

THE RADICAL HUMANIST



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A.B. Shah (1920-81)

Amritlal Bhikkubai Shah was atheist, rationalist and founded the Indian Secular Society. He was a 'Royist' and an outstanding critic of communalism and obscurantism in India. Shah stood for human values and freedom mainly devoted to the problems of Muslims in India

Eternal Vigilance Necessary to Protect Our Democracy

Mahi Pal Singh

Religion and Morality

N.D. Pancholi

Ethics and Politics

M. N. Roy

Milestone in History of Indo-Naga Relations

Nandita Haksar

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Dr. Usha Ramanathan

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Founder Editor:

M.N.Roy

Advisors:

Dr. R.M. Pal
Dr. Narisetti Innaiah

Editor:

Mahi Pal Singh

Editorial Board:

Ramesh Awasthi, Dr. Deepavali Sen,
Vidya Bhushan Rawat, Qurban Ali,
N.D. Pancholi (Ex-officio Member)

Publisher and Printer:

N.D. Pancholi

Send articles and reports to:

Mahi Pal Singh at G-3/617, Shalimar Garden
Extension I, Rose Park, Sahibabad,
Ghaziabad-201005. (U.P.) Ph. 09312206414

or E-mail them to:

theradicalhumanist@gmail.com or
mahipalsinghrh@gmail.com

Please send Subscription/Donation Cheques in favour of

THE RADICAL HUMANIST to:

N.D. Pancholi, G-3/617, Shalimar Garden Extn. I
Rose Park, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad-201005 (U.P.)
Ph. 0120-2648691, (M) 9811099532
E-mail : ndpancholi44@gmail.com

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Editorial:

Eternal Vigilance Necessary to Protect Our Democracy

Mahi Pal Singh

Within 15 months of coming to power at the centre, the Narendra Modi government has amply shown its true colours. If we compare what Narendra Modi, the Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP, and the party's President Amit Shah, had promised to the voters with what the government has done so far, the wide difference between the promises and the implementation comes out clearly. Mr. Modi had made a tall claim to bring back black money stashed in foreign accounts and put in every individual's account an amount of fifteen lakhs of Rupees each within something like three months has already been repudiated by Amit Shah who has truthfully admitted it to be a mere 'poll slogan', which clearly shows that they do not mind raising false slogans deliberately before the elections only to be forgotten and rejected after coming to power. The Prime Minister has also forgotten his promise of bringing down prices of vegetables and other essential commodities. Contrary to his 'poll slogan', the prices of vegetables and cereals have risen by 50% to 100% during the last few months, the prices of onions having reached, on an average, Rs. 60/- to 80/- per Kg. and 'dal Arhar' is being sold at an unprecedented high price of Rs. 150/- per Kg. and the government has done pretty little so far to control the price rise. The Prime Minister's vow, or slogan should we call it, 'Na khaonga na khane doonga' (I will neither eat nor let others eat) has come to be true not for weeding out corruption for which it was made, but for removing vegetables and cereals from the plates of the consumers. A frantic effort was also made by the government to snatch farm lands from the possession of the farmers by amending the Land Acquisition Act, passed by the earlier

UPA government in 2013 with the express consent of the BJP, so that land acquisition, to hand it over to the builders and industrialists in the name of Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects, could become easier to the detriment of the farmers. The government was so desperate to pass and implement the new law that it brought central ordinance three times when it failed to get the bill through parliament. Had the new law been passed, farmer suicides, which are already very high, would have attained new heights with more farmers losing their only source of sustenance. Yet the same government claims to be farmer friendly. The government was so adamant on passing the amendment bill that it proposed to bring in a fourth ordinance but the move was abandoned after its efforts were strongly opposed by all the opposition parties in parliament and the farmers were agitating against the move throughout the country. The BJP, which had come to power on the basis of only 31% votes, could have hardly afforded the erosion of farmers' votes and still hope to come to power again.

After its failure, at least so far, to get the new anti-farmer Land Acquisition Bill passed by the parliament, now the government plans to bring in a new pro-factory owner and anti-labour law. The government plans to overhaul the 67-year-old Factories Act to allow two different departments of the same factory to be counted as two separate companies. A factory employing less than 40 people will not be treated as a factory. The move will encourage factory owners to list different branches or departments as separate factories to bring down the number of employees to less than 40 so that the new factories would be kept out of the purview of the

Factories Act and they would enjoy many relaxations, including in their social security obligations. The irony is that the labour ministry which is supposed to safeguard the interests and welfare of the labour has prepared this anti-labour proposal.

The record of the Narendra Modi government on the education front is also deplorable. It has done nothing to send every child upto the age of 14 to school, as mandated by the Free and Compulsory Education to all children upto the age of 14 Act having been passed by the national parliament long ago. On the contrary, those already going to schools are being taught through the school text books that multiple rape and murder accused Asaram Bapu, a self-proclaimed Godman who is in jail, is a 'great saint' and finds himself listed in the company of Buddha, Mother Teresa and Guru Nanak only because he had supported the BJP during the elections. "Hitler lent dignity and prestige to the German government within a short time, establishing a strong administrative set-up," appears in a chapter titled 'Internal Achievements of the Nazis' in a state text book used as a guide for children aged 13-15 years old. And those who belong to the RSS and hold such obscurantist and anti democratic views are being made heads of educational institutions, including institutions of higher learning.

On the front of human rights, the record of the NDA government so far is worse than that of the UPA. The latter had at least passed the Right to Information Act in 2005 which empowered the citizens to access government records to find out where their tax money was being spent and how the government was functioning. The BJP talked of transparency and accountability in public life when it was in opposition. Now the BJP-led central government has told the Supreme Court, in reply to a PIL filed by Prashant Bhushan, a noted lawyer and human rights activist, that it

was against the idea of bringing political parties under the Right to Information Act arguing that the move will adversely impact their "internal working." It does not want people to know from where the party gets the funds for the elections, which run into thousands of crores.

In another bizarre U-turn, the BJP led government has strongly supported the Congress initiated UID/Aadhar card project of bringing in every citizen's personal details under the scanner of the government which it had opposed earlier on the argument that the data could be easily misused. In a case pertaining to the project, the government argued that the 'right to privacy' could not be considered a fundamental right. In relation to privacy as a fundamental right the Supreme Court itself observed - It worries the court that reading the 1954 judgment in MP Sharma's case and the 1963 judgment in Kharak Singh "literally" and accepting it as "the law of this country", would denude "the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India and more particularly right to liberty under Article 21" of "vigour and vitality".

The government also does not like anybody to raise a dissenting voice. As civil society organizations oppose anti-people policies of the government, as they have been doing in the past, the government has cracked its whip on them in the name of foreign funding though in many earlier cases the judiciary has declared its moves as illegal and unconstitutional. In a new move, rights activists are being denied access to meeting halls and other places where people can discuss various issues as the government fears that such meetings would foster dissent. In a recent case in Gujarat, which has a BJP government, the Mehdi Nawaz Jung Hall at Ahmedabad which was earlier widely used by civil rights organisations has been made out of bounds by the Gujarat Governor O P Kohli for "any political activity or any activity against the

government," on the basis of an "oral decision" by Governor Kohli. The decision has been strongly opposed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties whose state General Secretary, Gautam Thaker, strongly criticized the decision saying, "I think it is a move to stifle the voice of dissent. It is an attempt to suppress the freedom of speech and expression of civil society."

As if this is not enough, leading rationalist scholars and anti-superstition activists are being targeted and killed by the intolerant forces of the Hindutva outfits who choose to interpret even mere discussions, debates and statements about Hindu practices and rituals as an insult to Hinduism, and resort to threatening and attacking speakers and writers. Earlier, leading rationalist and anti-superstition activist Dr. Narendra Dabholkar was murdered in Pune on 20th August 2013, and left leader and outspoken critic of Hindutva, Shri Govind Pansare was murdered in Kolhapur on 20th February 2015. The latest murder of Prof. M. M. Kalburgi, a renowned rationalist scholar and former Vice-Chancellor of Hampi University, Karnataka hailing from Dharwad who was shot dead on 30th August 2015, along with the earlier two murders, is suspected to have been committed by right wing religious extremists. This belief gets credence because the Co-convenor of the

Bajrang Dal's Bantwal cell, Bhuvith Shetty, welcomed the assassination of M. M. Kalburgi. Such right wing Hindutva elements are emboldened and are increasingly coming out openly against persons who are merely critical of Hinduism because they are getting the tacit support of the BJP government at the centre. To what extent their opposition can be allowed - to 'gali' or 'goli', 'abuse' or 'bullet' - has to be considered by the society as a whole. If this trend is not checked and turned back immediately, the people of India will lose their right to freedom of speech and expression, and India's secular democracy will turn into fascism.

Showing their concern for civil liberties and the future of India in view of the bad record of the Modi government, leading US academics, most of them Indians working in the US, have in a statement urged Silicon Valley to be cautious in dealing with Modi government when he goes there in the second half of September 2015. This shows that not only the activists living in India but also those Indians living abroad who love their country and the democratic values equally perceive a danger to both of them under the rule of Modi dispensation. To save them both we all have to be eternally vigilant and oppose every undemocratic and anti-people move by the Modi government.

Condolence over the Sad Demise of G. Lavanam

Indian Renaissance Institute is deeply grieved over the sad demise of noted atheist and social reformer G. Lavanam who expired on 14th August at Vijaywada. At the age of 12 he left his studies and joined his parents in the freedom struggle. As a member of Atheist Centre founded by his parents namely Gora and Saraswathi in 1940 he made significant contribution to the promotion of atheism, rationalism and scientific thinking in the country. It is worth remembering that he was born at a time when his parents were engaged in Salt Satyagrah (1930) along with Gandhi ji and therefore he was named 'Lavanam' -Telgu word for 'salt'. His demise is a great loss to the atheist and humanist movement in the country. Indian Renaissance Institute expresses its sincere condolence to the family and the Atheist Centre.

N.D. Pancholi, Secretary, Indian Renaissance Institute

Articles and Features:

Religion and Morality

N.D. Pancholi

Some time back my friend Shastri Ramchandaran had circulated a quote attributed to Pope Francis in a post on his 'facebook' which reads:

"It is not necessary to believe in God to be a good person. In a way the traditional notion of God is outdated. One can be spiritual but not religious. It is not necessary to go to Church and give money - for many, nature can be a church. Some of the best people in history did not believe in God, while some of the worst deed were done in his name."

Ramchandaran was surprised and thought it incredible coming from Pope. But Pope did make such a remark. I shared the post saying, "Pope Francis must be appreciated for what he said. He is endorsing what we the atheists claim that it is not necessary to believe in God or to be religious to be moral."

Divergent comments came. Some appreciated and some disagreed. One commentator questioned, "Where do atheists get their morality from?" Jay N Jayaram, another of my friends, replied, "From laws of the land, from notions such as ethics and decency." Jayaram was again confronted with the retort: "Why care about the law? Why not be clever and steal/rob and get away? How does an atheist know?"

This conversation made me to write this article.

At the first instance I would like to state that I belong to the group called 'Royists' who generally believe in the work and philosophy propounded by M.N.Roy (1887-1954). As a result of his vast experience in revolutionary

movements within India and outside, and also having worked with Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky in the Communist International for several years, he, towards the end of his life, developed a philosophy called "The Radical Humanism." it is summarized in 22 thesis. In this philosophy the basic values of human civilization i.e. freedom, rationalism and morality are traced to the man's biological evolution and it is believed that 'the quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human progress'. The source of morality is traced to man's biological evolution. One of its theses says, "Rising out of the background of the law-governed physical nature, the human being is essentially rational." Reason is a biological property. One becomes 'moral' not because he is religious but because he is 'rational'.

It is generally supposed that the morality of a people is grounded in their religion. The falsity of this view is, however, borne out by the frequent riots in which a large number of innocent people are mercilessly killed in the name of religion. The history of the world is full of religious wars- wars between Muslims and Christians, between Protestants and Catholics, between Hindus and Muslims, between Muslims and Jews. Large-scale deception and oppression of the people has also taken place in the name of religion. The religion being the source of morality is a myth exploded by history.

The research shows that rudiments of moral behavior can be found in several animal species. Survival being the basic urge of the entire biological world, co-operative living becomes essential for survival and growth and this

generates moral sensitiveness in human beings. On the plane of human consciousness, the biological impulse of mutual sympathy, necessary for co-operative living, takes the form of moral values. That is the real source of morality.

Unable to understand the causes of various natural phenomena such as wind, storm and rain, human beings attributed them in olden days to a number of gods and goddesses. In course of time, the idea of one God emerged, a higher power which would protect and sustain the man.

Mirza Ghalib, the famous poet, is reported to have stated in poetic words in one of his poem written in Persian language meaning thereby that 'man went out in search of truth and during his search, when he became tired, he set up temples, mosques and churches.'

"Freedom being the supreme value of 'human existence', V.M. Tarkunde, a well known 'Royist', in his book 'The Radical Humanism' asks "whether man can be free and moral at the same time? Can an individual act morally when he is entirely free and subject to no form of compulsion? If an individual cannot act morally without compromising his freedom, then freedom and morality are mutually inconsistent. One form of coercion is exercised by the machinery of law and enforcement which punishes a person who acts contrary to the prevailing moral code in so far as it is embodied in law. Another form of coercion is exercised by religion which teaches that a person who acts contrary to moral norms will be punished after his death. The question is whether a person can be moral of his own volition, without the fear of either temporal or spiritual punishment. This

question can be answered by raising a counter question. Can a person who acts in accordance with moral norms, not voluntarily but because of some form of compulsion, be regarded as a moral individual at all? Can conduct which is not impelled by moral sense, but which accords with the prevailing moral code, be described as moral conduct? Does for instance, a person acts morally when he desists from committing a theft because of the fear of detection and legal punishment or the fear of punishment in hell after death?" (1) Tarkunde says that the answer must be in negative. The conduct of a person cannot be regarded as moral unless he acts of his own volition and without any temporal or spiritual coercion. A person who acts under coercion does not act morally. Moral sense cannot be generated by force or pressure. Only a free individual is capable of moral conduct.

During the course of biological evolution man has realized that co-operative social living is necessary for human survival and instincts such as sympathy, compassion and sociability which are natural attributes of the mind are the source of moral sense of human beings. Kindness, truthfulness, honesty, sense of justice and equality are moral values because they promote cooperative social existence. The instincts of anger and self aggression are also developed during biological evolution but since these instincts are in conflict with social impulses, reason teaches the man to keep them under check for harmonious cooperative social existence. Thus morality becomes enlightened self interest.

I would end here quoting Epicurus: "I want to be moral, not to please the gods, but to please myself."

(1) Chapter 'Secular Morality' in 'The Radical Humanism' by V.M.Tarkunde.

Milestone in History of Indo-Naga Relations: Naga Perspective of the Peace Accord

Nandita Haksar

On August 3, 2015 the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim or the NSCN (IM) signed an agreement. Although the contents of the Accord have not been made public, it is being hailed as an important milestone in the history of Indo-Naga relations.

The Accord was signed by R.N. Ravi, senior Intelligence officer, on behalf of the Government of India and by Isak Swu and Thuingaleng Muiva on behalf of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN). So, is this Accord going to be, as Prime Minister Modi promised, "a shining example of what we can achieve when we deal with each other in a spirit of equality and respect, trust and confidence; when we seek to understand concerns and try to address aspirations; when we leave the path of dispute and take the high road of dialogue. It is a lesson and an inspiration in our troubled world"?

Thuingaleng Muivah was much more subdued in his speech. He reminded the Indians of the promise made to the Naga delegation by Mahatma Gandhi when they met him on July 19, 1947 to express their aspirations. And the Indian leader assured them:

"Nagas have every right to be independent. We do not want to live under the domination of the British and they are now leaving us. I want you to feel that the Naga Hills are mine just as much as they are yours, but if you say, 'it is not mine' then the matter must stop there. I believe in the brotherhood of man, but I do not believe in force or forced unions. If you do not wish to join the Union of India nobody will force you to do that."

Muivah also remembered the number of people, both Nagas and Indians, who had died in the course of the six-decade-long insurgency. It was a long journey that had brought him to the negotiation table in 1997. He had spent 27 years

in the jungles of Myanmar as a revolutionary, a guerilla fighter who had successfully led several groups of Nagas to China, through thick jungles of Burma and on many occasions he had to face the Burmese Army and the Indian Army. There were times they had marched with torn clothes and not eaten for days. He had kept up the spirit of the younger men and become a legend in his own lifetime.

Every year the Naga nationalists celebrate August 14 as their Independence Day. This was the day in 1947 the Naga National Council had declared themselves to be an independent country. By 1952 Angami Zapu Phizo had formed the Naga Federal Government and the Naga Federal Army. Muivah had been active in the NNC from the beginning but in 1975 had felt betrayed when senior members had signed an Accord with the Government of India in Shillong during the Emergency. The Shillong Accord had caused deep divisions within the Naga society and now as he stood to sign the new Accord Muivah must have prayed that the history of this Accord would be different.

This was the question in the minds of many Nagas. Had the Indians taken advantage of the fact that Isak Swu was critically ill and in hospital to put pressure on the NSCN? Both the Nagas and the Indians knew that these were the two leaders who commanded respect among the Nagas. If they did not reach an Accord there would be no one who had their stature. It was the intelligence agencies who had been responsible for creating so many divisions within the Naga underground and now they had realised the need to have one representative organisation with whom they could negotiate.

The NSCN (IM) had made great efforts to understand the legal and constitutional

implications of the provisions of the Accord. They had even got a team of international legal experts to help them understand the consequences of each word. But ultimately the problem is political; much will depend on the political vision that informs the final Accord.

The strength of the Naga national movement is its celebration of pluralism and democracy. Each Naga tribe, however small or big, had equal representation in the major Naga organisations, such as the all-powerful Naga Students Federation, Naga Hoho, the body representing the Naga elders, the United Naga Council and the traditional organisations.

Muivah mentioned the fact that the Accord is based on the recognition of the uniqueness of the Nagas. What is the basis of this uniqueness? It is the very rich cultural diversity and also the bio-diversity and abundance of natural resources. Any Accord will have to deal with these two major issues.

The Indian Prime Minister said: "My relationship with the North-East has been deep. I have travelled to Nagaland on many occasions. I have been deeply impressed by the rich and diverse culture and the unique way of life of the Naga people. It makes not only our nation, but also the world a more beautiful place."

It seemed rather ironic that a Prime Minister, ideologically committed to the promotion of a culturally homogeneous India, was talking of inclusive democracy and hailing the unique culture of the Nagas.

Much of the Naga culture has been destroyed by the evangelising Baptist missionaries who came to the Naga areas during British rule. They destroyed the old institutions and the administrators, anthropologists stole Naga cultural property which can be seen in museums in Western countries.

The Indian education system further helped to erode the Naga culture and destroy the languages; with no place for Naga history in the

school textbooks. The effect of this erosion of Naga cultural identity was brought out in a play recently staged at the National School of Drama by a student from Nagaland, Temjenzungba. It was staged on July 11, 2015. The play was called "Land Where Life is Good". If the play is judged on merits it may not qualify as an exceptional one; it had significance which went far beyond the mere aesthetics.

The small black brochure published for the occasion gives the synopsis of the play:

"The play talks about the various identities that are covered up in the blanket of a single identity called 'Indian'. It tries to look at the confusion that this exercise of assimilation for nationhood has created in the minds of the present generation, especially in the context of Nagaland. Does there exist a solo identity of a person or are we today the product of many identities? What is authentic-the old or the new? What are the bits of identity that we choose to hold on to and why do we let go of other bits?"

Both the Indian and Nagas have to be equally committed to a vision of society which celebrates cultural diversity and looks upon it as a resource for development, not an obstacle to be destroyed. Modi's vision of development, which is reflected in the debates around the Land Bill, would spell disaster for the future of the Naga society. However, the growing religious fundamentalism among the Nagas and the rise of a middle class which has benefited from the globalised world would become an ally in Modi's plans for corporatising development.

Isak Swu and Muivah have provided an opportunity for the Nagas and Indians to think deeply about these issues. It is up to us to seize it or let the moment pass...

Courtesy **Mainstream**, VOL LIII No 34 August 15, 2015

The author, as a lawyer, has represented Nagas in courts in India and abroad. She has written extensively about the Indo-Naga conflict and been involved in the Indo-Naga peace process.

Militarist Diplomacy: India Revives Pakistan in Kashmir

Seema Mustafa

The Odd Pakistan flag might increase in numbers because of shortsighted diplomacy

NEW DELHI: The gyrations---passing for diplomacy---over the last several days has done extensive damage to Indian foreign policy. In the short term the gentlemen in the Prime Ministers Office might be congratulating themselves for having 'taught Pakistan a lesson" on terrorism, but the more discerning individuals in the government including the Ministry of External Affairs have probably realised the folly of a militaristic approach that at the end, has not yielded even one 'credit' for India.

Look at what happened to understand what has happened. There was no back channel established. And bilateral relations with Pakistan, always sensitive and fragile at the best of times, were used for grandstanding aided and abetted by an equally ignorant media that lives off the moment. No back channels were established. The result was that issues like Kashmir and Terrorism, the 'core' for both Pakistan and India respectively, were left to be battled out in the spotlights.

Of course Pakistan had lost the first round in Ufa insofar as its military and public opinion was concerned when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his foreign secretary agreed on a document where it was clearly stated that the National Security Advisors would meet on terrorism. Kashmir was left out of the document, and the meetings between the BSF and Pakistan Rangers as well as between the Director General Military Operations of both sides were all to be about peace on the border, and ceasefire violations. Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj was right in pointing out that the NSA talks were on Terrorism and not Kashmir in the specific sense of the word. And that Sharif, faced with flak on

his return from Ufa, was forced to bring Kashmir back on the agenda which was acceptable to India as part of the overall composite dialogue, but not for the purpose of the NSA talks.

Having said this, governments in power are expected to be directed by a sense of continuity. And once it was clear---as it was immediately after the Ufa meet---that Sharif and his government in Pakistan would not be able to move away from Kashmir, at least in the public realm, India could and should have used the back channels to establish the rules of the tango as has been done any number of times in the past.

But first the question that New Delhi had to ask itself and answer was: Do we want the talks at all? If no, then of course all that has happened in the past days is very much on line. But it could have been achieved without the dangerous fallout that will be discussed in this report, by a cancellation at the onset. With again an agreed on excuse that could have alleviated the repercussions on Kashmir for India, and saved face instead of the gyrations that ended in a tense stand off, acrimony, and a flow of bad blood.

If yes, then all that has happened is exactly what bad diplomacy is about. From both sides but one would tend to blame India more as in the past, being a bigger country and a democracy to boot, it is the governments of India that have really charted out the course of bilateral relations. Any diplomat will confirm this.

So all that could go wrong did, either deliberately or involuntarily it is for the governments to say. one, no back channels were established; two, late responses by both sides amidst heavy fist swinging; three, accusations

and over the top allegations; four, accusations followed by ultimatums on the eve of the talks - a recipe for disaster as it hardened positions, led to militaristic posturing, and allowed the hardline constituencies on both sides to subsume government. Perhaps that was the intention as experts and citizens believe, perhaps not as the governments insist.

So what has gone wrong for India? In any diplomatic initiative, the success is determined in what is gained. India has certainly not gained an inch on terrorism, as the dossiers, the arguments, the rhetoric is just a repeat of all that has happened before. There was nothing that was said or given to the Pakistan government by New Delhi that has not happened before by other governments, including BJP's own Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. So not a word was said now on terrorism, not a fact more was provided by the government, it was all reiteration in the public space. And this reiteration, strident and backed by loud media, took place just before the NSA talks when usually both governments---in the past---lower their tones, and actually work to ensure the talks do take place. So at the end there was nothing really gained, as Pakistan clearly was not listening any more than it had listened in the past, and the result was that eventually the talks were called off. By whom? - is immaterial, though somehow this had become a moot point between the governments of India and Pakistan for some strange reason.

Nothing gained on terrorism, except saying what we have said before. And what is known to the world. But in the process major losses will inevitable result in Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir Valley under the young generation had moved out of Pakistan's yoke for the first time since independence. This for even intelligence chaps handling Kashmir, was seen as a major achievement and a window of opportunity to win over 'hearts and minds' with an extensive

reaching out, that was not limited just to economic packages. There was a visible rejection of Pakistan, and while the alienation with India had not ended, there were many strategic advantages for New Delhi in the former. The foremost being of course that the space in the Valley for Pakistan was now severely restricted, with the younger generation hostile and angry.

The Kashmiri separatist leaders were also divided at that point in time, but bad politics by earlier governments had virtually pushed some of them who had been looking at New Delhi for solutions to the Islamabad camp. However, the pro-Pakistan forces in Kashmir were quieter than ever before simply because of the ground pressure that was not willing to listen to that position being articulated any longer. Protests carried banners of 'no India, no Pakistan' with considerable concern in Islamabad about its dwindling constituency in the Valley. The mood had swung, but while some of the more astute officials had taken note of the fact, they were unable to convince the Congress government and then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to strike home while the iron was hot. In that reach out through aggressive pro-people schemes that were able to answer at least some of the aspirations of the younger generation in Kashmir.

The year 2010 saw a large number of deaths in Kashmir with over 120 young boys killed by the police in a matter of weeks. This was a turning point for the young insofar as India was concerned, in that the hostility reached new levels. However, the anger towards Pakistan remained and this was seen as a plus point by those trying to persuade the Indian political class to open doors and not shut them. The separatist leaders too were keen to begin a dialogue but the Manmohan Singh government was unable to respond, remaining under the pressure of the BJP that was in opposition at that time. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah proved to be not just

incapable, but also disinterested in the state he had been elected with great hope, to govern.

The BJP has reversed the clock entirely. And with its diplomacy this time around has given the Kashmir floor entirely to Pakistan. Islamabad was able to use this to its advantage, with NSA Sartaj Aziz raising the pitch substantially at his press conference just before Minister Swaraj spoke out on terrorism. The message sent out to Kashmir was that Pakistan was willing to jettison the dialogue on Kashmir, first when the foreign secretary level talks were cancelled because of the invitation by the High Commissioner to India to the Hurriyat leaders; and this time because of the government of India's refusal to discuss the issue despite it being on the composite dialogue.

In plain language the message read as, "Pakistan is committed to Kashmir. Pakistan will not have talks with India without Kashmir. Pakistan will be back on the international stage raising the issue of Kashmir. Pakistan will not give up on the people of Kashmir or its leadership which is the Hurriyat."

All that New Delhi had claimed through the diplomacy of peace where it had actually silenced Islamabad, and prevented it from posturing on Kashmir, has been lost in one stroke of amazing poor diplomacy. One of the reasons why the Kashmiris were angry with Islamabad was its failure to involve them or even at times speak for them. Except for the occasional meetings between the Kashmiri separatists and leaders from Islamabad---that had yielded little but a cup of tea over the years---in the view of the ordinary Kashmiri, Pakistan had done little for the 'cause.' In fact it was not even insisting they be included as the third party.

Now even the last has been handed over to Pakistan on a platter by the Indian government.

Minister Swaraj kept referring to the Kashmiris being brought in as the 'third party' by Pakistan when actually Aziz was doing little more than the established tokenism of meeting the Hurriyat leaders as a token gesture. This had been allowed by earlier governments after an assessment that it meant little in real terms, and did not strengthen Pakistan's clout in Kashmir, in fact quite the opposite. But this time Minister Swaraj insisted that NSA Aziz was bringing them in as a 'third party' when this was far from the case.

Pakistan has been revived in Kashmir, and its clout now will again be very visible. The Pakistan flags that were being flown as little more than an irritant till recently, will be waved in the Valley with more fervour and support now. This is a given, whether the BJP likes it or not. Also as Aziz said, Kashmir would be on top of its international agenda and that it will raise it from the rooftops as it were. India had been able to lower this rhetoric as well with the carrot of the composite dialogue that both countries had placed as a desired objective. Now with the hardline evident from India, Pakistan can be expected to pull out all the plugs and internationalise the issue of Kashmir as never before. This will get it more support within the Valley that has clearly turned and is looking at Islamabad with renewed interest.

Meanwhile the Government of India can busy itself answering the question whether all this will foster terrorism, or defeat it? Loud talk, threat of war, macho declarations have never defeated the armed non-state actor as the US and Israel's policy in West Asia has proven; it is talks, dialogue, peace that isolates and defeats terrorism as history has proven.

(Courtesy: **The Citizen**)

Modi has a lot to hide in Riots Case

Kuldip Nayar

The G.T. Nanavati-headed commission on Gujarat killings has reportedly given a clean chit to Chief Minister Narendra Modi. I have seen how Justice Nanavati evaded naming the person behind the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi after reconstructing an impartial account. When I met him after the report to pinpoint the person responsible, he shrugged and said that everybody knew who he was. This is true, but coming from him, as it did, in black and white, would have made all the difference.

The head of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), R.K. Raghavan, investigating 10 cases on the Supreme Court instructions, appears to have allowed his ideology get the better of him, although he has been an outstanding police officer. Even the court has not commented on Modi, although it had all the details before it. By sending to the trial court the case of former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri, who along with 69 people were burnt or butchered alive in Ahmedabad's Gulburga Society, the Supreme Court passed the buck. This is the same Supreme Court which said about Modi that Nero was fiddling when Rome was burning.

Sanjeev Bhatt said in an affidavit that Modi instructed officers to let Hindus vent their anger on Muslims.

The sort of report that the SIT has submitted can be assessed from the evidence of two retired judges it has ignored. Both had interviewed the then Home Minister Haren Pandya, who was murdered because he had started speaking the truth. According to the two judges, P.B. Sawant, who was on the Supreme Court bench, and Justice H. Suresh of the Bombay High Court, Pandya told them that the Chief Minister had directed the police to let the Hindus vent their

anger during the riots. Both judges were members of the People's Tribunal which held Modi guilty. That there is not a single FIR filed against the Chief Minister is not a plus point. He had created so much fear in the minds of the victims that they did not dare to go to the police station, hardly safe for Muslims at the time.

To incite people, Modi also arranged to parade through Ahmedabad's streets the bodies of the 49 karsevaks who died in the Godhra train burning. This had dire repercussions. Even today Muslims in Gujarat generally confine themselves to their localities fearing that they may be attacked. They have not forgotten how some 2,000 of their community were killed 10 years ago, between 27 February and 1 March 2002, and how several thousands were ousted from their hearth and home. Some Muslims have tried to return to Gujarat, but have found that they are not welcome in the land their forefathers lived for ages.

The horror of Gujarat has shaken the nation. Yet, no amount of condemnation by the public and the media has made Modi relent, much less force

him to apologise. He has refused to say sorry and has gone about arranging the humbug of sadbhavana (goodwill) sittings. Modi has a lot to hide. Specific instances of murders, when reconstructed or proved, prove that the state plotted to ethnic cleansing.

Brave police officers like Sanjeev Bhatt have told the truth, even at the risk of annoying Modi, who has unleashed his repressive, one-sided administration against Bhatt. Even the Gujarat

High Court has not come to Bhatt's aid. Bhatt said in an affidavit that Modi instructed officers to let Hindus vent their anger on Muslims.

Hats off to Teesta Setalvad who has stood firm to expose Modi and his police's acts of omission and commission. I endorse her walking out of a television programme where the anchor, ignorant of facts, was indulging in an inquisition, not questioning.

In the case of Sikhs, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi have offered their apologies for the 1984 riots. Modi and the BJP have not done that. In fact, he is the party's candidate for prime ministership for the general elections of 2014. BJP chief Nitin Gadkari cannot stop praising him.

Certain tragedies make such deep furrows in our minds that the time does not lessen the pain or the anger when the perpetrators go scot-free, the Gujarat and anti-Sikh riots being cases in point.

The BJP and the Congress do not understand why there is so much umbrage against the anti-Muslim and anti-Sikh riots years after they took place. The reason is, there is practically no action against those people who bloodied their hands. The BJP has saved them in Gujarat and the Congress in Delhi and elsewhere. Worse, the parties have protected the administrations that planned and executed the riots.

(**Kuldip Nayar** is a veteran syndicated columnist catering to around 80 newspapers and journals in 14 languages in India & abroad. kuldipnayar09@gmail.com)

Congratulations to Nandita Haksar

For the award of Degree of LL.D. (Honoris Causa) by NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

Citizens For Democracy congratulates Nandita Haksar for having been conferred the degree of LL.D (Honoris Causa) by the NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad on 16th August 2015. The citation rightly states:

"A self-declared product of the women's liberation movement and the human rights movement of the 1970s and '80s, Ms. Nandita's career has been awe-inspiring in its breadth and its single-minded focus on building a tolerant and inclusive nation. Ms. Nandita has shown us that advocacy is not about taking on cases, but causes. It is about speaking with those whose voices have been muffled, gagged or silenced....."

It is heartening to note that for the first time a state university in its 'citation' has given due recognition to the valiant struggle waged by a human rights activist to get justice for villagers "who were facing the brunt of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958 (AFSPA) in the army's counter-insurgency operation....."

It is a rare honour and our hearts are gladdened. We find very few people of such unflinching conviction and commitment. May she live long and give hope to those struggling for their human dignity!

(The link of citation and her acceptance speech: <http://nalsar.ac.in/sites/default/files/Nandita%20Haksar%20Citation.pdf>)

N.D. Pancholi, General Secretary, Citizens For Democracy

Indira Gandhi and Narendra Modi's Common Pursuit: A Pliant Judiciary

Prabhakar Sinha

Indira Gandhi considered an Independent judiciary a thorn in her flesh, and its independence as its fang. She wanted to defang it so that she could rule like an absolute Monarch free from any constraint. She even found the Constitution as an undesirable impediment and wanted to mould it to make it subservient to her imperial will. To her even the Rajya Sabha appeared as a nuisance.

When the Supreme Court rejected her government's claim that Parliament possessed **unlimited** power to amend the Constitution (by a majority of one in a 13 member bench, and held that Parliament could amend any part of the Constitution including the fundamental rights but not the 'basic features' of the constitution she retaliated by superseding Justice Shelat, Justice Hegde and Justice Grover for their audacity to stand in her way and appointed Justice A.N. Ray, the fourth person in the order of seniority as the Chief Justice of India. The seven judges in the case (Keshavanand Bharti, 1973) saved India and Indian democracy. By superseding them, she gave a stern warning to the Judges to either pay heed to her imperial wishes or pay the price. It did yield the desired result during the Emergency when the scared Supreme Court held that during the Emergency even if a policeman killed someone for personal reason or someone was detained or tortured, the Courts could not entertain his writ petition against violation of his right to life or personal liberty. The only judge Mr H.R. Khanna, who gave a dissenting judgement was not made the Chief Justice of India when his turn came.

In 1993, the absolute power enjoyed by the Union Government to appoint the judges of the

Supreme Court and the High Courts and transfer the judges of the High Courts (which had been brazen facedly misused) was taken away by the apex court and vested in a Collegium consisting of the Chief Justice of India and three senior-most judges of the apex court. Modi government has amended the Constitution to create the National Judicial Appointment Commission consisting of the Chief Justice of India and two senior-most judges of the Supreme Court, the Union Law Minister and two eminent persons to be appointed by a committee consisting of the P.M., the CJI and the leader of the largest party in the Lok Sabha. Initially, it was provided that if the recommendation of the Collegium was referred back by the government for reconsideration, its reconsidered recommendation would be binding on the government only if it was made unanimously. Thus Modiji wanted to exercise his veto through the Law Minister. It was his ploy to ensure that nobody could be appointed to the Supreme Court or the High Courts without the blessing of the P.M. Due to fierce opposition this provision had to be dropped. But dispensing with the democratic principle that in the event of a difference of opinion the opinion of the majority would prevail, it has been provided that if two members of the Commission opposed a candidate he would not be recommended for appointment. Why should two members be empowered to veto the choice of the remaining four members? Why was the democratic principle of majority opinion prevailing has been dispensed with? Why has the practice of giving a casting vote to the Chairperson in the event of there being a tie in the six-member Commission not been included?

The answer lies in the imperial mindset of Narendra Modi. Even under the Collegium system, he played a dirty trick on Gopal Subramaniam by creating a situation in which an honourable and dignified person would withdraw his name. Out of the two names recommended by the Collegium, one was appointed in an unprecedented move and disinformation campaign launched against the other (Mr Subramaniam) making it below his dignity to continue his candidature. Consequently he withdrew his name. The language, tone and temper in which his Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi has been arguing in favour of the NJAC in the Supreme Court undermines the prestige of the highest court of the country and appears as an act of intimidation. He offensively alleges that under the Collegium system bad appointments have been made, but fails to support it with facts. He shamelessly overlooks the sordid history of abuse of power by the Executive when it called the shots. The belligerent approach is calculated to demoralise and intimidate the judiciary. In every important case involving the rights and liberty of the people, the Attorney General demands that the case should be heard by a larger bench. Indira Gandhi had amended the Constitution to make it mandatory for the Supreme Court to constitute a bench of at least seven judges to hear cases involving the constitutionality of a law. Taking no chances, it was also stipulated that a law

could be held unconstitutional only if two thirds of the bench declared it so (by 42 nd Amendment of the Constitution).

Indira Gandhi's associates wanted a committed judiciary in the name of introducing pro-people socio-economic measures (whatever their real intent); Modi's Law Minister has written to the Supreme Court and High Courts asking them to hold classes for judges in which they should be taught about animal rights from the book written by Maneka Gandhi. He has also written to the Bar Council of India to prescribe the book for all law students in the country. He is acting as if under Narendra Modi's government the judiciary has already come under his department. In any other democracy, a Minister writing such a letter would have been sacked, not only for impropriety and ignorance, but also for his boorishness.

We, the concerned people, learn a lesson only after it is too late. The issue of the independence of the judiciary is a question of life and death for us not the judges.

There would always be people to accept the exalted position of a judge of the Supreme Court and High Courts under the terms and conditions laid down in the Constitution, and dispense justice even if it means dispensing with justice. It is we, who would pay the price tomorrow for the indifference and neglect of today.

Prabhakar Sinha is the President, PUCL

"Where a society has chosen to accept democracy as its credal faith, it is elementary that the citizens ought to know what their government is doing." Justice P N Bhagwati, former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India, (1981)

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

The Takeover: How the Modi Govt. has filled Key Positions in 14 Institutions

Soumya Shankar

Two celebrated Indians - Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor - have separately come out in public, raising one issue: the Modi government's interference in educational institutions.

Sen was scathing in his criticism of what he calls "extraordinarily large" interference of the government in academia. "Nothing in this scale of interference has happened before. Every institution where the government has a formal role is being converted into where the government has a substantive role," he alleges.

He also claimed that his "ouster" from the post of the Chancellor of Nalanda University was a forced one.

Kapoor focused his criticism on the controversial appointment of BJP member Gajendra Chauhan as the director of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII).

"FTII is a premiere institution. All that the students want is a chairperson with a body of work they can be inspired from...The institution's autonomy is very important. The students aren't asking for something illogical. All they want is an institution with correct faculty, correct syllabus, one which they can be proud of," Kapoor said in a video released on Wednesday.

But the otherwise apolitical Kapoor did raise an issue that has a larger resonance even outside FTII: institutional autonomy.

The line between autonomy and the lack of it in government institutions of India has never been a clear one.

Almost every government has tried to control

cultural, educational and scientific institutions by appointing either pliable individuals to head them or those who were ideologically aligned to it.

The new government, it seems, is no different. However, what increases the discomfort around their political appointments is the absence of process. For the most part, many of these appointees also share an ideological belief that India would be better off as a majoritarian Hindu rashtra rather than a secular polity.

Here's a quick list of some of the controversies that the new government has been involved in.

1. Mahabharata in FTII

Chauhan's appointment has brought the institute to a halt. The students are now on an indefinite strike demanding the rollback of his appointment.

Apparently, Chauhan was picked ahead of filmmakers of the stature of Gulzar and Shyam Benegal, who are said to have been shortlisted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Best known for playing the role of 'Yudhishthir' in the TV series Mahabharata, he has been an active BJP member.

Chauhan isn't the only one, pro-RSS individuals such as Anagha Ghaisas, Narendra Pathak, Pranjali Saikia and Rahul Solapurkar have been appointed to the FTII society.

Eminent members of the Governing Council like cinematographer Santosh Sivan, actor Pallavi Joshi and director Jahnu Barua have quit in protest.

2. IAS, Shimla - direct nomination by minister

Gopalkrishna Gandhi resigned as chairperson of the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS), Shimla, soon after the BJP's electoral victory in May last year.

The new chairperson, Chandrakala Padia is nowhere near the stature of her predecessor.

3. IIT controversy

Nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar resigned from Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay's governing body in March, following reports of differences with the HRD minister over the selection of directors for IITs at Ropar, Bhubaneswar and Patna.

Kakodkar says his term was due to finish in May, and he decided to resign a few months in advance.

The government's effort to change established processes in autonomous institutions when things had been working reasonably well raises some questions.

4. IIM Bill

The new Indian Institutes of Management Bill introduced by the Modi government has come under criticism for curtailing the autonomy of the premier institutions.

The government has sparked a controversy by breaking from academic traditions with an order that candidates for IIM director posts will have to clear group discussions, much like prospective students to these prestigious management institutes - a move that educationists have dubbed 'insulting'.

5. NCERT director forced out

One of the major problems is that the government isn't filling some of the positions that have fallen vacant.

Parvin Sinclair, the director of the National Council for Educational Research and Training, resigned in October last year, two years before her term was supposed to end.

6. RSS man appointed as VC in BHU

Girish Chandra Tripathi, a state level RSS functionary, was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Asked about his Sangh background, Tripathi said he had no hesitation in accepting that he "is an RSS man".

7. TIFR director's appointment vetoed

The Prime Minister's Office earlier this year rejected the appointment of theoretical physicist Sandip Trivedi at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) on "technical grounds", making it the first time that a director's appointment has been vetoed by the PMO.

Trivedi, a front-ranking theoretical physicist specialising in string theory is the recipient of prestigious awards, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award and the Infosys Prize.

8. RSS man heads the ICHR

The appointment of Y Sudershan Rao as chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research Chairman raised a storm, given his proximity to the RSS.

His writing praising the caste system in India had sparked a controversy. Rao has also stated his vision of re-writing India's history. He wants to prove the historicity of the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

The others who have been accommodated in the reconstituted team of ICHR include office bearers of RSS-backed ABISY and a former professor who unsuccessfully contested Lok Sabha elections in Manipur on a BJP ticket last year.

9. Modi devotee in the ICCR

The foreign ministry has appointed Lokesh Chandra to head the Indian Council of Cultural Relations. He is 87 years old and claims that Modi is a greater leader than Gandhi - attached to Indian values, fiercely dedicated to the poor, a man "above all political affiliations" and "an incarnation of God".

10. National Book Trust

Baldev Sharma, former editor of RSS mouthpiece Panchjanya, was appointed as chairman of the National Book Trust in March this year.

11. IGNSA

Any historical purge happens with reshaping and reclaiming history. Here, names play a very crucial role.

The government, determined to wipe out the government institutions' association with the Gandhi family name, has decided to remove Indira Gandhi's name from the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and rechristen it the 'National Centre for the Arts'.

12. NIT Nagpur

Vishram Ramchandra Jamdar, a professed RSS swayamsevak, was appointed as the head of Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur even when he was not among the four shortlisted candidates for the post.

13. Central Board of Film Certification

Pahlaj Nihalani, the newly appointed Censor Board of Film Certificate (CBFC) chairman, sees a "guardian" in PM Modi. He was also the brain behind the BJP's 'Har har Modi, Ghar ghar Modi' campaign video during the Lok Sabha elections.

14. Prasar Bharti

Many of the recent appointments at Prasar Bharti have been of people affiliated to the Sangh in direct or indirect ways. Perhaps the most crucial of these appointees is A Surya Prakash as the body's chairman.

Surya Prakash has been consulting editor of the Pioneer and a distinguished fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation, a Delhi-based pro-RSS think tank that was earlier headed by current National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.

Courtesy **Catch News**

M.N. Roy on Superstition

Superstition is rooted in the ignorance of the primitive man. In course of time, man outgrows the blissful state of ignorance. Nevertheless, he is haunted by superstitions haloed by tradition, and often raised to the dignity of the expression of revealed wisdom. Eventually, scientific knowledge gives him the power to break the spiritual bondage. The history of the development of science coincides with the history of a bitter struggle against superstition. In our country, the struggle is still to begin. Whatever little of modern scientific knowledge is now there, is very largely superficial, and is often utilised with the purpose of reinforcing superstitions. That is an abuse of science.

Dehradun
June 15th, 1950.

M. N. Roy

From: Preface to the second revised edition of 1950,
'Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary: INDIA'S MESSAGE'

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

K. Pratap Reddy

In the long history of India (ancient and present), there have been several great figures who have contributed to the growth, development and modernization of India - that is Bharat. Late Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is certainly one of them.

While one believes or not in the mythologies of Ramayana and Mahabharata, it is certainly true that they have played a dominant Role in the multicultural growth of our country, India - that is Bharat as a whole.

Leaving the mythologies, when we come to the growth of India, narrated by historians, thinkers, philosophers and religious leaders, right from Chanakya, Manu and Parasara, all of them have contributed to guide the growth of the modern civilization in India - that is Bharat. Even this growth of India i.e., Bharat is in my humble opinion, very much relevant in the context of learning the growth of human society and human civilization in other countries. Readers may think that while, writing about Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, I have diverted too long and too wide from the subject, but I would like to give immediate reply to such criticism if any, by saying the life of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam reflects, IN ALL ASPECTS, the historical and civilizational growth of India - that is Bharat.

I would like to draw the attention of my readers that there is no other country in the world containing, comprising or reflecting the whole growth of human civilization spread out in all over the world. There is no other country in the world, which has given home, shelter, protection and opportunities to grow to ALL races, religions and civilizations of the world. Name any Race or any civilizations of the world, they would be found in India and they have made India as their own country. The life of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

reflects the teachings, ideologies and civilizations of the world.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was born on 15th October, 1931 in the southern most remote village of India, namely, Rameshwaram in a humble family. Late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has grown up to the highest position in the country and had earned the love, affection from all the people in the country right from the youngest school going child to the oldest person comprising of ALL Religions, Faiths and Beliefs. One seldom comes across such a person.

Any person claiming himself to be learned and knowledgeable, will find himself short in describing A.P.J. Abdul Kalam as belonging to any particular religion, faith, race or civilization. Think of any religion, any faith or belief, be it Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Zorastratism, one will find Kalam as a part of every one of the above elements.

Now, coming to the intellectual attainment of the A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, one cannot confine A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to any single field of learning. Such is the versatile nature of his personality.

Starting as a teacher, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam grown as one of the greatest scientists of the world including the nuclear sciences. While not taking pride of being the person putting India on the NUCLEAR MAP OF THE WORLD, making it equal and certainly not second to any nation in the knowledge of nuclear science, Kalam never himself claimed this achievement. That shows his humality. His contribution in this field is unique in the sense, that while putting India on par with all acclaimed nuclear countries, he guided the nation India - that is Bharat to utilize such nuclear power not only in the field of

science and technology but also in every aspect of the society such as Agriculture, Industry, Telecommunication etc. This quality of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam made him a different person from ALL OTHER nuclear scientists in the world.

While not being a politician, and Not even belonging to any political party, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was elected as the President of India, the Highest Honour any citizen of India can aspire. As President of India, Kalam has earned a unique place for himself in the galaxy of presidents of India. Speaking about myself, I do claim that I have met almost ALL the persons who have occupied the position of president of India right from the first President Dr. Babu Rajendra Prasad to present President Sri Pranab Mukerjee, but I have not found any other President of India as humble, humanist and of a child like nature as A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi had once dreamt that the highest political office in Sovereign Independent India must be occupied by a person of humblest and poorest class of India's population and must be a person ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO ALL PEOPLE of India. Late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam FULL FILLED the dream of Bapu when he occupied the position of President of India.

After graduating from the Saint Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, from Madras Institute of Technology, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam spent the next four decades as a scientist and science administrator, mainly at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and was intimately involved in India's civilian space program and military missile development efforts. He was thus known as the "Missile Man of India".

Kalam worked with Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Prof. Satish Dhawan, who are the well known nuclear

scientists of India.

Although scientist by education and knowledge, religion and spirituality were very important to Kalam throughout his life. A proud practicing Muslim, daily namaz and fasting during Ramadan were integral to Kalam's life. He reached to every religion and religious teachings in their true sense of means of development of humanity.

As a prolific writer, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam had written many books; the last one of his books "Transcendence" gives a true picture of universalisation of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam wrote that every evening, his father A.P. Jainulabdeen, an Imam, used to meet the head priest of the Rameshwaram Hindu temple, Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry, and a Church priest and used to discuss the issues concerning to the humanity. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam believed that the multitudinous issues of a multi-cultural country like India will depend upon dialogue and cooperation among the country's religious, social, and political leaders. Kalam believed that respect for other faiths was one of the concerns of the religions like Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity.

Apart from his devotion to the Islamic tenets, Kalam was well versed with Hindu traditions. He read the Bhagawatgita. He was a pure vegetarian. He was a poet in Tamil and used to play Veena and always shown interest in devotional songs; both Karnatic, Hidustani.

In one of his books "India 2020", Kalam strongly advocated an action plan to develop India into a "KNOWLEDGE SUPERPOWER" by the end of 2020. Apart from achieving the highest honours of India such as Padma Bhushan in 1981, Padma Vibhushan in 1990 and Bharata Ratna in 1997, Kalam also received Honorary Doctorates from 40 universities in the world. These are the rare achievements by any person in the world. In

spite of several achievements earned by and Honors conferred on A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, he has given to the world at large and India in particular, are much more than what India and the world has given to him.

ABOVE ALL, late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is one of the Finest Human beings, the world at large and India in particular has the good fortune in having him among ourselves.

Lastly, I would like to submit that while late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's life is an example for ALL INDIANS. It is a SPECIAL MESSAGE for our Muslim brethren to follow the path laid down by late A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for developing themselves in the field of modern and scientific education, instead of hankering after political

leaders for concessions and favours in the form of reservations or otherwise. This message was also given by Late Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of Aligarh Muslim University in 1903, but unfortunately that message has fallen on deaf ears of our Muslim brethren. They have also forgotten that while preserving the religious and personal freedoms of all minorities, the Constitution of India has in Article 30 thereof, given enormous, unbridled and unlimited rights and powers of education as a weapon of equalizing themselves with all other classes of the society. I, only hope that at least now our Muslim brethren and more particularly their leaders will get themselves awakened and follow the LIFE of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, which itself is a GREAT MESSAGE.

Gunning down of MM Kalburgi deplored

Indian Renaissance Institute (IRI) is deeply grieved over the gunning down of M.M. Kalburgi, the eminent Kannada scholar and rationalist by unidentified killers and strongly deplores the heinous crime. It is obvious that this cowardly act has been committed by the forces of obscurantism represented by right wing extremists belonging to Hindutva factions who were opposing his progressive ideas and rational writings. It is a matter of concern that governments of the day do not seem to be serious enough in checking the rising tide of Hindutva extremism. We hope that culprits would be soon caught and duly punished. However these representatives of dark ages and obscurantism should know that such cowardly acts would not deter the community of those who believe in rational and scientific thinking from speaking against and challenging superstitious thought and blind faith. IRI pay its tribute to M.M. Kalburgi and resolves to do its utmost in strengthening the struggle for which Kalburgi lived and died.

N.D.Pancholi, Secretary, Indian Renaissance Institute

M.N. Roy on 'Capital Punishment'

".....How is society benefitted by law adding murders to those committed without the sanction of law? How is it justifiable for law to commit the crime it presumes to punish? Justice is still far from being civilized. She remains a savage goddess who demands human sacrifice. And gods and goddesses are made after the image of their worshippers. If the world was really civilized it would not worship savage goddess with offering of blood. You may place the offering in an electric chair; yet it is human sacrifice."

From **Jail Diary** (1931-1936) of **M.N. Roy**

Statement of Citizens for Democracy on Changing the name of Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi

Citizens For Democracy, 'CFD' in short, is shocked that the New Delhi Municipal council, NDMC in short, has decided to rename the 'Aurangzeb Road' in New Delhi as the 'Dr.A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Road'. The said decision is totally illegal, unjustified arbitrary and against our constitutional ethos. It appears to be guided by not reason and law but by narrow communal consideration.

It is well known that a section in BJP has long been agitating to change the name of Aurangzeb Road to some other names but it each time this proposal has failed. For example in October 2014 BJP had requested NDMC to rename the name of 'Aurangzeb Road' to 'Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh Road' but it was not allowed. On 17th December, 2014 Shri Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, Minister of State for Home Affairs, made a statement on behalf of the Home

Ministry that Aurangzeb Road could not be renamed since the policy is not to rename any road named after a historical figure. Thus as per guidelines of the government, the name of the 'Aurangzeb Road' cannot be changed. The memory of Dr. Abdul Kalam could have been better served by building a scientific or educational institute under his name.

We therefore demand that NDMC should immediately withdraw that decision and not to take any step for implementing the said decision.

A notice in this respect has already been sent to the concerned authorities on behalf of the Citizens For Democracy (CFD).

Kuldip Nayar, President, CFD; **Justice Rajindar Sachar** (Retd.), Former President PUCL; **N.D. Pancholi** General Secretary, C.F.D. (M) 9811099532.

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The Truth about the Gita

By Late V R Narla*



V R Narla

(On 30th August 2015 Prof. M.M. Kalburgi, a renowned rationalist scholar and former Vice-Chancellor of Hampi University, Karnataka was shot dead at his residence. Co-Convenor of the Bajrang Dal's Bantwal cell, Bhuvith Shetty, welcomed the assassination of M.M. Kalburgi. Earlier a leading rationalist and anti-superstition activist Dr. Narendra Dabholkar was murdered and Pune on 20th August 2013 and another left leader and outspoken critic of Hindutva, Govind Pansare was murdered in Kolhapur on 20th February 2015. All these had the courage to speak the unsavoury truth based on their research without fear of consequences. All of them are suspected to have been killed by right wing religious extremists. With the BJP government at the Centre providing tacit support, right wing Hindutva elements are emboldened and are increasingly coming out openly against persons who are merely critical of Hinduism.

Human rights activists have strongly condemned the killing of Kalburgi and earlier those of Narendra Dabholkar and Govind Pansare. As a mark of respect to these scholars and rational thinkers, and our commitment to rationalist thinking and also upholding the cause of freedom of speech and expression as granted by the Indian Constitution, we are publishing some chapters from the book 'The Truth about the Gita' written by late V.R. Narla, also a great scholar and rationalist, beginning with this issue of The Radical Humanist. - Editor)

Prologue

A more apt title would have been "The Myth of the Gita". For all that is traditionally said about it is open to serious doubt. Was a great war really fought on the plains now hallowed as Kurukshetra? In case it was fought, did every principality in the India of the day, and some even beyond India, join one side or the other? What was the date of the war? Was there a Krishna, Vasudeva who elected to be charioteer of Arjuna? Did Arjuna, said to be the single-handed victor of many battles, lose his nerve when he saw the mighty army of Duryodhana arrayed against the smaller one of his own? Granting that he was, in fact, shaken by the thought of having to kill his kith and kin to gain a kingdom, could a pep talk by Krishna prepare his mind for the terrible carnage which

followed? And did the two vast armies, poised for battle, stand still while the question and answer session between Arjuna and Krishna went on for the better part of a day?

Another important question that faces us is this: In case the Bhagavad Gita, the Song, Celestial, was actually sung by Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, how did it come down to us? The full text of the Gita, says the Mahabharata was reported at the end of the day by Sanjaya to the old and blind Dhritarashtra sitting miles away in his palace at Hastinapura. Not only did Sanjaya report every word that dropped from the blessed lips of Krishna, but he also described the setting of the divine discourse without missing the slightest gesture by the head or hand or the

very lifting of an eyebrow. Unseen by anyone, unhurt by any weapon, he moved freely from one side of the battle front to the other. Day or night made no difference to him. He knew no fatigue and worked round the clock. He read the innermost thoughts of everyone as though he had an open book before him.

Inventions of the present scientific and technological age, such as the radio, television and video, are put to shame? The traditionalists will, of course, retort that even to pose such a question is silly. They will tell you that the sages of that bygone age were only a notch below the gods and they had the power to grant any boon, and Vyasa was a supreme lord of boons. And so, when Dhritarashtra, the congenitally blind Kuru king keenly wanting to follow the fortunes of the war, prayed that Sanjaya, his crony, be given the boon of seeing and hearing and knowing everything, Vyasa gave it readily. Obviously, these miraculous powers were given only for the duration of the war for we do not know of Sanjaya having used them ever afterwards. Furthermore, there was a point when those powers let him down.

On the last day of the war, Satyaki spotted him and might have put him to the sword but for the timely intervention of Vyasa.

Brushing aside the traditionalists who put a pious gloss over ugly facts, it should be bluntly stated here that Dhritarashtra, thus favoured by Vyasa, was Vyasa's illegitimate son. Can a holy man like Vyasa be guilty of lechery? Yes, he was. And he was himself the natural son of Satyawati, the offspring of her pre-marital sex with Parasaram, a great sage. And in his turn, the greater sage, Vyasa, was the father of four illegitimate sons in all.

Frankly, the age of the Mahabharata was the Permissive Age par excellence. In that age

drinking and dancing were customary. Cattle-lifting and the abduction of prospective brides were widely prevalent. Fratricide and genocide were not uncommon. To ensure royal succession and to avoid sure passage to hell, the birth of a son even outside wedlock was actively promoted. Indeed, it was at the instance of Satyawati, the queen-mother, that Vyasa impregnated her two royal daughters-in-law, Ambika and Ambalika. For their dissolute husband died prematurely without leaving a son to continue the Bharata dynasty. As we will presently see, this was no solitary example of progeny by proxy in that particular dynasty, nor for that matter, in that particular age.

Despite the fact that Vyasa, according to traditionalists, was almost a demi god, he was not much of a success as progenitor. Dhritarashtra, the son whom he begot by Ambika was blind; Pandu, the son whom he next begot by Ambalika, was pale and sickly. Only in his third go, he was able to produce a normal, healthy and intelligent boy, called Vidura. And yet, Vidura's right of succession to the throne was never so much as thought of. For his mother was the Sudra maid (which in effect meant a slave) of Ambika. Disliking the very sight of Vyasa, Ambika (though urged by her mother-in-law) refused to sleep with him for a second time, and sent in her maid. Obviously Vyasa had a happy time with her for the outcome of his encounter with her in bed was happy. Besides these three sons, he had a fourth one by name Suka. One day, it is said, Vyasa was rubbing two dry sticks against each other to produce the sacred fire. While on the job, he chanced to see a buxom wench from the large harem of Indra, the Lord of Heaven. It made him so libidinous that he spilled his seed all over the holy sticks in his hand. Lo and behold! That very moment Suka was born to excel, in some respects, both

his father and grandfather in greatness.

If we now turn to the next generation and its principal heroes, we find that all the five Pandavas were illegitimate children. The mother of the first three was Kunti, and each of them had a different father; the mother of the next two, who were twins, was Madri, and they had a set of two fathers. Like Satyawati, Kunti also had premarital sex and the son born out of that affair was Karna. Unlike Satyawati, however, Kunti did not own up her first-born but abandoned him as soon as he was born. Putting the gloss of supernaturalism over such licentiousness and making gods parties to such lechery, as we find it done in the Mahabharata, is to degrade gods to the level of lechers!

So widespread was the permissiveness of the age that sexual looseness, bordering on depravity, was not at all confined to the Bharata dynasty. It was, as hinted earlier, very much present in other dynasties as well. Kansa was the son of King Ugrasena of Mathura and the maternal uncle of Krishna; he owed his birth to the rape of the queen by a danava, that is, by a non-Aryan. The birth story of Drupada, the Panchala king, is odious. Still more odious is the story of the birth of his two children Draupadi and Dhrishtadyumna. His intense desire for progeny led him to solicit the help of two sages who were brothers. Both of them were natural sons like Vyasa. Perhaps due to that very reason they almost matched Vyasa in their miraculous powers. The younger of the two refused to help Drupada at any price, but the elder agreed to take up the assignment on condition that he be given a hundred thousand cows as his fee. Towards the end of the sacrifice initiated to produce a son, the officiating sage, that is, the elder one, invited the queen to sleep with him. As she was having her period, she had to ask him to wait for a few

days. But as the auspicious hour would not wait, the sage produced there and then Draupadi and Dhrishtadyumna. The two of them emerged from the sacrificial fires not as babies but as a fully grown maiden and a robust young man; the maiden bedecked like a princess, and the young man fitted with a coronet and armour like a prince. While the maiden was black, the young man looked ugly, almost hideous. The former was so black that her given name was "Krishna" (the Black one). Despite her dark colour, she was stunningly beautiful, and her hand was much sought after. Ultimately she became the polyandrous wife of the five Pandava brothers.

To traditionalists, all this may be another proof of the miraculous power of sacrifices, but to a modern man with a liberated mind this can only be the skullduggery that was being widely practised by the so-called sages. It is quite likely that the illegitimate children of an illegitimate sage were palmed off on a willing Drupada as gifts from heaven.

Indeed, it looks as though it was the Age of Illegitimacy. For we find, apart from many royal princes, the two leading teachers of archery of the age (both of them from the priest caste) were also illegitimate; the reference here is to Drona and Kripa. Of course, their questionable origins are hidden, as usual, behind the smokescreen of sanctimony. Can anyone who cares for naked truth deny that fornication in its grossest form was a part of the more important of the Vedic sacrifices?

However that may be, the point is that between the original teaching of the Gita by Krishna and its recital by Souti at least a century must have elapsed. For after the Kurukshetra War, Yudhishthira ruled for thirty-six years; Parikshit, his successor, ruled for sixty years. It is not known when exactly Janamejaya launched his

genocide of the Nagas as a measure of revenge for their assassination of his father, Parikshit. Nor is it known definitely how many years later Sounaka initiated his sacrifice in the Naimisa Forest. But of one thing there can be no doubt. The time lag between Krishna's teaching of the Gita and its recital by Souti cannot be taken as less than a century. Not one but several centuries must have elapsed from the time of Souti to the time of the final redaction of the Gita to writing. If we have to give credence to traditionalists, that gap is to be reckoned not in centuries but in millennia. Over such a wide gap in time did the text of the Gita as taught by Krishna retain its original size or shape or the scope of its message?

It can, of course, be argued by the traditionalists that the Vedas were reduced to writing after a much longer gap than the Gita and yet even the nuances of its pronunciation retain their original purity. But the Gita is no Veda and even now its scriptural authority is not universally accepted. In fact, none seems to have taken the Gita very seriously before Adi Sankaracharya who lived in the A.D. eighth century, and wrote a commentary on it as a part of his campaign to destroy Buddhism. Not to speak of others, neither the Arya Samajists nor the Brahmo Samajists attach much value to the Gita. And so, any analogy sought to be drawn between the purity of the text of the Vedas and of the Gita can hardly be relevant.

The improbable setting in which the Gita is said to have been taught and the dubious way in which it is supposed to have been handed down to us are good enough reasons to convince a rational mind that it is a myth. What Alexander Pope said of rumours is amply true of the Gita:

*"The flying rumours gathered as they roll'd,
Scarce any tale as sooner heard than told;*

*And all who told it added something new,
And all who heard it made enlargements
too."*

Having first read the Gita when I was a fresher at college, and that was more than half-a-century ago, and having given very many years to the study of innumerable commentaries on it, I am convinced that all that is said about the Gita, including its authorship, its time and place of composition, its transmission from generation to generation, its importance as compendium of a unified and profound system of philosophy with relevance for all people and all times, in a word, everything that is sedulously propagated about it is a myth. In that case, why did I not entitle it as "The Myth of the Gita"? My only reason is the hope that with a comparatively mild title I may not turn the devotees of the Gita against me even without reading me. To be sure, I have no illusions that I can convert them to my view, but even if a few out of their mighty ranks come to realise the hollowness of the tall claims made on behalf of the Gita, mine will not, I believe, be a wasted effort.

***Late V R Narla**, humanist, editor of Two Telugu dailies, twice Rajya Sabha member, dedicated his books to V M Tarkunde, Premnath Bazaz, M N Roy etc

V.R. Narla's THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GITA has been published in the US and continents. Prometheus Books in Amherst, New York has brought out this critical writing of Narla Venkateswararao as a part of the Center for Inquiry India project about a critique of Hinduism. V R Narla wrote this book in the last days of his life (1980's). He died before it saw the light of the day. Dr N. Innaiah brought it out in Hyderabad, India.

From the Writings of M.N. Roy:

Ethics and Politics*

M.N. Roy

(M.N. Roy, a great visionary as he was, had visualised even before the country attained Independence the shape of things to come so far as the functioning of parliamentary democracy was going to take place in the country after Independence. He visualised how there was going to be mad scramble for power by politicians winning elections using money and muscle power, and how they were going to neglect the people who would vote for them; how the party leaders were going to be dictatorial in their approach and how elected representatives of the people were going to be more responsible and accountable to their respective political parties and not to their electors; how delegation of the sovereignty, which rightfully belongs to them, by the people to their parliamentarians was going to make them completely powerless and helpless, being denuded of their democratic freedoms and rights, before the so-called 'servants of the people' who were going to become their rulers and how democracy, 'the government of the people and by the people', was going to become 'the government for the people' run by modern Maharajas and their family members for their own benefits. Roy not only visualised the problem but also suggested the remedy of bringing in 'power to the people' or direct democracy, as defined by some political scientists, empowering the people at the grassroots: exercise of the people's sovereignty by themselves through 'People's Committees', putting up their own candidates for election and not voting for the candidates put up by various political parties.

In 'Politics, Power and Parties' Roy has given a realistic view of our politics and parties today. During the last 68 years of our independence, morality and idealism has completely disappeared from our politics, parties and our political leaders. Given the condition of our politics today, and for the betterment of our political life and democracy in our country Roy's views are insightful and worth considering. Therefore, in order to present a complete view of Roy's thoughts on all these issues facing our country, we have started the publication of his lectures/articles compiled in the book for the benefit of our readers. - Editor)

A re-examination of the different contemporary political theories-of the Right and of the Left, conservative and liberal, reactionary and revolutionary-reveals the disconcerting fact that in their practice there is little fundamental difference between them, because capture of power, irrespective of the diversity of means

advocated for the purpose, is the common postulate of all political theories. The ensuing scramble for power has led to a progressive demoralisation of public life. Morality in public life, therefore, presupposes a political theory which would not make capture of power the precondition for any necessary social change;

and such a new political theory must be deduced from a social philosophy which restores man in the place of primacy and sovereignty. Morality being the dictate of conscience, it can be practised only by individuals. Without moral men, there can be no moral society. Until now, all the architects and engineers of new social orders have reversed the order: they all postulated an ideal order as the condition for the free growth of human personalities. The Liberals believed that the ideal of a good life could be attained by good laws. As against their "reformism", Socialists and later on Communists maintained that economic reconstruction on the basis of common ownership was the condition for human development. The result has been the eclipse of the individual by collectivities; totalitarianism and dictatorship in political practice have been the corollary to collectivist social philosophies.

It is easy enough to place the individual in the centre of a social philosophy. As a matter of fact, individualism was the cardinal principle of the liberal social philosophy and political theory; and Liberalism was the source of inspiration for the magnificent achievements of modern civilisation. But in practice, the principle of individualism was reduced to an abstract doctrine, the sovereign individual to a legal fiction. The decay of Liberalism encouraged the rise of various collectivist doctrines which denied the possibility of individual freedom, ridiculed the idea as an empty abstraction, and proclaimed that, in order to be free, the individual must merge himself in the mass; in other words, find freedom in self-annihilation. If Liberalism had made a legal fiction of the sovereign individual, the socialist and communist conception of freedom is denial of freedom.

The cause of the decline of the liberal social philosophy was the ambiguity about the sanction of morality. It started with the excellent principle that the individual was a moral entity and, as such, sovereign. That is an ancient belief; in

Europe, Christianity popularised it: man is moral because he possesses the soul, which is a spark of the divine light of the universal moral order. In the beginning, that was an elevating idea; inspired by it, European humanity threw off the thralldom of the patriarchal and communal organisation of the mediaeval social order. But the religious faith in man's moral essence limits his sovereignty; indeed, it is a negation of the liberating concept. In the last analysis, it implies that man as man cannot be moral; to be so, he must feel himself subordinated to a super-human power. With this paralysing sense of spiritual subservience, man can never be really free. Man's struggle against the doctrine of the necessity of his eternal spiritual subservience was the outstanding feature of the earlier stages of modern civilisation. Liberalism was born out of that struggle, which reached the high-water mark in the eighteenth century. The Enlightenment represents its afflorescence. The shock of the French Revolution frightened Liberalism out of its wits. Natural religion was opposed to Materialism, and the sanction for morality was traced to a transcendental moral order. As against the transcendentalism of the earlier nineteenth century moral philosophy, liberal social reformers and political theorists advanced the utility principle of morality. If in the former, ethical values were metaphysical concepts beyond the test of human experience, the latter deprived them of any objective standard, and that amounted to a negation of morality. Between the two, the civilised world was thrown into a moral confusion.

At the same time, the practice of parliamentary democracy and laissez faire economics reduced the individual to a helpless position. The cumulative effect of moral confusion and social atomisation destroyed man's faith in himself. The collectivist ridicule of the idea of individual freedom corresponded with the experience of the bulk of the community. Having lost faith in himself, the individual welcomed the hope, offered by collectivist social philosophy, of

finding security in the power of the masses. **The human factor disappeared from politics. To sway the masses by appealing to base instincts and evil passions came to be the essence of political practice.**

It is clear that moral philosophy itself must be placed on a sound basis before it can have a wholesome influence on social doctrines and political practice. The crucial question, therefore, is: What is the foundation of ethics? Can man be moral by himself? Until now, the prevailing opinion has been that man can behave morally only under compulsion, either supernatural or social. This view about the source of morality nullified the time-honoured belief that man is a moral entity; but that belief must be resurrected, and freed from its original limitation, if a really revolutionary social philosophy is to prescribe a rational political theory and a moral political practice.

A great advance in this direction was made during the earlier centuries of the history of modern civilisation, when its pioneers made certain secular postulates about the nature of man and his place in nature. Their bold speculative thought, progressively reinforced by the expanding knowledge of nature, culminated in the scientific Materialism of the eighteenth century. The approach was humanist, which discarded the dogma of special creation and traced the origin of man in physical nature. Growing out of the background of a law-governed Universe, man must be a rational being; as such, he established the original society as an instrument for the development of his personality. The revolutionary discoveries of biology in the nineteenth century bore out the speculative postulates and rational hypotheses of the earlier thinkers. But just at that time, the ambiguities and inadequacies of Liberalism set the civilised world adrift towards a moral confusion.

The confusion was more confounded at the turning of the century, when new discoveries of

the physical sciences seemed to render untenable the classical concepts of substance and causality which were the corner-stone of scientific naturalism. A neo-mysticism, claiming the authority of science, challenged the pretensions of Humanism. Not only the objective validity, but the reality of human knowledge was disputed. Exaggerated emphasis on epistemology confused cosmological and ontological thought. An intellectual crisis aggravated the moral crisis.

Psychology preached irrationalism on the authority of science; in the garb of vague concepts, intuition, mysticism and transcendentalism returned to ethics. Man is irrational; he is instinctively moved by the blind urges of dark forces; therefore, the sanction of morality either in private or public life is the penal code and the police, or the priest. Except under the surveillance of these temporal and spiritual custodians of law and order, the law of the jungle would reign. The irony of our time is that the dreaded law of the jungle reigns supreme, nonetheless.

The only way out of this vicious circle is indicated by a moral philosophy which finds the sanction of its values in the rationality of the human being. But what is the sanction of the rationality of man? What is Reason? Is it again a metaphysical category, or a biological property? In the former case, the problem of the sanction of morality is not solved by tracing it in rationality. That is only referring one problem to another. As an expression of the reason in nature, rationality can be regarded as a biological function, and physical determinism is the Reason, in nature. Otherwise, the classical concepts of natural law and moral order are meaningless. Modern sciences, physical as well as biological, put a content of objective truth in those concepts which were originally hypothetical.

These trends of thought have a direct bearing upon the practical problems of contemporary society. The problems confronting the world of

today are expressions of the crisis of our time; they clearly call for a new social philosophy which allots a high place to morality in public life. The disgust with politics, that is, an unscrupulous scramble for power, and disapproval of economic exploitation of the majority by a minority, are no longer confined to the Left.

They are shared practically by all. Leaders of political parties actually engaged in the struggle for power sanctimoniously condemn power-politics. Parties enjoying the patronage of the upper classes proclaim their intention to establish a classless society; businessmen, big and small, call themselves Socialists. One hears the cry for morality on all sides; it has become incumbent on public men to talk of moral values. **Yet, there is little sign of improvement anywhere. The law of the jungle, scramble for political power and lust for economic loot reign supreme;** no single country can plead not guilty of the charge without laying itself open to the graver charge of telling the untruth.

Nevertheless, the mere fact that the absence of moral scruples in public life is generally deplored, that lip loyalty is pledged to moral values, is significant. If, in practice, politicians cannot be true to their profession, that is not necessarily a proof of dishonesty. They are caught in a vicious circle. Engaged in a game, one must play it according to the rules. The fault of moralising politicians is the failure to realise that, so long as power remains the object of political practice, it cannot be handicapped by irrelevant scruples, it must be guided by the dictum that the end justifies the means. Caught in the whirl, the best of men are bound to be pulled down the lowest depth, which may appear as the pinnacle of power.

The crying need of the time is to harmonise ethics with a social philosophy and political practice. The sovereignty of man, which must be the foundation of any revolutionary social philosophy, can be deduced only from the fact

that man is a moral entity. It has been a time-honoured belief, which could not be sustained in practice; now the belief must be replaced by the knowledge of the fact that man is moral because he is rational. The Universe is a moral order governed by laws inherent in itself. Man grows out of that background.

Ethics must be the foundation of the social philosophy which is the crying need of our time. In order to avoid the quicksand of transcendentalism and the pit-falls of relativity, ethics must be integrated in a general philosophy. We do not want to build yet another castle in the air, which will not stand the test of the next storm. A humanist ethics based upon a naturalist rationalism can be built only on the rock-bottom of a mechanistic cosmology and a physical-realist ontology. Therefore, we must begin by examining the problems raised by modern science. The next step is to find the connecting link between the world of dead matter and living nature. It is no longer a missing link. It solved the problem of the origin of life. If it is discovered that life originated in course of the mechanistic process of nature, human rationality can be deduced from the background of the law-governed physical Universe; the imaginary gulf between physics and psychology is thus bridged and the most baffling problems of philosophy, the epistemological problems, are solved. Truth ceases to be a metaphysical concept; it stands out as the content of positive knowledge. In the light of the basic nature of truth, the nature of other values is more clearly visible, and they can be rationally arranged in a proper hierarchy. Having thus obtained our moral values in the world in which man has his being and becoming, we shall be able to harmonise them with a social philosophy which indicates the humanist approach to the economic and political problems confronting the contemporary world.

* Published in the **The Radical Humanist**, March 2, 1952 and Compiled in the book **'Politics, Power and Parties'**.

Human Rights Section:

Decoding the Aadhaar Judgment: No More Seeding, Not Till The Privacy Issue is Settled by the Court

Dr Usha Ramanathan

*The challenge to the Aadhaar project is, of course, much more than privacy.
Much, much more.*

The three-judge bench of the Supreme Court hearing the cases challenging the UID/Aadhaar project has decided that there "appears to be certain amount of apparent unresolved contradiction in the law declared by this Court" in relation to privacy as a fundamental right. It worries the court that reading the 1954 judgment in MP Sharma's case and the 1963 judgment in Kharak Singh "literally" and accepting it as "the law of this country", would denude "the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India and more particularly right to liberty under Article 21" of "vigour and vitality".

Yet, the judges see a "certain amount of apparent unresolved contradiction" in the decisions, and, in the interests of "institutional integrity and judicial discipline", they have decided to refer the case to be resolved by a larger bench. That is their view, and the case has moved on.

The challenge to the UID project is, of course, much more than privacy. Much, much more. Convergence, surveillance, national security, matters of personal liberty, the power the data controller wields over the data subject, the inversion of the relationship between the state and the citizen, exclusion, data as property, the failure to make a law, the deliberated flouting of court orders, the conversion of voluntary enrolment into mandatory enrolment on threat of being left out, untested biometrics, no informed consent about the uses to which the data will be

subjected, the absence of an exit option to get out of the UIDAI data base, the lack of accountability if there is a failure in the system and someone suffers in consequence, the handing over of the NPR data to the UIDAI which will then 'own' it (according to the notification that set it up)

The upside is supposed to be its potential to plug the leaks and exorcise the ghosts - a claim that rests on faith in technology generally, and not on the way the UID project has unfurled. The rampant outsourcing of data collection, the private entrepreneurs who have been inducted to collect the data, the difficulty for manual workers, for instance, to use their fingerprints as their signature, the foreign firms who hold and manage the data and who have uncomfortably close relationships with American and French intelligence agencies.... The cases before the court list them out comprehensively.

The Attorney General claims the 90 crore people they say have been enrolled did so voluntarily, and with informed consent. That the flouting of orders of the court that said UID cannot be made mandatory for availing services, and the threat of exclusion from services and scholarships, and the inability to get married, register property or rental agreements or marriage, explains why people felt pushed to enroll - demonstrates what a long way that was from volition and consent. This makes the interim order of the court of extreme significance. What does it say?

One, that the government shall widely publicise, in the electronic and print media including radio and television networks, that it is not mandatory for a citizen to obtain an Aadhaar card. Two, the production of an Aadhaar card will not be condition for obtaining any benefits otherwise due to a citizen.

Three, the UID number or Aadhaar card may be used in the PDS "in particular for the purpose of distribution of foodgrains etc., and cooking fuel, such as kerosene" and in LPG distribution. This, of course, excludes those requiring state assistance from the right to privacy, and it is not clear why the court thought that waiving the right to privacy of the poor was all right. In any event, even here, the rule of 'no compulsion' applies - that production of the Aadhaar card cannot be a condition for getting what is otherwise their due; and nobody can be compelled to enroll on the UID data base.

Importantly, the UID number "will not be used by the respondents for any (other) purpose". School admissions, scholarships for students, visiting prisoners in jails (as has been ordered by the Telangana government), passport verification, banks, registration of marriage, wills, property sales or rentals, vehicle registration, mobile phones - will all be illegal after this order.

'Seeding' is a matter of grave concern in the UID project. This is about the introduction of the number into every data base. Once the number is seeded in various data bases, it makes convergence of personal information remarkably simple. So, if the number is in the gas agency, the bank, the ticket, the ration card, the voter ID, the medical records and so on, the state, as also others who learn to use what is called the 'ID platform', can 'see' the citizen at will.

This idea of seeding has been put to rest by the interim order which categorically states: "The information about an individual obtained by the UIDAI while issuing an Aadhaar card shall not be used for any other purpose, save as above (for PDS and for fuel)." Seeding in various data bases will, by this order, have to cease forthwith. So, the Election Commission's exercise in seeding their data base with the UID number will have to stop. So, too, for instance, the sharing of the NPR data with the UIDAI. This is an important privacy protection that the court has ensured till the petitions challenging the UID project is finally heard and decided. The only exception that the court has made, unsolicited it would seem, is in the event of a court directing the use of the data 'for purposes of criminal investigation'. The UIDAI has been proclaiming that their data is incapable of being used for criminal investigation; but it seems the court has not paid heed to this cry of protest.

The government's denial of the existence of the fundamental right to privacy is, of course, not innocent at all. This happened at the same time that the government was arguing in another court down the corridor that privacy was the reason it wants to retain the defamation clause in criminal law. It is also the time that it is considering the passage of a Human DNA Profiling Bill, aspiring to create a DNA Data Bank.

New Delhi August 12, 2015

Dr Usha Ramanathan works on the jurisprudence of law, poverty and rights. She writes and speaks on issues that include the Bhopal gas disaster, mass displacement, civil liberties, criminal law and the environment.

Modi Abroad

Leading US academics urge Silicon Valley to be cautious in dealing with Modi Government

Digital India initiative ignores key questions about the collection of personal information and the near-certainty that such systems will be used to enhance surveillance, says statement.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi due to visit Silicon Valley to promote his Digital India initiative late in September, leading South Asian experts at US universities on Thursday issued a statement urging information firms to be cautious of doing business with a government that has "on several occasions already, demonstrated its disregard for human rights and civil liberties, as well as the autonomy of educational and cultural institutions."

The signatories include Columbia University's Akeel Bilgrami, Stanford University's Thomas Blom Hansen and the University of Chicago's Wendy Doniger.

Here is the full text of their statement:

As faculty who engage South Asia in our research and teaching, we write to express our concerns about the uncritical fanfare being generated over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Silicon Valley to promote 'Digital India' on September 27, 2015.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Silicon Valley highlights the role of a country that has contributed much to the growth and development of Silicon Valley industries, and builds on this legacy in extending American business collaboration and partnerships with India. However Indian entrepreneurial success also brings with it key responsibilities and obligations with regard to the forms of e-governance envisioned by 'Digital India'.

We are concerned that the project's potential for increased transparency in bureaucratic dealings with people is threatened by its lack of

safeguards about privacy of information, and thus its potential for abuse. As it stands, 'Digital India' seems to ignore key questions raised in India by critics concerned about the collection of personal information and the near certainty that such digital systems will be used to enhance surveillance and repress the constitutionally-protected rights of citizens. These issues are being discussed energetically in public in India and abroad. Those who live and work in Silicon Valley have a particular responsibility to demand that the government of India factor these critical concerns into its planning for digital futures.

We acknowledge that Narendra Modi, as Prime Minister of a country that has contributed much to the growth and development of Silicon Valley industries, has the right to visit the United States, and to seek American business collaboration and partnerships with India. However, as educators who pay particular attention to history, we remind Mr. Modi's audiences of the powerful reasons for him being denied the right to enter the U.S. from 2005-2014, for there is still an active case in Indian courts that questions his role in the Gujarat violence of 2002 when 1,000 died. Modi's first year in office as the Prime Minister of India includes well-publicized episodes of censorship and harassment of those critical of his policies, bans and restrictions on NGOs leading to a constriction of the space of civic engagement, ongoing violations of religious freedom, and a steady impingement on the independence of the judiciary.

Under Mr Modi's tenure as Prime Minister, academic freedom is also at risk: foreign scholars have been denied entry to India to attend international conferences, there has been interference with the governance of top Indian universities and academic institutions such as the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, the

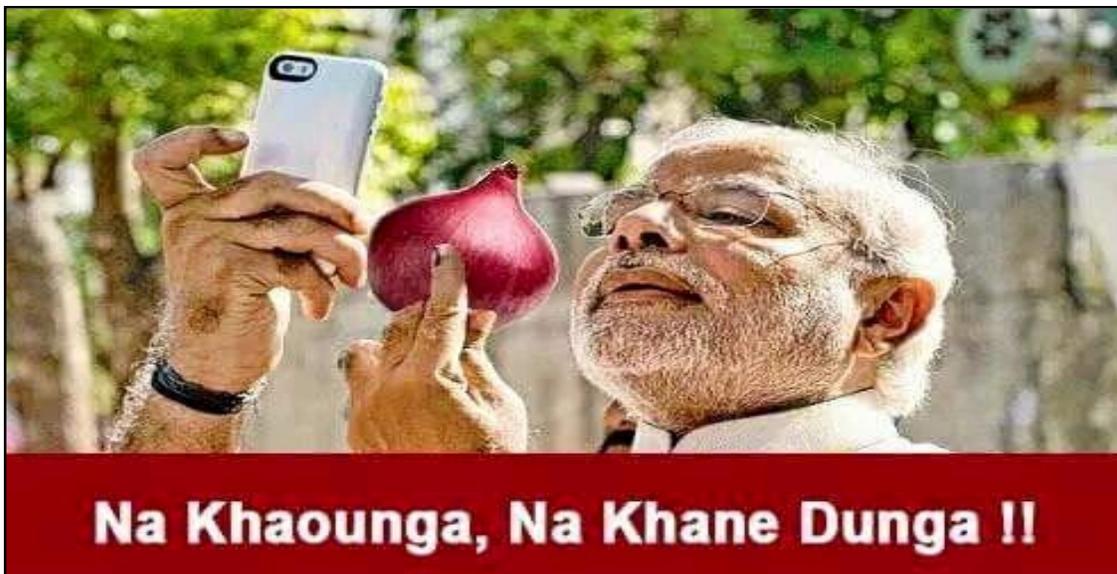
Indian Institutes of Technology and Nalanda University; as well as under qualified or incompetent key appointments made to the Indian Council of Historical

Research, the Film and Television Institute of India, and the National Book Trust. A proposed bill to bring the Indian Institutes of Management under direct control of government is also worrisome. These alarming trends require that we, as educators, remain vigilant not only about modes of e-governance in India but about the

political future of the country.

We urge those who lead Silicon Valley technology enterprises to be mindful of not violating their own codes of corporate responsibility when conducting business with a government which has, on several occasions already, demonstrated its disregard for human rights and civil liberties, as well as the autonomy of educational and cultural institutions.

Courtesy **Scroll Staff**



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

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

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

After Land Bill, It Is Now Factories Act: Suit-Boot ki Sarkar Moves to Redefine Factory

Prashant K. Nanda

[The government may soon legislate to redefine the word "factory" in order to enable their owners to file for exemption from social security and other obligations, potentially worsening simmering strains between the government and workers' unions.]

Govt moves to redefine factory, risking the ire of worker unions

Change in Factories Act will allow two different departments of same factory to be counted as separate companies

The government may also keep non-manufacturing units of a company out of the purview of the law.

New Delhi: ***The government may soon legislate to redefine the word "factory" in order to enable their owners to file for exemption from social security and other obligations, potentially worsening simmering strains between the government and workers' unions.*** [Emphasis added.]

Government moves to overhaul the 67-year-old Factories Act include a proposal to allow two different departments of the same factory to be counted as two separate companies.

The labour ministry proposals, which are set to delight industry, suggest that all companies employing fewer than 40 people be kept out of the purview of the proposed law.

The ministry says that the word "factory" should mean "any premises...wherein 40 or more workers are working or were working on any day of the preceding 12 months and in any part of which manufacturing process is being carried

on".

This, trade unions warn, is fraught with difficulty.

D.L. Sachdeva, national secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress, said the move will encourage factory owners to list different branches or departments as separate entities in order to avail of exemptions. A factory with 80 workers, for instance, could be shown as two factories, which would mean both entities would be kept out of the purview of the Factories Act and enjoy several relaxations, including in their social security obligations.

However, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) wants to set up an independent regulator to deal with health and safety standards in factories.

The proposed law "may be called the Factories (Amendment) Act 2015", according to two government officials, as well as labour ministry documents reviewed by Mint.

The government introduced the Factories Amendment Bill, 2014, in the Lok Sabha in August last year, but lawmakers sent it to the parliamentary standing committee related to labour matters. The committee has already submitted its report, expressing reservations on some key proposals such as raising the limit on overtime to almost double what is currently allowed and allowing women to work in night shifts.

The government is not bound to accept the parliamentary panel's recommendations. Instead of persisting with the old bill, however, the

labour ministry has now reworked a fresh bill with many more amendments, which it believes promote both workers' safety and industrial growth.

According to the new proposal, a factory owner can apply to the state government or any other competent authority for permission to declare two different departments or branches of the same factory as two different factories. "If no communication is received within one month, on the application, the proposal shall be deemed approved," the proposal says.

The government may also keep non-manufacturing units of a company out of the purview of the law. The new draft bill defines manufacturing as any process or activity "resulting in any alteration of original character such as nature, state, shape, size, usefulness and/or making value addition to the original material..." Giving an example, it says "unprocessed milk that is simply packed into different volumes or weight without changing the character of milk shall not be manufacturing".

S. Srinivasan, chairman, All Indian Manufacturers Organisation (Tamil Nadu chapter), praised the move as an attempt to "unclutter" the current Factories Act, which he said is too complex, with provisions that encourage over-regulation.

He said that all branches of a factory involved in non-manufacturing activity, such as the sales department, should be kept out of the Factories Act. "Instead of tinkering, it needs a huge overhaul. India does not need so many labour laws and the government will do good if it consolidates them," Srinivasan added.

According to the draft bill, "It is felt that a dynamic policy framework/Act is required to ensure work place safety to workers...many of

the provisions of the (current) Act may be inadequate in addressing the contemporary challenge to safety in workplace. Similarly, with huge backlog of unemployed and under-employed youth, it is necessary that more and more factories are set up in this country and produce output competitively. This calls for simplification of the procedure, credible instruments of compliance of safety norms and faster yet effective approval process."

It says these objectives are sought to be addressed in the new proposals which "introduce a regulator, self-certified declaration, risk-weighted inspection system, modern regulatory practice and IT (information technology)-enabled work-flow system".

The proposals say entrepreneurs should be allowed to give "self-certified declaration for fuller responsibility" on safety standards.

The regulator will create the necessary infrastructure, service and work-flow system to facilitate electronic submission and processing of request for registration. The process will be largely Web-based.

"Provisional registration shall be in real time on submission of self-certified declaration on the notified standards of safety, health and occupational disease, hygiene and other conveniences of the workplace," the new draft of the bill says.

The request will be deemed approved on the expiry of 15 days of receipt of certificates from a licensed safety auditor or officer, the draft bill says. A government official said such a system will make for faster processing by placing more trust on entrepreneurs.

Courtesy **Livemint.com**

AIR in Trouble Over Criticising Government Notices to Media Over Coverage of Yakub Case

Vasudha Venugopal, ET Bureau

[This boorish authoritarian conduct of the Modi government needs be thoroughly exposed, roundly condemned and stoutly countered.]

Last week, the government had issued notices to three TV channels for their coverage of the controversy surrounding the hanging of Yakub Memon.

NEW DELHI: ***The government has sought an explanation from the director general (news) of All India Radio (AIR) for broadcasting a story which reported criticism by the Editors' Guild of notices to three TV channels. Last week, the government had issued notices to three TV channels for their coverage of the controversy surrounding the hanging of Mumbai blasts convict Yakub Memon.*** [Emphasis added.]

Top sources at Prasar Bharti and Ministry for Information & Broadcasting (MIB) told ET that AIR director-general (news) Mohan Chandak was pulled up by MIB officials on Tuesday as well as Wednesday for clearing four news items the government found unsuitable, including the Guild's criticism of the government's actions against the channels.

AIR's coverage of Manipur chief minister Ibobi Singh's criticism of the Centre's peace deal with Naga insurgents, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's reference to former PM AB Vajpayee's advice to then Gujarat CM Narendra Modi on Rajdharm, and criticism by Kumar and Lalu Yadav of Modi's speech last week in Gaya, has also displeased the centre. Prasar Bharti chairperson A Surya Prakash and CEO Jawhar Sircar refused to comment for this story but ET learns that two AIR editors could face action soon. The reports in question were part of hourly

news bulletins in Hindi and English on Sunday and Monday. Chandak too refused to comment for this story.

According to officials, Chandak has been asked to give an explanation and the ministry is now mulling action against the team that cleared the news items. "This is negligence. We have asked them to respond with facts and details on how they choose to present some issues over others," said an MIB official. Ministry officials said they were particularly upset with the way AIR was presenting news that was often biased and critical of the central government. He added that I&B officials will meet officials of Prasar Bharti - an autonomous body which runs Doordarshan and AIR - this week to ensure "synchronization between media units and better presentation of news."

The AIR news on Sunday morning had reported the Editors Guild's comments on the show-cause notices issued to the TV channels. It said the Guild had called the move "shocking and had called for immediate withdrawal of notices." The Guild has said that Cable TV regulations were never meant to stop free and vigorous discussion of matters of public interest however disagreeable the content might be to the government. On Sunday, as part of its hourly news at 8 a.m., AIR also carried a news item on Nitish Kumar's speech in which he mentioned former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee reminding the then Gujarat CM Modi of his Rajdharm in the context of the 2002 riots. The broadcaster had

also reported Nitish Kumar's comments on Modi, including one alleging

that the Centre was ignoring Bihar.

***The other AIR news items that have upset the ministry was a 15-second report on how the Manipur CM Ibobi Singh, along with his counterparts in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh,

had protested over not being consulted in the Naga peace process by the Centre, and Nitish

Kumar voicing displeasure over the appointment of senior BJP leader Ram Nath Kovind as Governor of Bihar.*** [Emphasis added.]

Courtesy **Economic Times**, 13 Aug, 2015

Readers' Comments

Mahipal Ji

Congrats on August 2015 issue of the RH. It has come off well. Thanks. One suggestion for your consideration: In any page there should be relief for the reader instead of solid matter. In between a box item or a photo or quotation will give that kind of relief. Reader may not feel bored if such design is planned. - **Innaiah**

Dear Mr. N. D. Pancholi & Mr. Mahi Pal Singh Ji,

I'm extremely excited and happy to receive the July 2015 issue of The Radical Humanist.

While, I was a Student of the Political Science & Public Administration in 1978 at the Government College for Men, Punjab University Chandigarh; I was also very much influenced by the Life & Philosophy of M. N. Roy.

After 37 years; yesterday I was so delighted as if M. N. Roy had himself come to my home.

Thank you for doing this favor to me.

Best Regards, **Rajender Mohan Kashyap**



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Can't Book Hall for Anti-Govt. Activity: Gujarat Governor

Parimal Dabhi

Hall booking only on undertaking of no political or anti-govt. activity: Raj Bhavan

An Ahmedabad hall widely used by civil rights organisations has been made out of bounds by Gujarat Governor O P Kohli for "any political activity or any activity against the government".

A *kabulatnama* or written undertaking that there will be no such activity has been made mandatory for anyone who wishes to book the Mehdi Nawaz Jung Hall, named after the first Governor of Gujarat. This follows an "oral decision" by Governor Kohli.

The Mehdi Nawaz Jung Hall has been the venue of several meetings, including those on the 2002 riots, screening of films on the riots, and where the riot-hit have spoken out.

More recently, the hall hosted organisations which backed Teesta Setalvad, the social activist booked by police for alleged embezzlement of funds meant for riot victims, and others critical of the Centre's crackdown on NGOs.

The hall is part of the Himavan complex which is administered by a board of trustees of the Governor's Social Welfare Fund. The Governor is one of the trustees and chairman of the board.

Responding to an application filed by The Indian Express under the Right to Information Act, Raj Bhavan said the decision on a *kabulatnama* was taken on May 26, 2015 - a day after expelled AAP leader Yogendra Yadav was denied entry to the hall despite a booking by organisers of a meeting. Yadav then held a meeting with workers outside the hall.

In its reply, the Governor's Office said: "Since the persons who approach the management of

Mehdi Nawaz Jung Hall, Paldi, Ahmedabad for booking the hall are orally instructed to give their *kabulatnama* to the effect that they will not use the hall for any political activity or any activity against the government, the hall is not given on rent to any party which refuses to give a signed *kabulatnama*."

"The hall is currently booked for carrying out educational, social, humanitarian and cultural activities," the reply stated.

The Indian Express had also sought minutes of the meeting in which such a decision was taken. To this, Raj Bhavan said: "Meetings were not held and no notings were made while taking this decision, so the question of giving copies thereof does not arise."

Gautam Thaker, general secretary of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) in Gujarat, who is also administrator of the hall, said he had not been informed about the decision.

"I have not been intimated about the decision. I handle issues like salaries of the staff of the hall etc. The booking part is being handled by a watchman who is also performing the role of a manager," he said.

Thaker criticised the insistence on a written undertaking. "I think it is a move to stifle the voice of dissent. It is an attempt to suppress the freedom of speech and expression of civil society," he said.

Courtesy **Indian Express**, Ahmedabad, August 25, 2015

Refusal of the BJP led Central Government to Come Under RTI Exposes its Intent Towards Transparency & Accountability

On a plea filed through Swaraj Abhiyan co-founder Prashant Bhushan, the BJP-led central government has told the Supreme Court that it was against the idea of bringing political parties under the Right to Information Act arguing that the move will adversely impact their "internal working."

"If political parties come under the RTI it will affect their smooth internal functioning. Political

rivals will file RTI applications with malicious intent," the government said.

The unreasonable logic given by the government is hilarious to say the least. It's a pertinent question as to what "internal functioning" will be adversely impacted if political parties come under the ambit of RTI. The argument that political rivals will use it to settle scores is similar to saying that a criminal should not be

An Appeal to the Readers

Indian Renaissance Institute has been receiving regular requests from readers, research scholars, Rationalists and Radical Humanists for complete sets of books written by M.N. Roy. It was not possible to fulfil their demands as most of Roy's writings are out of print. IRI has now decided to publish them but will need financial assistance from friends and well-wishers as the expenses will be enormous running into lakhs. IRI being a non-profit organization will not be able to meet the entire expenses on its own. Initially, following 15 books have ordered for print: New Humanism; Beyond Communism; Politics, Power and Parties; Historical Role of Islam; India's Message; Men I Met; New Orientation; Materialism; Science & Philosophy; Revolution and Counter-revolution in China; India in Transition; Reason, Romanticism and Revolution; Russian Revolution; Selected Works - Four Volumes; Memoirs (Covers period 1915-1923).

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Thanking you.

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N.D. Pancholi
Secretary

S.C. Jain
Treasurer

punished for fear of revenge by the other party.

The Centre filed its response in compliance with apex court order asking the government why parties should not be brought within RTI ambit to make them more accountable to public.

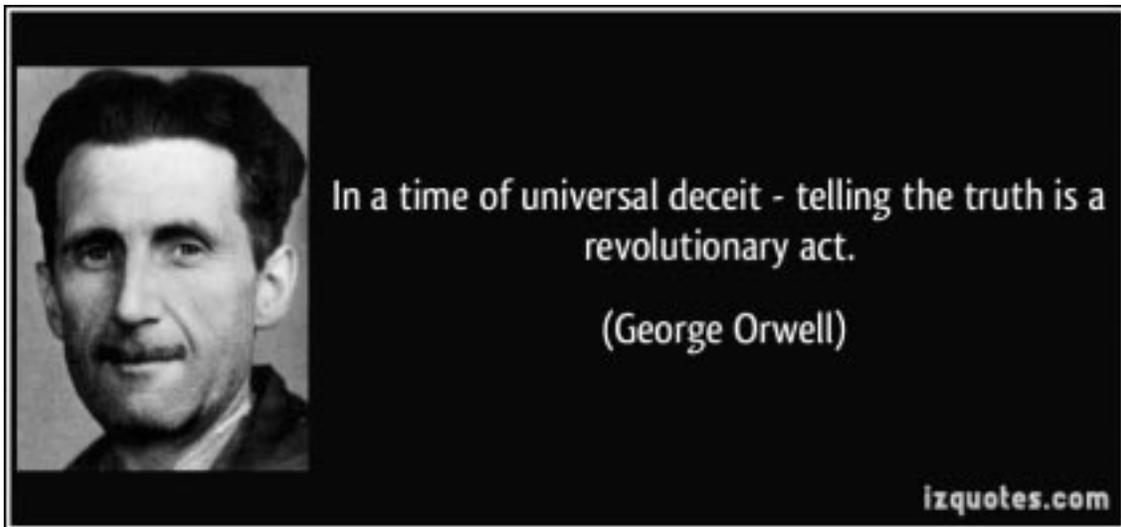
Prashant Bhushan said that since the national political parties were exempt from filing income tax returns, it almost made them public funded bodies. Bhushan also added that if it wasn't for their tax exemption, these parties would have had to deposit 35 percent of their donation to the exchequer. Prashant Bhushan had also urged the court to direct all such parties to disclose details regarding their income and expenditure.

On June 3, 2013, the Central Information Commission had declared six national political parties, the INC, BJP, CPI (M), CPI, NCP and BSP to be "public authorities" under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act. The CIC in its order had directed

these political parties to designate "CPIOs and the Appellate Authorities at their headquarters within six weeks time." Today, it's not only the BJP whose intentions stand exposed but also the six national political parties who have arrogantly defied the lawful decision of the Central Information Commission.

Swaraj Abhiyan expresses deep concerns and doubts on the central government's commitment towards transparency and accountability. It may also be noted that the present Modi government went without a Chief Information Commissioner for more than a year and has appointed one recently only after immense public pressure to do so. Swaraj Abhiyan reminds the political parties that they are not above the law of the land and hopes that the Supreme Court will uphold the law.

Media Swaraj Abhiyan, 24th August, 2015



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