured people. Mother Theresa praised him as lover of poor people!

Mother Theresa received \$ 1.25 million from Charles Keating in USA. He floated a company called Keating Savings and Loans during 1980 and cheated the public to the tune of \$ 250 millions. He was jailed. During the trial Mother Theresa appealed to the judge Lance it for pardon. The attorney asked Mother Theresa to return the money she received from Keating so that it can be distributed to the victims and at least some

families could be saved. She kept quiet. Mother Theresa visited Albanian dictator Never Hoxha's grave for reasons not known. Mother Theresa praised Indira Gandhi for her emergency rule (1975-77), saying that the people are happy and employment problem was solved.

She received Bharat Ratna! Dr. Robin Fox the editor of *Lancet*, the prestigious medical magazine from UK, visited the Charity Institutes of Mother Theresa in Kolkata in 1991 to find that there were no sterilized syringes and not even analgesic medicines for suffering children. When the Mother inquired replied that children could be cured with prayers.

During Bangla Desh war, 4,50,000 women fled and some were raped. Mother Theresa opposed termination of pregnancies in the name of divine grace. Walter Wuellenweber did some research on the funds of Mother 'Theresa and published articles in *Stern* magazine in Germany during 1998. Germany alone accounted for \$3 million annually for Mother Theresa Charity Account. All the accounts and spending were kept secret.

The money collected for charity houses in India was never accounted for where did the money go? The sources say that ultimately it reached the bank of Rome, which controlled by Vatican.

Sister Paulan in Germany refused to answer about the money of Mother Theresa Charities. Dhuru Shah in India has written the motives of Mother Theresa as conversion of religion. Arup Chatterjee published scathing criticism with first hand experiences in his book *The Final Verdict* in 2003. Similarly Sunanda Datta Ray, noted journalist also written articles on the behaviour of Mother Theresa.

Christopher Hitchens, the international reputed journalist produced a documentary on Mother Theresa in collaboration

with Tariq Ali, entitled *Hell's Angel* which was telecasted in Channel 4 in UK (Nov. 8, 1994). Then Mr. Christopher Hitchens published the book on Mother Theresa. Before doing so, he visited Kolkata charity houses of Mother Theresa, interviewed her and noted the facts. That is eye-opener to all sane persons.

Catholics are powerful community in the world. Pope controls them with the support of people, Mother Theresa continued her charity activities. She received several laurels and prizes including templeton prize in 1973, Nobel Prize and become honorary citizen of us in 1996.

Mother Theresa (1910-97) is neither mother nor Theresa. Her original name is Agnes Gonxhe Bojaxhiu. She was born in Uskub, a town in Macedonia. She joined the Sisters of Loreto at the age of 15 and went to Ireland. Then she proceeded to India where she worked as teacher for some time and later started charity home for children. Catholic nuns are not supposed to marry. They are called Mothers when they become seniors.

Just as Hindu Sanyasis change their original name after becoming hermits, so also Catholics adopt new name.

## **MAKING SAINT**

Whenever Mother Theresa was sick she was admitted in corporate hospitals and got excellent treatment. In 1993 mother Theresa had first heart stroke and when she had second heart stroke in 1989 a pacemaker was arranged. She suffered with pneumonia in 1991 and broke her collarbone in 1997 and also suffered with malaria. She underwent heart surgery once again. She was admitted in corporate hospitals and given excellent treatment. That should be welcomed. Mother Theresa ought to have given similar value to the lives of destitute children whom she recruited and in whose name she accumulated enormous funds. Instead of praying and saving money, she ought to have

given the children best medical treatment in good hospitals. She did not do that.

She eschewed strong painkillers. When a patient was dying with cancer, she said “You are suffering like Christ on the Cross. So Jesus must be kissing you”. The Agonizing patient said “please tell Jesus to stop kissing me”!

After her death Pope John Paul II wish to make her saint urgently. He waived the waiting period of five years. To fulfill the minimum conditions, they concocted some miracles and myths.

### **MONICA BASRA MIRACLE STORY**

A tribal poor woman in West Bengal was suffering with stomach tumour and tuberculosis. Dr. Ranjan Mustafa of Belurghat General Hospital in West Bengal treated her. The acute TB cyst in stomach has gone with the medical treatment. Mr. Seiko, husband of Monica Basra also confessed in the beginning about the treatment and cure. They were poor and have five children. They were approached by the Catholic Nuns, offered free education for their children and also donated some land for them. ‘Then they brain washed Monica Basra to narrate the miracle story. One day Monica Basra saw the photo of Mother Theresa in locket and miraculously the cyst in stomach has disappeared. The records in hospital disappeared when a charity mission worker visited the hospital. (*Time*, Asia mentioned this) that was the miracle? They propagated it to support sainthood for Mother Theresa. The first part of sainthood is called beatification, which was done on 19 Oct. 2003.

The tradition of Catholics is to create saints now and then so that they perpetuate the belief system among the Catholics and also get income through some events. This practice was going on since centuries and Pope John Paul II continued that practice. It is income-generating way for Vatican.

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# WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TELUGU

This paper consists of two parts. Part I deals with the early contact of M.N.Roy with Andhra Pradesh, and his influence among Telugu speaking people. The second part deals with the impact of M.N.Roy and his philosophy on Telugu Literary personalities.

## I

M.N.Roy first came into contact with Andhra Pradesh during 1937. His name was known to a few educated urban-oriented elite only. He addressed the Faizpur Congress Session where he suggested alternatives to Gandhi. One young advocate from Kakinada, a port town in Coastal Andhra, attended the session and heard Roy. He was Mr. M.V. Sastry, who later became legislator in the Andhra Pradesh Council. Mr. Sastry was greatly impressed by Roy's speech. He came back and sent a letter appreciating Roy's approach as an alternative to Gandhism, When M.N. Roy started his new journal '*Independent India*'.

M.V. Sastry's letter was published in it. Roy added a note asking for the young person's address. This letter was seen by the son of Abburi Ramakrishna Rao in Banaras. He brought the copy and gave it to his father, who was working as a Librarian in Andhra University, Waltair. Mr. Sastry also joined them. Together, they discussed about Roy's thought and invited him to Andhra. At that juncture, Roy was addressing the All India Radical Medical students at Madras. He asked Sastry to come to Madras. From there, Roy toured Andhra for the first time during 1938. He visited Nellore, Guntur, Tenali, Vijayawada, Kakinada and Waltair, Mr. Abburi Ramakrishna Rao introduced Roy to Dr. C.R. Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University. Impressed by Roy's amazing brilliance, Dr. Reddy invited Roy to join Andhra University as a Professor. But Roy simply laughed at the

suggestion and left it at that. Roy used to stay at the residence of P.H. Gupta, Bar-at-Law and enjoy the pleasure the seacoast gave him during convalescence. Gradually, a few persons gathered round Roy and started studying his thought. They, in turn, influenced a few others and converted them towards 'Royism'. By 1940, a small but powerful group emerged in Andhra.

The Press and the political parties - both leftists and rightists were against Roy. Communists were not only hostile towards Roy, but passed the resolution of to speak or contact Royists under any circumstances. In Andhra, Communists were very vigorous in anti-Roy propaganda. Under those circumstances, a ticklish incident occurred at Madras. During Roy's visit to Madras a press Meet was arranged by Mr. Gopichand, who was studying in Pachayappa's College at that time. On the eve of Roy's visit, Mr. Khasa Subba Rao, Editor, *Indian Express* had passed some unwarranted remarks about Roy and Ellen. When Khasa was introduced to Roy at the Press Meet, Roy became furious and expressed his anger by adopting a threatening posture. Mr. Subba Rao walked out of the Meet and others followed suit. From then onwards till the death of Roy the Press in Andhra-both English and regional - was never friendly or sympathetic towards Roy, Royists or their philosophy. The Royists had to depend on one or two sympathetic journals. Later, they started their own journals in Telugu like The **Radical**, **Radical Student**, **Sameeksha Radical Humanist**, etc.

During the last 15 years of his life, Roy visited Andhra nearly half a dozen times and made a lasting impact on people there. The first conference of Radical Democratic Party, Andhra Branch was inaugurated by Roy in 1940 at Tenali. Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary, famous iconoclast, critic and poet hosted the conference. Royists tried to bring Roy and Ramaswamy together. They arranged a meeting at Tenali, but Roy was not impressed by Ramaswamy. Ramaswamy was influenced by Arya Samaj. He appreciated Roy's materialism, but could not stomach his approach in social matters.

He read Roy's "**Why Men Are Hanged**" where Roy has supported the marriage between brother and sister under peculiar circumstances, and reacted strongly against it. Ramaswamy lived hardly one year after this nothing much could be done by the Royists towards bringing them closer.

A few persons from Andhra attended the All India Political Study Camps conducted by Roy. They had a tremendous impact on the participants. In turn, the participants conducted several regional and local camps in Andhra. These political schools, camps and meetings attracted some students, youth, teachers, advocates and doctors into the fold of M.N.Roy and his philosophy. The encounter the onslaught of communists and face the hostile congress party in Andhra. Mr. Gopichand published a political satire and his "**Pattabi's Socialism**", influenced several politically conscious persons. In 1946, the Radicals contested the general election in Andhra, but all were defeated. Later, when Roy wound up the party and started the movement, several Radicals could not reconcile with the party less politics. Some of them confined themselves to their professions, a few retired from the group and some joined other parties. Similarly, a few persons converted themselves into reactionaries.

After the death of Roy, Radicals in Andhra continued their activities through journals, political schools and meetings. Ellen Roy encouraged them. When Ellen was assassinated, Radicals in Andhra were shocked, and it took them quite sometime to recover. The Andhra Radical group still continues its renaissance activities through publications, meetings, seminars, discussions, political study camps. The enthusiasts sustain the interest in Radical Humanism by running a couple of journals

All the major writings of M.N.Roy were translated into Telugu and published by the Telugu Academy. Perhaps, next only to English, Royists can boast of the largest number of publications in

Telugu on Roy and Radical Humanism. Hyderabad, Tenali, Chirala and Guduwada have emerged as strong centers of Radical humanists. The Andhra Radicals have hosted All India Radical Humanist Conferences and study camps. Today, media is less hostile towards Radical Humanists and their philosophy when compared to the 40's and the 50's.

## II

Dr.C.R.Reddy, vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, critic, poet, writer and a justicite, admired Roy's style of writing and praised his "Letters from Jail". Dr. Reddy recommended these letters to be studied by students at the University level. But we cannot say that Dr. Reddy was in anyway influenced by Roy's thought and philosophy.

The first major poet and theatre art critic, who came into contact with Roy was Abburi Ramakrishna Rao. He remained a Royist throughout his life and paid rich tributes in his poems to Roy. He wanted **his tributes to Roy to be translated into English** and carved on Roy's sepulchre at Dehradun. This wish of his was carried on after the death of Ramakrishna Rao. Under the influence of Ramakrishna Rao his sons and daughter also followed Roy's thought and philosophy.

Gopichand (1910-1962), the son of Tripuraneni Ramaswamy can be considered as the first major creative writer under the influence of Roy and his thought, during the early 40's. He was a film producer, critic, prolific writer, satirist and practitioner of law. He was also the Secretary of the Radical Democratic Party for a brief period. Gopichand's early short stories and writings were rationalistic and humanistic. Some of his early writings :- 1. **Parivarthanam** 2. **Asamardhuni Jeevitayatra** 3. **Pilla Themmera** and 4. **Yama Pasham** are written under the influence of Roy and his thought. In a story entitled '**Devuni Jeevitham**'; a girl traces the evolution of the gods.

The entire novel, **Perivarthana** depicts rationalism. Another novel, **Yama Pasham** stresses the importance of individual

freedom and the need for human effort. Similarly, in his **Asamardhuni Jeevayatra** too Gopichand emphasized *human* effort. Gradually, Gopichand drifted towards Aurobindoism, mainly due to the internal conflicts among Radical Democrats. Gopichand wanted to be a 'Guru' to the Tenali circle, which was not acceptable to many. Even after **becoming a disciple** of Aurobindo Gopichand could not erase the impact of Roy and his Humanism from his writings. In his **Postu Cheyyani Utharalu** (Unposted letters), he copied several paragraphs from Roy's 'Science and Philosophy', which amounts to Plagiarism. In His **Tatvavethalu** (Philosophers), Gopichand tries to assess M.N.Roy critically, but in vain. Later, he published several portraits, novels and stories, but many of them are polemical. In his award winning novel, **Panditha Paramesware Sastry Veelunama**, he exposed all his former Radical colleagues with malice, pungency and venom. His other writings are **Merupulu-Marakalu, Pilla Themmera, Gadiya Padani Thalupulu, Premopahathulu, Cheekati Gadulu, Shidhilaalayam and Gathinchani Gatham**. Gopichand Crossed swords with several contemporary writers by bringing their characters into his novels indirectly. The affected writers retorted by writing novels which exposed Gopichand. Thus, in his last phase, Gopichand emerged as a frustrated and irrational, but powerful fiction writer.

Paalagummi Padmaraju (1915-1983) was a Royist throughout his life. He won an international award for his story **Gaali Vaana** (The Storm). He was a script-writer for movies. His writings are **1. Bathikina College (novel), 2. Rendava Ashokuni Moonaalla Muchachata, 3. Nalla Regai, 4. Rama Rajyaniki Rahadaari**. Padma Raju in his satirical novels, exposed party politics and parliamentary Democracy. His humanistic endeavour can be seen in **Rama Rajyaniki Rahadari**. Padmaraju attempts to explain the human situation through the work of art.

G.V. Krishna Rao (1914-1979) received his Doctorate for his work on Pingali Surana, a medieval Telugu poet. He taught Telugu in a college

and for a brief period worked in All India Radio. He wrote poetry and novels published works on criticism and aesthetics. He was a Radical humanist and evidence of it can be seen throughout his writings. In his *Kavya Jagathi* Krishna Rao tried to explain class relations. His attack on temples and the emergence of man out of nature can be seen in **Jaghana Sundari**. He exposed narrow jingoism in his novel **Raga Rekhalu**. The Radical humanist philosophy which was propounded in 22 theses can be seen in **Keelu Bommalu**, a novel. The humanist philosophy again pervaded **Papi Kondalu**, an incomplete novel of Krishna Rao. This novel also stressed the importance of ethics in day to day life. He attacked the communist party in his **Damadamaala Bandi** and published critical assessments on Plato, Kant and Nagarjuna.

Koganti Radhakrishna Murthy (1914 - ) is a publisher, writer and critic who came under the influence of M.N.Roy and Radical Humanism, a pioneer among Royists in Andhra. He established Nalanda Publications and Praja Parishad at Tenali. Under the banner of these two establishments, K.R.Murthy published several rationalistic works in Telugu. He himself has written the biography of Roy and critique of Gandhism. He edited Vihari, Radical, Sameeksha, the Telugu journals with a Radical Humanist outlook.

P. H. Gupta who hosted Roy for several years at Vizag, was a Gandhite. He published the critique of Ramayana in English in consultation with Y.Rosaiah, a staunch Royist from Guntur.

Gora (Goparaju Ramachandra Rao) established the first atheist centre at Vijayawada and practiced staunch atheism. He was excommunicated by Brahmins for breaking the Brahmanical traditions. Gora, in his early days was influenced by Gandhi and later by M.N.Roy and Jayaprakash Narayan. He adopted politics without power and preached the same under the impact of M.N.Roy.

Avula Sambasiva Rao, former Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court and the present Lokayukt started his career as a Gandhite but gradually came under the influence of Roy. He edited two

Souvenirs on Veeresalingam, a social reformer and Gopichand. He has written 30 plays in Telugu and published several essays. The impact of Radical humanism pervades his writings. He exposed the frauds in the society through his short plays like **Aapada Mokkulu, Manavula Adugu Jaadallo, Visthrutha Padham, Vamanudu** etc.

Avula Gopala Krishnamurthy popularly known as AGK was the outstanding Royist in Andhra who was also an orator and essayist. He influenced several youth and converted them towards Radical Humanism. With his powerful pen, AGK attacked the political opponents through several journals. He edited *Radical Humanist, Sameeksha* etc. under the title **Na Chuttu Prapancham** (The world around me) he has published a series of articles in Vahini Telugu weekly from Vijayawada. He also published several critical articles on Telugu literature. He translated Roy's Humanism and wrote his tour experiences of U.S.A. Several literary persons and poets acknowledged AGK's influence and impact on them.

Some of the minor writers who were influenced by Radical Humanism and Roy are : Biragi (Poet), Gokulchand (Play-writer) , Jaasti Jagannadham (critic), A.Y.Mohan (writer), etc. B.S.I. Hanumantha Rao, K. Basaveswar Rao are the two historians who came under the influence of Radical humanism and published several history works with a scientific outlook.

R.Venkatadri came under the influence of Roy since his early days, and published several works from the nationalistic point of view. He is a critic and opposed superstitions, astrology and ESP. He conducted several political study camps and inspired many students towards rationalistic thought.

N.V.Brahmam came under the influence of Roy and Radical Humanism, since early the 40's. He published *Bible Bandaram*, which was proscribed by the government. The Supreme Court upheld the publication. Some other writers and essayists under the influence of Roy and Radical humanism are M.V.Ramamurthy,

G. Venkataswamy (Conducted research on the impact of humanism and Telugu literature), P.V.Krishna Chowdary (edited Radical student), P.V.Subba Rao (Ame Cheppindi – Novel), A.V.Mohan (Translated Roy's memoirs of a cat), P. Satyanarayana (secularism in Telugu), Kolla Subba Rao (Published articles on education) M.V.Ramanaiah, Achyuta Rao, G.Narahari (Secretary RDP), G.Veeranna, S.A.Baksh, M.V.Subbamma, A.Manjulatha, V.Komala, G. Surya Kumari, K. Subrahmanyam, Ch.Raja Reddy etc.

There is one major writer, critic and editor who came under the influence, of Radical Humanism, after the death of Roy. He was V.R.Narla (Narla Venkatesware Rao). Ho was a bitter opponent of Roy and Royists, as long as Roy was alive. Even the news of Royists could not appear in the daily *Andhra Prabha* under the editorship of V.R.Narla. When Roy died, Narla did not write any editorial to pay tributes to him, AGK Murthy came out with a scathing criticism of Narla for this attitude. That was a turning point in the life of Narla. He studied all Roy's published works and acquainted himself with Roy's philosophy. He was, deeply impressed by the writings of Roy and the philosophy of Radical humanism. V.R.Narla left *Andhra Prabha* and founded *Andhra Jyothi*, a Telugu daily. He was also a member of Rajya Sabha for 12 years and toured the entire world. He delivered lectures in the Universities and published the content of the lectures in booklets. In the Mysore University, he gave two lectures on the poverty of intellectualism, in India. He felt that had India followed Uddalaka in the past and M.N.Roy in the 20th century, instead of Badarayana Uddalaka in the past and Mahatma Gandhi in the present, the country would have achieved modernity by now.

In his lectures in Osmania University on Indian Culture and its caste complexion, Narla said that Roy and India had a firm grasp of all the evils of the past, present and future, that link in the caste system.

In his lectures at Nagarjuna University on “East and West”, Myth of Dichotomy, Narla said that Vidyasagar and M.N .Roy in the 20th century are the two Indian stalwarts who did not trumpet forth the eastern spiritualism or run down the Western materialism.

In his latest book, "*Man and his world*", Narla placed key to par with Marx, Engels, Bradlaugh, Sartre, Lenin, Mao, Charvak and Epicurus and commented that Roy is in the good company of Atheists.

In another book, *Gods, Goblins and Men*, Narla said that “Roy’s thought being critical, radical, philosophical, it cannot take root easily. Roy denied the existence of God, disdained prayer, dismissed the veneration of the cow as a survival of primitivism, castigated verna and ashrama as the two pillars of an unequal and unjust society”. Narla compared. Roy and Gandhi and explained the reasons for the unpopularity of Roy. (Minarva Associates Publication 1979)

At present, two journals are being published from Chirala viz. *Hetuvadi* (monthly) and *Humanist*. But surprisingly today hardly any creative writer claims to be a Radical Humanist, though there are several essayists and writers, who are active in the Telugu field.

# CASTE CONQUERS COMMUNISTS

CASTE has no scientific basis. It is purely a creation of religion and perpetuated by custom and habit. Genetics has proved the baselessness of caste groups. Yet people succumb to it. Caste cuts across science, politics and economics. The strength of tradition is such.

The communists of Andhra, who encouraged inter caste marriages during the 40s and 50s and who pooh-poohed caste as superstructure, are its victims no less. The Communist Party had its voter banks among the untouchables (Harijans) girijans and backward classes. Most of them are agricultural labour. Gradually, the harijans have lost interest in communists. Since 1956 election results indicate how the strongholds of the communists were shaken and crumbled. Now the communist parties are reduced to a skeleton opposition in the legislature.

The first armed struggle occurred in Telangana in 1948. In 1968 China claimed the liberation of Srikakulam district in Andhra by the C.P.M.L. Yet it has become increasingly difficult for the communists to save their deposits in the elections. Why is it that the communists, champions of the down-trodden, have failed to sustain their strength among Harijans? How is it that during the 45 years of its history communists have failed to raise leadership from among the Harijans and Girijans (tribals)? Have the Harijans seen through the game of upper caste communist leaders? Let facts speak.

Andhra has thrown up all-India leadership in almost all the national parties. Among them undoubtedly the communists played a significant role, but they could not rise above the caste

complexion inspite of their professed internationalism. The communist party never encouraged leadership from among the depressed classes, especially the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and the backward communities. While the leadership was always in the hands of the upper castes, the rank'and file were dominated by the poorer sections, that too mostly from the Harijans and agriculture labour from other castes. Key positions in the Party at national and state levels, legislature leadership, almost all journals of the Party are manned by the upper castes.

The Party started its branch in Andhra in 1935 and in Telangana in 1940. P. Sundaraiah, M. Basavapunnaiah, C. Rajeswara Rao, Tarimala Nagi Reddy, were its stalwarts. They always dominated and never allowed the youngsters to rise to key positions in the party like membership of the politbureau, the National Executive, leadership in parliament and state legislatures. The first communist legislator from Andhra was P. Venkateswarlu, a Brahmin from Krishna District. In 1952, after the first general election, the communists made an abortive attempt to come to power in Madras with the help of the late T. Prakasam, the doyen of defectors in Andhra. Then the leadership was in the hands of T. Nagi Reddy who defeated his brother-in-law N. Sanjeeva Reddy, later President of India.

C. Rajeswara Rao was the leader in the Legislative Council for a brief period. Thus the leadership from the inception of the party was divided between the Kammas and Reddys in Andhra. These communist leaders were landlords, kulaks from the rich upper middle class.

The leaders of the Andhra communist party tried to help the formation and growth of the party in Telangana where the Nizam's feudal rule was most oppressive during the forties. But here again, the leaders came from the upper castes only. Ravi Narayana Reddy, Baddam Yella Reddy, Arutla Ramachandra Reddy, Devulapalli Venkateshwara Rao are the prominent leaders.

In 1955 Andhra faced a bye-election to the State Assembly in which the communist party made its last herculian effort to get 190 seats. But they got only 15 seats. In 1956 Andhra and Telengana merged. In the legislature Sundaraiah was elected as the opposition leader. The Communist party was divided in 1964. Never-theless, leadership remained in the hands of the upper caste people in both the parties. C.P.M. was further split in 1968. CPM-L with all its revolutionary noises could not escape the leadership of upper castes. Later CPM-L was divided into several groups, each again dominated by upper caste leadership. In the present Assembly the leader of the C.P.M. group is P. Sundariah, while C.P.I. is headed by C. Rajeswara Rao, a Velama. At the all-India level C. Rajeswara Rao is the General Secretary of the C.P.I. whereas Basavapunnaiah is a member of politbureau.

Let us now look at the break-up of this upper caste leadership. The Brahmins are : P. Venkateshwarlu (CPI) Devulapalli Venkateshwara Rao (CPML), late Pulipula Sivaiah, late Dr. K. Achamamba, Vavilala Gopalakrishnaiah (Ex. CPI), Sri Sri (CPML) Poet, Jwalamukhi (CPML) Poet, Adibhatla Kailasam (CPML), Ramalingacharry (CPML), Rachakonda Viswanadha Sastry (CPML) Writer, Panchadri Krishnamurthy (CMPL), Subba Rao Panigrahi etc. (CPML), Etukuri Balaramamurthy (CPI) (Total : 15).

*Kammas* : Chandra Rajeswara Rao (CPI), Makineni Basavapunnaiah (CPM), Moturi Hanumantha Rao (CPM), Vemulapalli Srikrishna (CPI), Koratala Satyanarayana (CPM), Korrapati Pattabhiramaiah (Ex. CPI), Kidiyala Gopala Rao (Ex. CPI), Maddikuri Chandra Sekhara Rao, N. Giriprasad CPI, Tacoma Satyanarayana Reddy (CPI), Y.V. Krishna Rao (CPI), N.R. Dasari (CPI), Chalasani Prasad (CPML) Writer, Challapalli Srinivasa Rao (CPML), Kolla Venkaiah (CPML), Chaganty Bhaskara Rao (CPML), Madala Narayana swamy (CPML), Dr.

Radhakrishna Murthy (CPM), Mukkamala Nagabhushana Rao, Katragadda Rajagopala Rao (Ex.CPI), Vellanki Visweswara Rao, Lavu Balagangadhara Rao (CPM), Ravi Ammaiah, M.L. Narayana (CPML), Dr. Bhaskar Rao (CPML), Chennupati Lakshmaiah CPI, Manikonda Subba Rao (Total: 27).

*Reddys* : Puchalapalli Sundariah (originally Sundararami Reddy) CPM, Kondapally Sitaramayya (adopted name, CPML), late T. Nagi Reddy (CPML), Chandra Pulla Reddy (CPML), Neelam Rajasekhara Reddy (CPI), Ravi Narayana Reddy (CPI), late Baddam Yella Reddy, Arutla Ramachandra Reddy (CPI), B. Narasimha Reddy (CPM), Guruva Reddy, K.V. Ramana Reddy (CPML), Intha Ramana Reddy (CPML), Tarimela Ramadas Reddy. (Total : 13).

Kammas and Reddys dominated in the Communist party from its inception, and a few brahmin leaders were gradually replaced by them. Other upper castes like Kshatriyas, Velamas, Vaisyas, are also there but very few. The number of Harijans is negligible among the leaders. Small wonder that while selecting candidates to contest for Assembly and Parliamentary elections, the communist parties also keep the criterion of caste in view, and thus play standing between the two Reddys though they the caste game on par with any other political are bitter enemies political party.

The CPI and CPM had election alliance with J. Vengal Rao, former Chief Minister during 1980, though earlier the same parties had blamed him for killing Naxalites in encounters and also depicted him as murderer before the Bhargava Commission.

P. Sundaraiah accepted chairmanship of the board offered by the anti-communist Chief Minister Dr. M. Chenna Reddy. Both being Reddys, there was bitter criticism against Sundaraiah, who had to resign from the chairmanship just on the eve of Lok Sabha

election in 1980. Earlier, when G. Bapanaiah, C.P.M. Harijan legislator had expired, at the request of Sundaraiah it was agreed that Congress-I should leave the seat to the wife of Bapanaiah. People saw wrong motivation in the tacit understanding between the two Reddys though they are enemies politically.

Some communists had already left the party and a few joined Congress while others either became neutral or anti. Some remain sympathisers and give donations to the party now and then.

Communists will certainly deny all these facts and arguments. They stand for 'structural changes'. Perhaps caste is a 'superstructure' to which they succumb unwittingly. Communists will also say that the failure of the party is not due to its casteism but due to wrong programmes, policies, tactics and strategies etc. But this is their stock argument. If marriage out of caste is the acid test of one's de-casteisation, a majority of Communist leaders including Rajeswara Rao and M. Basavapunnaiah have failed miserably.

(This essay is taken from the Radical Humanist, July 1980. P. 23-26).

# TRANSLATING ROY'S WORKS

I HAVE translated some of the major writings of M.N. Roy into Telugu. To start with, I translated *India in transition* at the instance of the Indian Council of Historical Research, Delhi. Though the script was submitted five years ago, it has not seen the light of the day. Since I.C.H.R. is itself in doldrums I doubt whether they will publish it at all. This book was praised by C.P.I. leaders and the theoretician Mohit Sen commented that *India in transition* was undeservedly neglected by Communists in India. This book was the first of its kind in India. In it Roy had applied Marxian methodology to the Indian situation, while he was in Moscow during the '20s. I did not face any problem in rendering it into Telugu.

Some of the articles in *Parties Power and Politics* were translated and published in a Telugu weekly *Praja Vani* from Guntur during the '60s. It was also rather an easy task. Similarly, a few articles from *Heresies of the 20th century, India's Message* also were translated and published in *Radical Humanist*, a Telugu fortnightly during the '60s.

It is of some interest to know that several CP1 (MLI people) are attracted by Roy's criticism of religion and superstitions in his writings in prison.

But it is not that easy to translate *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* into Telugu. When I read the two volumes I felt at home and was inspired by it. Recently, the Telugu Akademy assigned to me the translation of these two volumes. Osmania University requested the Akademy to get these two volumes into Telugu as they need it for reading and reference material.

Telugu medium is being introduced gradually at post-graduation level and naturally the university is getting ready with background material.

I have translated both the volumes but there are several points here to note. They may be of some interest to those who translate it into other Indian languages. I understand that a Marathi translation is complete.

Roy mentions several prominent and less prominent thinkers of Europe in these two volumes. The reader in regional languages will certainly find it difficult to follow Roy unless the translator gives the background about the persons and places mentioned in these two volumes. *Encyclopaedia of philosophy and psychology*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and any standard dictionary are of immense help to the translator to provide the necessary background to the reader.

Roy uses several German, French, Italian words, phrases and titles, but does not always give its equivalent in English. Hence the translator must approach any university where foreign languages are taught or seek help from the Central Institute of English and Foreign languages in Hyderabad. The reader is likely to misunderstand Roy unless the proper meaning is given to these foreign words and the context is explained.

Yet another difficulty is the pronunciation of proper names, especially French. Of course, all standard dictionaries give the pronunciation but the difficulty arises with names which are not found in the dictionary. Better consult Daniel Jones pronunciation dictionary and also the key to foreign languages. They are available in any good library.

Reading and understanding the three Rs is entirely different from attempting its translation. It was really a rich experience for me, inspite of the feeling that several philosophical terms have no proper equivalents in Telugu. Better explain such words in

footnotes. For example, Kant's "thing-in-itself", Bergson's "elan vital" or Marx's "superstructure".

No doubt the translation will become very bulky but that cannot be helped. We cannot take it for granted that the reader in regional languages has the background of European history and civilization, philosophy and science. Unless one is familiar with these subjects one cannot follow the three Rs. I am sure that modern Indian students with regional language as their medium cannot fulfil these preconditions. Hence the translator has to put in a little more effort so that the reader in regional languages could follow Roy's thought.

While translating the three Rs I came across some minor factual mistakes of Roy. For instance, in the 2nd volume he writes: "A dissertation on Epicurus won for Marx the doctorate from the university of Bonn." (page 164). It is not Bonn but Jena. Originally, Marx intended to submit his thesis to Berlin University.

Roy's criticism of Marx may not be totally valid. Had Roy known of Marx's *Brundrisse*, I am sure he would have rewritten the two chapters, namely, Hegel to Marx and Marxism.

This book was available in India only after the death of Roy. Erich Fromm in his *Marx's concept of Man* and David McLellan in his *Karl Marx* have shown how communists concealed the major work of Marx which led to misunderstanding of Marxist ideas regarding the connection between ethics and economics.

Roy often uses "dialectical materialism" in the book but Marx ever used these words as such. It is historical materialism and dialectics. By mixing the two, a lot of confusion was created by communists and the same phraseology crept into three Rs. Erich Fromm rightly discussed this point in his book.

I have translated some parts of Roy's *Science and Philosophy* and published them in *Smneeksha* — Telugu monthly

during 1965-67. Later, on request A.B. Shah sent me the files of Roy's monumental work "The philosophical consequences of Modern Science". I selected similar topic for my Ph.D. thesis which I submitted in 1969. The thesis is still with Osmania University, but that is a different story. The point is, any future translator of Roy's monumental work needs to give lengthy explanations at several places. Roy wrote it during the '30s in jail and hardly touched upon while publishing parts of them in the Humanist Way/Marxian Way. Science has since progressed tremendously. Hence Roy's work will remain a historical document but may not be relevant in details. His main thesis, anyhow, remains though many gulfs are to be bridged with proofs. It may not be a relevant aspect here. Nevertheless, I hope this work will see the light soon.

After translating some of the works of Roy, I thought I should share my feeling for a dialogue and proper perspective. Hence this brief note.

# HUMANIST ACTIVITIES

## Andhra Pradesh

### **Abburi Trust founded in Hyderabad in commemoration of Sri Ramakrishna Rao and Sri Abburi Varada Rajeswara Rao**

Abburi Ramakrishna Rao was a very close colleague of M. N. Roy in the Radical Democratic Party and later in the radical humanist movement. A faculty member in Andhra University, Abburi Ramakrishna Rao was the father of the Telugu theatre. His son, Abburi Varada Rajeswara Rao was also a member of the Radical Democratic Party and very close to Roy. He was a well-known Telugu poet and literary critic.

The Abburi Trust was founded in 1994 by Rajeswara Rao's widow, Abburi Chaya Devi, helped by a number of intellectuals in Andhra Pradesh. Herself a well-known writer in Telugu, Mrs. Chaya Devi has been a member of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. She is Managing Trustee of the Trust. [In a subsequent issue of the *RH*, we will publish her paper presented in this year's annual National seminar organized by the Sahitya Akademi on the theme, Indian Women's Writing at the turn of the Century. — Mg Editor, *RH*].

The Trust while continuing its publication programme, instituted an annual literary award in 1999 in the name of Abburi Ramakrishna Rao and Abburi Varada Rajeswara Rao, to be awarded through Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad, to eminent persons in Linguistics, Prosody and Literary Criticism.

Dr. Budaraju Radhakrishna, an eminent Telugu scholar and author was honoured with the award for the year 1999 by the P. S. Telugu University on 30th October, 2000 An academic of distinction, Dr. Radhakrishna's publications include several

monographs on Telugu dialects and other linguistic and literary subjects, two dictionaries of occupational terms in Telugu (edited), and a compilation of an English-Telugu dictionary. He has also edited V.5 (Telugu) of the *International Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, — R.M.P

The following report has been sent by Dr. N. Innaiah, senior radical humanist of Andhra Pradesh. Dr. Innaiah has held a number of important positions: President, Rationalist Association, AP 1991-93; General Secretary, Indian Rationalist Association 1994-96; Secretary, Indian Radical Humanist Association AP 1992-94; President, AP Chapter of Indian Academy of Social Sciences, Hyderabad 1988-90. A prolific writer, his published books include translations into Telugu of M. N. Roy's books, *India in Transition*, *Parties, Power & Politics*, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. He has also written a number of books in English and Telugu on the subject of Humanism and Rationalism. — R.M.P

Dasari Manjulatha, the director of Telugu Akademi of Andhra Pradesh has asked Mr. Ravipudi Venkatadri to write a history of humanist and rationalist movements in Andhra Pradesh in the last century.

Mr. Basaavapunnarao, a humanist from Tenali, has been entrusted with the responsibility of writing a biography of A. G. K. Murthy; the biography will cover the history of the humanist movement in Andhra.

Two humanist schools in Andhra, one at Chirala and another at Mandapeta under the aegis of Mr. Baparao and Siddartha Baksh celebrated the anniversaries during February 2001 with seminars and discussions on education and humanism.

Mr. Ravipudi Venkatadri dedicated his latest book on Rhyme and Anti-Rhyme (*Laya-Avalaya*) to Mr. K Muraharirao, a humanist agriculturist in a function at Chirala on 9th February 2001, which was presided over by Mr. N. Innaiah. Another book of late V. R. Narla, "*The Truth about the Gita*" Telugu version (by

N. Innaiah) was also released at Chirala Humanist Study Camp on 10th February 2001.

Mr. G. Laxmaiah was awarded Ph.D for his thesis on "*The Concept of Man in M. N Roy*" by Osmania University. Mr. Laxmaiah is at present lecturer in Philosophy Department, Osmania University. Mr. Sudarshan Singh was awarded Ph.D. for his thesis on *M. N. Roy's Humanism*" by Potti Sriramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad, this year.

Mrs. Chandra Latha, a humanist writer from Nellore and Dr. N. Innaiah are fighting against the government of Andhra Pradesh for distributing Belladonna Homeo tablets to prevent brain fever. They challenged the government to prove the medical content in Belladonna Homeo and also asked to establish the scientific validity of homeo system before doing make-belief propaganda.

On behalf of Rationalist Association, N. Innaiah, Narra Kotaiah and M. Subbarao submitted a memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor of Telugu University, Hyderabad, demanding explanation for continuing astrology courses without proving scientific evidence. Dr. Gopi, the Vice Chancellor promised to reply to the memorandum but nothing has moved since its submission a couple of months ago. The association asked the university to give any evidence of the scientific truth in astrological predictions and also asked to stop courses which are leading to public cheating through degree holders

The Humanist Association asked the government of Andhra Pradesh to establish a permanent committee to go into superstitions that are prevalent among the people. The committee should be autonomous with statutory powers so that whenever people are misled by superstitions, it may recommend action after studying its harmful effects on the people. They listed geomancy, astrology, parapsychology, alternative medicines under superstitions.

# WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM AMERICAN HUMANISTS?

It is a small wonder that despite the economic differences between U.S A. and India, there are several similarities among humanists. When I landed in U.S.A. on 6th February, 1992, I had addresses and some information provided by Prof. Sib Narayan Ray, Mr. Samaren Roy, Dr. Indumati Parikh, Mr. Lavanam, Mr. R. Venkatadri and Mr. V.M. Tarkunde. I corresponded with Prof. Paul Kurtz and Gordon Stein. I contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Unbelief* on Indian humanist activities. With that background, I addressed letters to the American Humanist Association at Buffalo, the Skeptics, the Rationalists of St. Louis, the Atheists of Los Angeles and Austin, the Ethical Union, the Judaic Humanists and the South Shore Skeptics. Frederic Edwards, the executive director of American Humanist Association provided me with addresses and lot of information. I sent letters to all the chapters of AHA, seeking information bulletins, news letters and details about their activities. The response was quite encouraging. Since I was staying in Washington D.C. with my daughter, every one suggested that I should meet Edd Doerr. He was the recipient of American Humanist Award during 1992 and crusader for the separation of state and church. He invited me for lunch and briefed me about the various allied humanist organisations. He is a poet in Spanish and English and humorous in conversation. His latest book gives details about how the authorities in U.S.A. abuse the First Amendment, of the constitution in not separating the church and state

## **Edd Doerr**

Edd Doerr is a full time active humanist in U.S.A He is author, poet, organiser, and activist in T.V programmes on

humanist alternative. He has clear understanding on Humanism. In his conversation he told me that people like R.G. Ingersoll were successful in attacking Bible but failed to attract youth and children. He says that the humanists in U.S.A. can utilise the buildings and funds of Unitarian churches who have 150 units throughout the country. They are friendly with humanists. They have many common issues with humanists like population control, right of abortion, equal rights and so on. The unitarians are not fanatics and Edd Doerr is pleading for co-operation from them.

Edd Doerr says that Science education is not popular in schools and colleges and that is where humanists have to work hard. He also told me that the Spanish people had strong humanist tradition which can be revived. Edd Doerr is prepared to visit India in near future and meet humanists. I welcomed him. He is at present associated with Humanist magazine in U.S.A. I saw him on T.V'. participating in the Humanist alternative weekly programmes along with Paul Kurtz in 49 open channel from Maryland. He told me that when his father-in-law expired in Columbia, he flew there and arranged secular funeral. He is critical of old humanists in U.S.A., who are not doing anything actively, but appreciated Paul Kurtz. He opined that only in Norway the equality of sex can be seen which is woefully lacking in U.S.A. He presented me with his books and was in touch with me as long as I was in the States. When I wanted to meet Isac Asimov, the president of American Humanist Association, he contacted them but to my regret Mrs. Asimov sent a reply that Asimov was ill. It was shocking to me to receive the death news of Asimov on April 6. Washington post had written lengthy editorial about him. Edd Doerr asked me to meet certain persons and associations and gave me tips. He knew only Lavanam in India but wanted to know about many more humanists.

## **Philip J Klass**

He is an expert on unidentified flying objects and at present chairing the sub-committee of the committee to investigate the claims of paranormal. He stays in Washington D.C. and retired from aviation department. He had all appreciation for the tremendous efforts and energy of Paul Kurtz in spreading the cause of humanism in U.S.A. He narrated to me the myth of U.F.O. in U.S.A., how the stories were popularized and how the people lost faith in it. Bob Hopkins published his Communion in 1987, which was sold in millions and he was joined by a psychologist Lcibo. She waled to treat the U.F.O. believers, which Hopkins refused. Then she realised the mischief and left him. Another group, namely Abduction, concocted several stories about U.F.O. during 1990, which were also popularised through T.V. The skeptics denied them but they are in minority. Klass is crusading against U.F.O. through T.V., radio and university meetings. He told me that on any clear night a lay man can see certain bright unknown things in the sky which are believed to be U.F.Os. He says that nothing was proved about U.F.Os so far. Klass is a pleasant person and explained to me so many details at his residence.

## **Humanists on TV**

T.V. is very powerful and popular media in U.S.A. The humanists are using T.V. media to educate the public. Under the caption HUMANIST ALTERNATIVE they have organised programmes, interviews on human values, education, separation of state and church. There is an open channel system in U.S.A. in which good programmes are arranged free of cost. Humanists are using that channel. I witnessed Paul Kurtz, Edd Doerr, Isaac Asimov and several eminent persons appearing under this programme. It is telecast once a week from various centres.

Similarly the rationalists of St. Louis also arranged several T.V. programmes, mostly interviews. The atheists of Austin under the

guidance of Madam O'Hara organised regular T.V. interviews. They are a little bit aggressive in projecting the views and very frank in expressing the opinions on various topics. I contacted Madalya O'Hara on phone, who told me that she knew Lavanam and couple of others. She mailed some information. They have organised one book exhibition in Los Angeles on Atheism.

Isaac Asimov was very assertive and positive in his T.V. interviews on 2nd April, 1992 in channel 62 from Washington D.C. He was critical about revelations and pleaded for rational approach. It was prerecorded.

What was the impact of the humanist T.V. programmes? Obviously there was no feed back survey. Only in St. Louis I found a couple of rationalists attending my meeting, who told me that they joined the association after witnessing the T.V. programme.

The atheists are also interviewing the foreign visiting atheists. I saw one such interesting programme of an interview by Jon G. Murray, the president of American atheists, of a German atheist. I learnt from that interview that Germany collects church tax even from the non-believers worth 13 billion Marks and it makes the German church the richest in the world. The church employs 7 lakh people and even the government has no veto power on the decisions of the church. Th German atheists are willing to support any political party which is favourable to their opinion.

Unlike the Christians who manage separate T.V. channels with their huge finances, the humanists are dependent on open public channel. They are swimming against the faith healers and, strong believers. They have long way to go.

### **Encounter with Humanists in U.S.A.**

I attended the Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia humanists meet at a potluck lunch. Roy Torcaso, the senior humanist, introduced me to other humanists. The potluck lunch arranged was good and attractive. Each person brings one item.

An organiser sees to it that there is no duplication. No one is burdened with expenses and that was really a good occasion to meet and discuss the problems and future programmes. I offered Indian chicken which they enjoyed. During the discussion they asked several questions about Humanist organisations in India and were curious to know our problems. I am delighted to know that they have some funds for humanist organisations but they face the dilemma what to do with it. They have plans to construct a building.

Another attractive meeting, where I learnt new aspects, was a Judaic Humanist meet in Maryland. There was no prayer but they read out an oath for humanism. Snacks were served and an U.N.O. expert addressed them. It was arranged in a house and the gathering was 15. They introduced me to all the persons and were curious to know about the humanist activities in India. Edd Doerr already briefed me about their enthusiastic activities. I addressed letters to their headquarters. They sent me lots of magazines and books. They have chapters spread throughout States and working in collaboration with humanists. They don't believe in Jewish gods and say that it is possible to keep the Jewish identity without religion. They want to prove it through their day to day activities. They have secular alternatives for marriages, funerals and festivals. Human values are stressed everywhere. Man can live happily without religion and can be moral without god, as per Judaic humanists. Jews are a powerful minority in U.S.A. and the humanists among them are trying to develop secular attitude which is a fresh breeze in the deeply religious society. They are actively collaborating with atheists, rationalists and humanists in U.S.A. which is heartening. Their efforts are appreciated by the secular humanists.

### **Discussions with Frederic Edwards**

Frederic Edwards is the executive director of American Humanist Association and a very dynamic person. He responds to phone calls and answers to queries. He is familiar with Indian Humanists and toured India a couple of times. On 14th May, 1992 I called on him with prior arrangement. Dr. Rama Bojedla, the youngest daughter of late V.R. Narla who is practising medicine

in Niagara, took me to the humanist headquarters. After exchange of plesantries Mr. Edwards took me round the office, introduced me to the staff and showed me the small library consisting of humanist thought. We discussed several aspects – both organisational and theory. We continued the discussion at lunch. When I suggested that some Indians in U.S.A. will also join the humanist group and participate, Mr. Edwards was very happy. I gave him addresses to contact them. Apart from publishing a humanist monthly, they are bringing out a news bulletin, arranging films, audio-video cassettes and computer disc of Ingersoll speeches and writings. He gave me one set of computer disc for Indian Humanist Organisation. It is a set of 3 ½" discs which can be supplied to humanists free of charge, provided anyone bears the expenses of floppy and the conversion charges. The humanist association is willing to have exchange of books, magazines with Indians. It is necessary to have regular communication with them since they are facing the same problems which we are encountering here in India.

### **Meeting Paul Kurtz**

I spent a day with Prof. Paul Kurtz in Amherst, which is adjacent to New York State University. The Secular Humanist Centre, of which Paul Kurtz is the head, is bubbling with activities. He introduced me to the editor of *Free Inquirer* and others. He took me round the office and showed the functioning of computers. He also took me to the Prometheus book centre. A small meeting was arranged where I clarified their doubts about Indian humanist organisations.

I suggested several points for establishing regular contact with the humanists of both the countries. Paul Kurtz was enthusiastic about implementing them and asked me to contact some book distributors for sale of the publications and magazines. He has also agreed to have special Indian price. Paul Kurtz promised to give books and tapes for Indian Humanist Organisations.

Paul Kuitz sent me 7 audio tapes on VOICE OF REASON which will be very useful for the study camps, training classes

in humanist meetings. These tapes also can be supplied to any one, provided the tape charges and mailing expenses are met with.

Paul Kurtz and Frederic Edwards are willing to visit India whenever we invite them. I promised to do so.

### **James Randi**

I spoke to James Randi on phone. He is prepared to come to India if there is a humanist conference, possibly in 1994 or 95. I asked him to give training to some Indian Humanists in magic so that they may expose the modern babas, faith healers, and godmen. He is willing, provided some persons can spend some time with him in States. His programmes are arranged by the Skeptics in Virginia when I was in the States. Persons like Uri Geller could not encounter Randi and devised the dubious ways of going to the law courts. But the Secular Humanists are fighting back. The faith healers failed to stand to the tests of James Randi and lost their income and popularity. Randi's books and articles are being published by Prometheus books.

### **Thomas Szasz**

Thomas Szasz in Upstate Medical Centre of Syracuse University is a humanist psychiatrist, who published several books and research articles, exposing the populist trends in Psychiatry. He questioned the unscientific ways of Freud, Jung, Adler, Mesmer and others which gave shock waves to the believers. I spoke to him on phone. He invited me to meet him. But I could not do so. When I visited New York, he had left for holidays. I told him that we are familiar with his books and thought. We have already published some of his writings in translations in regional magazines. He was happy.

### **Rationalists of St. Louis**

I was surprised to see the enthusiasm of Walter Hoops in St. Louis. During my visit the local rationalists arranged a dinner

meeting which he attended. He is 90 and going strong. He briefed me about the rationalist activities and appreciated Paul Kurtz. After hearing my brief speech they promised to carry out one article on M.N. Roy. They are familiar with Lavanam. They have one monthly journal and also publish Ingcrsoll's books. Steve Best, the secretary, is arranging computer programmes to expose the claims of astrology.

### **[The Secular Humanists of New York**

The Secular Humanists of New York arranged a meeting for me on 5th July in Greenwich village, Manhattan. Mr Warren Smith, the leader of the meeting, has shown me the correspondence of Ellen Roy, V.B. Karnik, Sib Narayan Ray and he is familiar with M.N. Roy, Gora, Lavanam. They are 150 members who meet once in a month in any one member's house. They put lots of questions and are keen to know about Indian Humanists. They are also bringing out a monthly bulletin. After the meeting they took me and Dr. Aramalla Purnachandra (Rationalist from India, who is now in Nc,. York) for dinner and showed me the Gay a Lesbian Humanist Centre. Mr. Smith told me their meet is regular, which Isaac Asimov also attended.

### **Baltimore Humanists**

A potlunch meeting was arranged in Baltimore and I was invited. I spoke for about half an hour and answered a lot of questions. Many youngsters attended the meeting. Mr Kenneth Marsalak, the admirer of Asimov, received my report on India with keenness. I suggested to the youngsters that they must visit James Randi and undergo training so that they could expose the faith healers. They welcomed the suggestion.

I contacted the Skeptics in Maryland and Cleveland. Chip Denman in Maryland and Stephan Page in Cleveland are actively exposing superstition by organising demonstrations and lectures. The atheists in Los Angeles under the leadership of Alexander

Praire are meeting weekly and they are publishing Atheists United magazine. When I went to Los Angeles, the riots broke out and I could not attend the meeting. But the atheists contacted me later and sent their magazine. I also met a number of individuals like Karen Price, Tom Madigan, Ranjit Sindhu and discussed with them the problems of humanism.

Paul Kurtz asked me to write on Indian Fundamentalism for *Free Inquirer* magazine. Promptly I sent an article, which they accepted for publication. I also sent two articles on Casteism and Evelyn to *Free Enquirer*. I sent a report-cum-article on superstition in India and how it is being tackled.

The *Skeptical Inquirer* is crusading regularly against ESP, Homco, UFO, Faith healing and several other superstitions. The educated in U.S.A. are equally superstitious. They may be experts in their own fields but in other spheres they are equally ignorant and did not apply scientific method to the problems. That is why they become believers, partly due to parents, partly due to the influence of church. The humanists have many common problems and hence the need for closer contacts and communications.

I attended a meeting of Ethical Union in Washington D.C. I find that they make their meetings more pleasant by arranging music and songs. They have brief speeches with question and answer session. The parents come with the children but they have separate arrangements for children to play with secular toys and secular games.

I received information from some humanist chapters, especially from the West Coast, showing how they encourage the talent of children by arranging their participation in arts and writing small articles and drawings. Along with the bulletin these children's material too was circulated. That is how the children of the humanists are encouraged to participate in the activities.

Numerically the humanists, rationalists and atheists are not many. But their weapon is scientific method which is very powerful and strong to face the blind belief. Often they contact the experts in a particular field and make them write on a particular topic. For example, an expert on biology contributes on evolution and creationism. The creationists have no answer. Popular science writers like Martin Gardener are contributing to the humanist journals and their books are published by Prometheus. Financially too the humanists are not strong. Their journals are struggling with financial problems but they maintain high level discussions on human problems.

The humanists and rationalists in India have many things in common with the humanists in U.S.A. Let us work together for better society and human values.

(This article is taken from *The Radical Humanist*, January 1993, p.27-31)

# LIFE-MIND CONTINUUM

Vitalism received its last death blow from the recent production of a deoxyribonucleic (DNA) molecule in a test tube which is biologically active, by three scientists. Dr. Arthur Kornberg, Dr. Mehran Goulian and Dr. Robert L. Sinsheimer in Stanford University laboratory. This artificial DNA molecule when introduced into a host cell, produces viruses, identical with those which are seen after infection by natural virus.' Thus science travelled a long way since Friedrich Wohler produced urea from ammonium acetate in 1828. Vigorous research was going on throughout the world but the whole tendency was against vitalism and Neo-Vitalism etc. Scientists now reject vital impulse theory because "the available factual evidence supports more adequately a different theory of evolutionary development".<sup>2</sup> Vitalists and philosophising scientists missed one essential point while deriving philosophical consequences from scientific laws that science is always self-corrective, ever progressing with only probable truths without assuming any finality or absoluteness to science. That is why, while science becomes ever fresh with accumulated data, philosopher's deductions from science tend to become outdated. The statment can be amplified if we can scrutinise the philosophies of Henri Bergson (Creative Evolution), Lloyd Morgan (Emergent Evolution), Schopenhauer (The Will as Idea), Nietzche (Superman),Wagner (Neo-Vitalism) and a host of other spiritual philosophers. Modern Science made all these philosophers to rue their fanciful systems or amend their positions considerably! For example, let us take the statement of Henri Bergson whose influence in the field of Philosophy is

considerable. He derived his philosophy from biology. "We asked whether the phenomena of life could be resolved into physical and chemical facts? When the physiologist affirms such a thing, he means consciously or unconsciously, that the business of physiology is to bring out whatever is physical and chemical in the vital, that it is impossible to say when the search will end and that, therefore, he must proceed as though the search were never to have an end; that this is the only way to go forward: He is thus laying down the rules of a method; he is not stating a fact...Science is as far as ever from a physico-chemical explanation of life."<sup>3</sup> Science turned the tables against Bergson by way of artificial creation of life molecule in laboratory and thus unveiled the so-called mystery of life proving that life evolved from `not-life, living matter from matter that had never been alive."<sup>4</sup>

In point of fact, Charles Darwin indicated the necessity of suitable atmosphere for the evolution of life in the beginning on earth. But his letters containing this idea was available only in 1940. But independent of body" relationship only and the simultaneous interactions and mutual influences of different body parts and functions is taken into consideration."<sup>1</sup>

The whole philosophic field was vitiated in the past by Rene Descartes' dualism and parallelism of mind-body. No doubt, Descartes studied this problem with scientific spirit and hence tried to link mind with body through brain. So far he was good. Due to lack of scientific data he failed to proceed further. John Locke attempted to fill the gap with his sensationalism but he too failed due to the confusion between sensation and perception. Bishop Berkely played on this failure successfully but he too ended with another confusion between sensation and ideas. Anyhow one can sympathetically understand these failures when adequate knowledge of scientific data was absent to build up any consistent philosophy. Even to day inspite of so much scientific

data some philosophers are trying to build up subjective idealism in vain is no small wonder. It is not necessary to refute these arguments. If scientific position is given that becomes self explanatory.

Mind exists in brain. All its expressions are manifested through brain. Brain is physical part of the body. Hence mind also becomes part of physical body. "We cannot conceive of even a thought occurring without its counterpart of biochemical and physiological events. If the mind resides in the brain, as we believe, then it follows, that thought and consequent behaviour are expressions of brain function. But brain function, in turn, can be derived only from the function of its component units. Those units, being living cells, are continually involved in biochemical activity, and alterations in their function must involve alterations in their biochemical activity. Whether this activity is as subtle as an ion shift or as "gross" as the elaboration of a neurohumor."<sup>16</sup>

Mind has two important capacities in which all other capacities can be merged. One is acquiring knowledge through perception. Unless and until the knowledge of the things is available to mind, thinking is impossible. Philosophically speaking ontology precedes epistemology. This is exactly the reverse position to Rene Descarte's dictum: I THINK, THEREFORE I AM. My existence is the precondition for my thinking. No semantics are involved here. The scientific position is obviously A POSTERIORI.

Some discussion of epistemology is not out of place here as it is linked with mind theory. Sensation is the result of stimuli received by sense organs. The reaction in senses to the stimuli is experimentally verified. These senses give message of stimuli through nerves, 'the highways to the brain',<sup>7</sup>. Sensation causes perception. The accuracy of perception of the given objective fact is also experimentally verified. After establishing the primary

capacity of mind it is easy to go to the second capacity which is much more important, The second capacity which includes images, dreams, hallucinations, forms, ideas, percepts and so on and so forth. At this level the capacity differs from man to man, the reasons being the compositions of the whole organism in a particular *way*. All activities of mind are representative though the individual may not be conscious of the fact. Symbols or pure mathematics also represent physical reality. Otherwise Einstein could not have succeeded in putting physical meaning in Reimannian double elliptical geometry or Lorentz formulas which were considered as pure, nothing to do with the reality. "The mind if the word 'mind' is to mean anything at all, must be taken synonymous with the electrical activity itself."<sup>11</sup> Mentalists along with vitalists lost the last resort. "It is a matter of tracing the development of certain sorts of abilities, capacities, tendencies and propensities in organism.. Ideas are woven on the basis of accumulated knowledge. The possibilities of creating ideas are innumerable which go beyond our knowledge. To be able to predict man's capacity one requires the knowledge of past, present and future. Scientifically this is an untenable position. Science traced the causality from brain-mind to cosmos. "Subject and object are only one. The barrier between them cannot be said to have broken down as a result of recent experience in the physical sciences, for this barrier does not exist."<sup>21</sup> Man is not mere conglomeration of body and mind but continuation of body mind which cannot be separated though logically body exists first (Even empirically). Hoyle went to the extent of saying: "Star, galaxy, man are all expressions of the structure of the universe...Star and man are in the same boat; they are both expressions of the same inner laws."<sup>22</sup>.

Causality need not be traced from scratch. for practical purposes—I mean for day to day life. But, for scientific position causality and its implication is indispensable. Man is not free in

its absolute sense. He has not separated himself from nature completely nor is it possible. 'The extraordinary degree to which the physiological processes of human life are still linked to cosmic rhythms provides a striking illustration of the persistence of traits having their origin in man's evolutionary past. Modern man is wont to boast that he can control his external environment...But even when he elects to follow unchangeable ways of life in an environments of the earth and of the moon with respect to each other and to the sun. His normal activities in particular, exhibit marked diurnal and seasonal rhythms and probably other rhythms also linked to those of the cosmos.'"<sup>23</sup>

If cosmos is law governed and rhythmical, man, as part of it must possess the same. M N. Roy the scientific philosopher of India, traced this rhythm in man as causality which functions as rationality. All probabilities must be explained in terms of determinism as per Roy. Otherwise we have to accept that out of nothing comes something. That is an unscientific position. Probable predictions are giving fruitful results because they are also determined. Here again epistemological limitations should not be confused with ontological determinism. Indeterminism and prediction (about probable results or statistical results) are mutually contradictory. This confusion resulted in failure of all systems and blue prints about man and his actions. Only omniscient and omnipotent knowledge will help to establish one to one relationship of causality i.e. strict determinism. Scientific method is against this claim. The only alternative is to accept the dynamic explanation offered by Roy that determinism must be explained in terms of probabilities. Modern science is undoubtedly converging towards monistic realism. In this scheme Life-Mind continuum is only a part as physical reality. There is nothing that undermines or subsumes man's dignity or position by accepting this scientific position. Moreover, this enables us to understand man in right perspective and will he able to give him the proper place.

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# HOMEOPATHY AND HUMANISTS IN U.S.A.

The secular humanists in U.S.A. are carefully studying the alternative medical systems and their scientific claims. The committee for the scientific investigation of claims of the paranormal under the Chairmanship of Paul Kurtz appointed a technical subcommittee to study paranormal health claims. The Committee's Co-chairman William Jarvis, Professor of health education department of preventive medicine, Lama Linda and Dr. Stephen Barret thoroughly investigated about the homeopathy system. Kurt Butler, nutritionist and popular science writer as well as Martin Gardner also studied about homeopathy in a systematic way. None of them found Homeo as scientific in any manner. Kurt Butler published a book. *"A consumer's" guide to alternative medicine* exposing the false claims of homeo and other fringe medicines.

Dr. Stephen Barret after thorough study of Homeo, published his report in Consumer reports. He stated thus:

"Most homeopathic remedies are too diluted to have any physiological effect. Use of such remedies involves a potential danger to patients whether prescribers are M.Ds, other licensed practitioners or outright quacks. In effective drugs are dangerous drugs when used to treat serious or life threatening disease. Self medication can be hazardous. Using them for a serious illness or undiagnosed pain instead of obtaining proper attention could prove harmful or even fatal."

Dr. Stephen further warned in his investigative report:

"Unless the laws of chemistry have gone awry, most homeopathic remedies are too' diluted to have any physiological

effect. Consumers Union medical consultants believe that any system of medicine embracing the use of such remedies involves a potential danger.,,

The humanists are willing to support homeopathy if there is any scientific evidence. Recently the homeos claimed such scientific conclusive proof. NATURE, the prestigious science magazine published the, claims of 13 biologists headed by Dr.Jacques Benveniste and Dr.Elizabeth Davens. These biologists belong to the Institute National de la ;ante et la Recherche Medicals (INSE.RM) located outside Paris, it is Homoe Institute.

The article created sensation. The essence of the claim is: After all the molecules of a certain antibody were removed from distilled water, the water somehow remembered the antibody's chemical properties. Benveniste said that the antibody he used is still potent when dilutions are even more extreme one part to 10 parts of water. The supposed potency of infinitesimal doses, even when the dilution removes all molecules of a drug is explained as force field (or vital energy). He further said that the anti serum molecules may somehow cause water molecules to re arrange their hydrogen atoms in some in explicable fashion that mimics the action of the antibody even when it is no longer there. Water can remember the properties of a missing substance.

That means water has memory! Lot of criticism against Nature magazine for publishing claim without verifying it. While Nature magazine disclaim any support to the homeo system, sent three experts committee to investigate the claims. The members of the committee are, John Maddox, Editor of Nature magazine, Walter Stewart of National Institute of health in Bethesda, Maryland U.S.A. and the humanist magician James Randi from Florida, U.S.A.

They went to Paris and thoroughly investigated the claims. In their report they said

The remarkable claims made by Dr .Jacques Benveniste and his associates are based chiefly on an extensive series of experiments which are statistically ill controlled, from which no substantial effort has been made to exclude systematic error, including observer's bias, and whose interpretation has been clouded by the exclusion of measurements in conflict with the claims. The phenomenon described is not reproducible in the ordinary meaning of that word. We conclude that there is no **substantial basis** for the claim. The hypothesis that water can be imprinted with the memory of past solutes is an unnecessary as it is fanciful.

In circumstances in which the avoidance of contamination would seem crucial no thought seemed to have been given to the possibility of contamination by misplaced test tubes stoppers, the contamination of intended well during the pupating process and general laboratory contamination (the experiments we homeos are cheating the public with their gullible arguments and never succeeded in proving the system scientifically. He said: "The slightest criticism of any fringe medicine is sure to generate angry letters the believers. The popularity of homeopathy in India. where a hundred pseudosciences bloom, is a strong count against it."

There were some attempts in Europe to prove the scientific validity of homeo in vain. In U.S.A. too the homeos are trying to avoid the Federal drug rules and regulations. They are also trying to influence the senators and politicians to enact laws to favor them. No principle of homeo was put to scientific test at any time. Max Sherman and Stevan Strauss firmly said in their article "Homeopathic drugs" – They have not been proven effective against diseases by scientific means such as randomized controlled double blind trails. The individualization would make it extremely difficult to conduct randomized clinical trial. The two basic tenets namely 'like cures like and the concept of increasing potency by increasing dilutions to infinitesimally

small doses, are at such variance with contemporary clinical science that relatively few orthodox investigators would be open minded enough to collaborate in clinical trials with the interested homeopathic physician. There is only little scientific evidence to suggest that homeopathy is effective.”

Thus the secular humanists came to the conclusion in U.S.A. that homeo is fringe medicine and has no scientific bias. Its A holistic approach is inhuman. Just as faith healers claim just so homeo claims miracle cures here and there.

In India the situation is worse since no attempt was made to put homeo to scientific test at any level. Its popularity proves the ignorance of the people. If the so called educated persons in advanced society. like U.S.A. & Europe can be cheated, no wonder the popularity of homeo can attract more persons in India. Martin Gardner gave number of instances where famous persons like Washington Irvind died under homeo care. Some homed practitioners like Ullman in U.S.A. were arrested for practicing homed without license. No such attempt was made in India and no demand from licensed homeos emerge for such arrest. Feop le read books written by Haenemann and Kent and start practicing homeo jr villages and towns. Martin Gardner said that James Tyler Kent’s lectures on Homeopathic medicine is undiluted nonsense who received M.D. Degree from eclectic medical institute. In the whole book of 982 pages, not a paragraph in it has a shred of empirical support. Yet people are enamored of such books.

In India where scientific tradition has yet to take roots, it is possible to cheat people and earn money in the name of homeo. But the problem arises when they claim that homeo is scientific.

# RADICAL HUMANIST MOVEMENT AMONG TELUGU PEOPLE (1940-2013)

Humanist movement in India commenced simultaneously along with European and American nations. M.N.Roy was the founder philosopher of the movement during second world war. To implement the ideas, Radical Democratic party was established but after eight years it was abolished, which is unique decision.

Abhuri Ramakrishna Rao was the first state organizer of Radical Democratic Party during 1940s. He was ably assisted by M.V. Sastri, A L Narasimha Rao, Pemmaraju Venkatarao, Tata Devakinandan (Municipal Chairman of Vizianagaram). The message of radical democracy was spread quickly among Telugu people. Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry was college student then. Abhuri Varada Rajeswara Rao and Gopala Krishna introduced him M.N.Roy. Rachakonda was very much impressed by Roy's thought and followed his writings as well as 'Independent India', weekly for brief period. Tripuraneni Gopichand, writer, director became the first state secretary of Radical Democratic party. He was a prolific writer who introduced political short stories in Telugu. He attacked communists and congress party with powerful and pungent pen. Much of Roy's thought were brought out into Telugu through short stories, plays and criticism by Gopichand.

Several of M N Roy's writings were simultaneously translated into Telugu and published. In those days the press was very nationalistic and did not entertain the radical ideas of Humanists.

Hence Mr. Gudavalli Ramabrahmam, cine director started one weekly called '*Prajamitra*' where the articles of Radicals found place.

Mr. Palagummi Padmaraju and Mr. G V Krishnarao emerged as powerful literary writers in support of M N Roy and Humanism. Padmaraju wrote novels with central theme of Humanism. He got world prize for his short story (Gaal Vaana) Storm. He also wrote script to several movies.

Mr. G V Krishnarao emerged as theoretical writer of Roy's philosophy and countered communist theories of aesthetics.

Mr. Koganti Radhakrishna Murty from Kuchipudi village started publication under the name of Praja Sahitya prachuranalu and brought out many writings and translations. He himself wrote a book on writings of M N Roy.

Roy's articles were brought out in Telugu by Koganti Radhakrishna Murty. He brought out many publications of Humanist thought.

Roy's New Humanism was translated into Telugu by Avula Gopalakrishna Murty. It is brief but powerful thesis.

Roy's magnum opus *Reason Romanticism and Revolution* was translated by Innaiah and Telugu Akademi published it.

Ellen Roy published the essential speeches and writings of M N Roy under the title: *Politics, Power and Parties*. This was translated into Telugu and serialized in Prajavani weekly from Guntur by this author.

### **AGK (Avula Gopalakrishna Murty) 1917-1967**

The outstanding personality among Royists and humanists in Andhra was late AGK. He was known as Vyasopanyaasaka. (essayist and speaker). He edited a weekly called *Radical, Radical Humanist and Sameeksha*. By profession he was attorney but spread the message of Humanism through his activities. He officiated several secular marriages as part of humanist thought. He

participated in literacy campaigns and attacked the reactionary poets like late Viswanatha Satyanarayana. He used to give fitting replies to communists, congress and socialists who attacked the ideas of Roy and Humanism. He was prominent in All India Radical humanist study camps. AGK encouraged poets, writers, singers, artists and promoted humanist ideology.

Mr. Bhattiprolu Hanumantharao taught history scientifically and published books from humanist perspective. Mr. Kalluri Basaveswararao collaborated with him in history text books. Mr Hanumantharao was the first person to translate M N Roy memoirs into Telugu.

M N Roy's *Memoirs of Cat* is popular in Telugu. Mr. A V Mohan , Ms Komala Venigalla translated it which ran into three editions.

Mr. Alapati Ravindranath started *Jyothi*, journal from Tenali which was very popular in spreading the ideas of M N Roy, Ellen and Radicals. He introduced new techniques of stories, scientific sex education and family planning. During 1948 he was sued for propagating family planning by publishing the article of Ellen Roy. It was very radical idea for orthodox people! Later he started monthly magazine *Misimi* in Telugu which established among literary sections.

Mr. D.V.Narasaraju, cine writer remained Royist throughout his life. He was prolific writer and his short plays, stories, satirical essays were very popular.

Mr. Koganti Subrahmanyam edited '*Radical Humanist*', Telugu journal .He was hard core worker who spread the ideas of Humanism.

Mr. Ravipudi Venkatadri contested as Radical Democratic Party candidate in 1946 elections and it was great opportunity to spread M N Roy thought in villages though he encountered much antagonism from nationalist and communists. He was the earliest

writer to spread Roy's ideas on astrology, origin of life and dialectics. He wrote a magnum opus on the thought of M N Roy and exposed communists. He sustained the movement through his speeches, participation in study camps and editing rationalist journal. Venkatadri was the earliest humanist to attack dialectics of Marx and clarified the humanist position. He explained in a lucid manner the falsehood of astrology and supported astronomy. He also narrated the origin of life and growth from scientific point of view and demystified the religious stories. He countered the false criticism of communists against M N Roy and published a magnum opus on M N Roy and his thought. In later part of his life he devoted to the monthly magazine *Hetuvadi* magazine and criticism of religion, myths, and belief systems.

Mr. N.V. Brahman is one of the earliest students in All India Radical Humanist camp at Dehra Dun. His book on Bible was banned in Telugu and later it was lifted through Supreme Court order. Brahman spread the humanist thought through his tutorial institutions.

Mr. Yelavarti Rosaiah who taught in Andhra Christian College, Gunter was at the root cause of spreading the thought of M N Roy through his students. Many of his disciples emerged as good Royists.

M V. Ramamurthy was one of the pioneers in Andhra to propagate the Radical Humanist thought throughout. He was also the president of All India Radical Democratic association.

He published articles, books and translations. Along with Koganti Radhakrishna Murthy he established Prajaswamy prachuranalu and brought the writings of Roy in Telugu. Ramamurthy edited one monthly magazine '*Vikasam*' for few years. He toured entire India and established contacts with humanists. From 1940 onwards Ramamurthy consistently worked for the movement until his death.

Mr. V R Narla editor of two popular Telugu dailies opposed M N Roy in the initial period and did not allow to publish the news in dailies. After reading M N Roy's literature he totally changed and started publishing several writings in favor of M N Roy and Humanism. He dedicated some of his writings to V.M.Tarkunde, Prem Nath Bazaz, Niranjan dhar, Sushil Mukherjee. He came close to Sibnarayan Ray, A B Shah and Tarkunde. His book The truth about Gita was well received abroad also.

Innaiah Nariseti published several books on humanism, rationalism, secularism in Telugu and English. He also translated the major writings of M N Roy, A B Shah, V B Karnik, Sibnarayan Ray, Agehananda Bharati, V R Narla into Telugu. They were brought out by Telugu Akademy, and Telugu University.

Mr. Gumma Veeranna devoted his time and energy to the humanist movement as writer and president of rationalist association.

Malladi Subbamma worked constantly for the upliftment of women and stood for secular humanism. She edited one Telugu monthly and spread the thought of Humanism.

Mr. Avula Sambasivarao, who was chief justice of Andhra Pradesh High court gave inspiration and help to the humanist movement throughout his life. He contributed several articles on Humanist thought. He was the president of Indian Radical Humanist association, and Indian Rationalist association.

Mr. V B Karnik's biography of M N Roy (both large edition and abridged edition) were translated into Telugu by N. Innaiah and published by Telugu akademi.

A B Shah helped to Secularist movement in the state through his writings, study camps and discussions.

Within the state Mr. Avula Gopalakrishna Murty carried the torch of humanist flame and struggled to sustaining the interest.

His early death in 1967 was a shock to the movement. Then Mr M V Ramamurthy took the responsibility and carried the burden. Later Mr. Ravipudi Venkatadri continued Rationalist organization and *Hetuvadi* magazine which has become a link to all the organizers

Mr. Agehananda Bharati delivered lectures on Roy in Osmania University and Ambedkar Open University during M N Roy centenary year 1988.

Mr P .Subbaraju from Palakole worked for the movement in various capacities. He spread the thought through intercaste secular marriages, eye camps, blood donations. He along with R Venkatadri wrote the history of Andhra Pradesh Radical Humanist, rationalist movement.

Mr Siddarth Baksh along with his wife Vijaya Lakshmi contributed to the thought through study camps, meetings, and publications and educational institutions.

Some sister organizations like Jana Vignana Vedika, Atheist center, Manava vikasa kendram, Putta Surendra of satyanweshana mandali cooperated for camps, meetings, magic performances and rallies.

Dr Jayaprakash Narayan since his days as collector till now helped to spread the thought of M N Roy and Radical democratic principles of decentralization, power to people, scientific education and human values.

One center was established in Inkole, a big village near Chirala town. Mr M. satyanarayana, Kari Haribabu, Shaik Babu, Kurra Hanumantharao, committed humanists are working for the center with annual celebrations, occasional meetings and publications.

Several humanists and sympathisers worked for movement in Andhra Pradesh: Due to space constraints details about their work could not be elaborated in this article. Some of them are:

Kolli Sivaramireddi, M.V.Ramanayya, Paruchuri Achyutaram, Meka Chakrapani, M. Narayana, V.S. Avadhani, Ancha Baparao, M.

Basavapunnarao, Gurajala Seetharamaiah, Gorantla Raghavaiah, Pasala Bhimanna, Ch. Rajareddi, 'Charvaka' Totakura Venkateswarlu, Aaramalla Purnachandra, Narra kotayya, Narne Venkata Subbaiah, C. Ranganayakulu, Sakhamuri Raghava Rao, Parvataiah, Prafulla Chandra, Mandava Srirama Murthy, Koneru Kuntumbarao, Gokul Chand, Polu Satyanarayana, Y. Raghavaiah, B.A.V. Sarma, Aluri Bhujanga Rao, Bandaru Vandanam, Jampala Shyama Sundara Rao, Kosaraju Sambasiva Rao, Kosaraju Ammaiah, Vasireddy Shivalingaiah, P.V. Subba Rao, Paramaiah, Chalamaiah, Chunchu Sesaiah, M.Chandrasekhar, Inturi Sambasivarao Jana Nageswara Rao, Kolla Subba Rao, P. Satyanarayana Raju, Jasti Ramaswami, Jasti Jawaharlal, Venigalla Venkata Ratnam, C. Bhaskara Rao, Aluri Bairagi, D.V.Narasaraju, Ravela Somayya, Ravela Aruna, Suryadevara Hanumantha Rao, Mandava Srirama Murthy, Narne Venkata Subbaiah, Narra Kotaiah, K.S.Chalam, Gora, Vijayam, Lavanam, Vikaas, B. Sambasiva Rao, Eswar. Lavu Ankamma, C. L.N. Gandhi, Putta Surendra. Detailed history of the movement has to written.

# ANTI-RENAISSANCE TRENDS IN INDIA

Our intellectual backwardness, our fatalism, our unreasonable pride in the anti-human tendencies of our past are tying us down from progressing. We should be able to peep into our past and appreciate what is worthwhile even as we reject whatever is not relevant. But the past is haunting us as we try to modernise ourselves. Superstition and deeply ingrained mindsets come in the way of progress which is possible only through the scientific method. So it is no surprise that we are stumbling on our way, as we try to run with the scientific hare and hunt with the superstitious hound.

Science puts us on the path of progress, but religion puts a lid on free inquiry and even promotes intolerance and it is this which has made us miss a Renaissance. In India, Rammohari Roy and Derozio were the most prominent among those who initiated the Indian Renaissance in the 19th Century but their efforts have suffered a serious setback and as we all can see now, religious fundamentalism and intolerance are steadily gaining an upper hand. What we see today is not a sudden development. This is the result of an atmosphere built up gradually, and all are culpable - the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians and very often, the governments in power.

## **The Hindus**

The Hindus who in a majority in India suffer from a minority complex. Today several Hindu organisations are inciting

the Hindus by raising the bogey of a threat to Hindu Culture. This is, however, not a new trend. The extremist section of Congress tried to organise Hindus on religious lines. Balagangadhar Tilak introduced religion into politics by organising Ganesh and Shivaji festivities, and laid the seeds of much of our contemporary intrusion of religion into the public life. The extremists in the Congress also promoted violence against the British in the name of nationalism and patriotism.. Tilak and Lajpat Roy played a major role in this. Naturally, the Muslims moved away from the Nationalist movement as they were worried of the religious factor. While a few Muslims joined the Congress, a Muslim League was founded for the Muslims, to protect and represent their interests.

### **The Muslims**

In 1862, a Muslim, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1889) had formed the Scientific Society at Aligarh. Sir Syed is responsible for helping start the modernisation of Muslims in India. The Anglo Oriental College that he founded to spread modern education among Muslims, the encouragement he gave to translation into Urdu of several history and science books incensed the Muslim religious teachers. When he asked Muslims to welcome western education, the Ulemas branded him a 'Kaffir' and passed a fatwa against him. Sir Syed relented and made :...me concessions, and finally the Ulemas took control of religious education. However, neither Sir Syed nor his followers encouraged Muslims to take to politics nor did they talk of social reforms.

Sir Mohammed Iqbal (1873-1938), a very influential Muslim leader and much acclaimed poet, proposed that religion, state and politics be integrated. Sir Iqbal wanted Islam in place of nationalism and socialism. However, Sir Iqbal wrote verses in praise of Marxism and Leninism!

The Muslim League came into existence on 30 December 1906 and the League was encouraged by the British so that it would not join forces with the Indian National Congress. In the Congress leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya opposed special facilities and weightages to Muslims. However, Tilak thought it fit to help Muslims as a part of a strategy to oppose the British.

Later, after the end of the First World War, Muslims were worried about the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The Khilafat movement was started and this was backed by Mahatma Gandhi. In Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha ended the Khilafat system and ushered in a number of reforms. Gradually the Muslims who took part in the Khilafat movement were estranged from the Congress and those who remained in the Congress like Abul Kalam Azad were not able to carry the Muslims with them. Until then few understood the danger of running then the nationalist movement on the basis of religion.

### **The Christians and the Communists**

The Christian and Communist hide-and-see game is however quite interesting. Both of them worked against secularism. In Kerala, Catholics supported the Communists much to the consternation of the Bishops. The Archbishop of Trivandrum expelled Catholics who supported the Communists in 1960. Communists felt it was unfair and Tarimela Nagireddy, Communist Party member of the *Lok Sabha*, The Lower House, introduced a bill to prevent the infiltration of religion into politics and the use of any church for political purposes. Although the bill was defeated, it is interesting that the Home Minister supported the Catholic leaders' right to call upon their members not to vote for parties that were opposed to their spiritual stand. Another bill, introduced in 1961 by S.V. Paruleka of Communist Party of India, pleaded for a ban on use of religious places as

tourist spots, but was defeated. The ruling party never demonstrated an open secularist tendency in the legislature.

### **The Government**

As to the place of religion in education, the first Education Minister of Independent India, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad was in favour of religious education while Prime Minister Nehru opposed it. Some wanted Hindu spiritual values to be taught first as Christians taught the Bible in the name of moral values. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who later became the President of the Indian Republic, as head of a committee charged with making recommendations, pleaded for inculcation of values advocated by all religions.

### **Hindu Contribution to Anti-Renaissance**

Another religious person, with great influence, who advocated respect for all religions was the epileptic Gadhadhar, known to us as Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886). Gadhadhar worshipped Hindu, Muslim and Christian gods, with whom he claimed to dialogue. Suffering from repressed sexuality, Gadhadhar looked upon every woman as his mother, so that all sexual thoughts would be gone from his mind.

His mental illness was seen as divine power by people and Gadhadhar himself came to believe it. Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar What could have been a Muslim Renaissance started by Sir Syed never took place because of religious opposition and subsequent politicisation of religion.

The few Indian Muslims like Hamid Dalwai who headed the Muslim Satya Shodhak Samaj had to face many hardships caused by traditionalists; Asghar Ali Engineer even today faces a threat to his life. Across the border, in Bangladesh, Tasleema Nasreen who has close contacts with Bengal Radical Humanists is facing a *fatwa* ordering her death.

## **The Christians and the Government**

The governments and political parties could have taken the initiative in helping the cause of the evolution of a Secular trend by supporting these courageous people, but they did not; too often governments themselves have been guilty of promoting anti Renaissance; anti-secular trends in the community. The British Parliament which rejected moves for Government promotion of Christianity in 1793 provided official status to Christian missionaries in 1813. Christian missionaries served the Indian Community by opposing Sati and untouchability and in their own interests campaigned for religious freedom.

Though after the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny Queen Victoria declared that Christianity would not be imposed, only in 1927 did the British Government stopped the practice of appointing Bishops and sending them to India. However, even after this, Churches received money from the government and it was only in 1948 that the British Christian Policy was done away with following the abolition of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment Act.

After Independence, following accusations of converting poor people into Christianity, the Justice Neogi Committee was appointed to report on the allegations. The ocmmittee suggested that there be a ban on religious propaganda; that the freedom to propagate religion be confined to Indians; that Christian religious books be allowed to be distributed only after obtaining the government's permission. The yeoman service done to the field of education by the Christian Missionaries had been ignored by almost all.

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(1853-1904) who treated Ramakrishna with homeopathy opined that Ramakrishna owed his mental illness to bodily origin. Dr. Sarkar resented Ramakrishna being called an incarnation. As Ramakrishna's name spread, many people came to see him, among them Narendranath who changed his name later to Vivekananda.

Ramakrishna revived the worship of several deities instead of worshipping one God. Vivekananda with his oratorical skills and command over the English language built a large following around the monastic order of Ramakrishna Mission. This was a great set back to the Renaissance movement in India as the influence of Vivekananda gave a new respectability to the philosophy of *Vedanta* and Gandhi's promotion of the *Bhagavadgita* led to a reinforcement of the scriptural sanction of many beliefs.

As we have seen earlier, Gandhi was not the first Hindu to introduce \*religion into politics: Tilak had a great role in this. The Hindu Mahasabha was formally inaugurated in 1907. Savarkar, a disciple initially of Tilak, strove to convert the Muslims back into Hinduism, after purification. However, the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha parted company very soon. In 1923, even as the Congress held its conference, the Hindu Mahasabha held its own in Belgaum. By 1930, the Hindu Mahasabha fielded its own candidates against the Congress in the elections. By now, Savarkar had given a new definition to Hindus: all those born on Indian soil were Hindus. As president of the Hindu Mahasabha he alienated the Muslims though he could not consolidate the Hindus as he too advocated Harijans' entry into temples and called for an end to untouchability.

After Independence which came with partition of the subcontinent on religious basis, the Sabha took up the slogan of *Akhanda Bharathi* and called for a merger of Pakistan and India; reconversion of Muslims into Hindus and a ban on cow slaughter. Compulsory military training and revocation of the Hindu

Marriage Act were called for; the Hindu Mahasabha slogans were Hinduisation of politics; running of Hindu religion on military lines and Hindu socialism.

The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (R.S.S.) was founded by Dr. Isav Balram Hegdewar in 1925 to consolidate the Hindus in the wake of the Hindu-Muslim clashes. During communal clashes, the RSS took care of the Hindus. It declared that it had nothing to do with politics and that it was a cultural organisation. Initially the organisation's goals were shrouded in secrecy and they were made public only after the organisation was banned, following the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee's *Jan Sangh* was a political organ of militant Hindus. The organisation gained respectability through electoral alliances forged to counter Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorial rule and earlier when they had supported the government of India during the India-Pakistan war. In its present incarnation as the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Jan Sangh is a force in the country indicating to us all to what extent anti-Renaissance voices have gained strength in the country. Formation of political parties for the rights of the majority Hindus, fuelling hatred towards the minorities in the guise of protecting 'Hindu Culture', advocating the use of religion in politics; declaration of the State's interest as the ultimate aim of all endeavours, even if that goes against the Individual: these are obvious signs of a fascist tendency that M.N. Roy predicted and warned us against more than 55 years ago.

Ambedkar, the father of the Indian Constitution was another individual who fearlessly fought against Hindu domination. Born in an untouchable family, Ambedkar grew into a towering personality in the Indian political firmament. In the context of opposition from religious traditionalists, he argued that there must be a common civil code for all citizens. Ambedkar resigned as Union law minister to protest against several

regiments in the legislature who prevented the Hindu code bill from becoming law. Nehru was guilty of pandering to the traditionalists. After quitting the Nehru cabinet, Ambedkar acted on his earlier conclusion that Harijans, Girijans and backward castes, so long suppressed, cannot be assured of equality as long as they remained part of Hinduism. He founded the Republican Party in Nagpur on October 14, 1956. On that day alone he converted seventy five thousand people to Buddhism. The government, dominated by Hindus, reacted by denying the converted Harijans the constitutionally guaranteed preferential treatment. Only sustained agitation in Maharashtra could do them justice.

However, Ambedkar wanted to rectify the blunders of Hinduism by replacing it with another religion. Ambedkar neglected the fact that religion and human values do not go together. There is, however, no doubt that Ambedkar as the architect of the Indian Constitution and as a scholarly critic of the Hindu religion took forward the Renaissance movement in India.

However, it was M.N. Roy - about whom several other authors in this book wrote - who was the most modern of Renaissance men of this century. With his transcontinental experience and his vision of a cosmopolitan humanist *order*, Roy's *theoretical articulations and the practical possibilities that stem therefrom are still relevant*, as *sadly*, many of his *political prophecies* and his worst fears are coming true.