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Founder

M.N. ROY

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M.N. Roy's bust at the M.N. Roy
Human Development Complex, Mumbai

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Dr. Ramesh Patdar, President, Centre for Study of Social Change, Mumbai, welcoming the guests at the M.N. Roy Memorial Lecture on 5th March, 2025



Dr. Sunilkumar Lawate, a prominent journalist and writer, delivering the M.N. Roy Memorial lecture



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Founder Editor:

M.N. Roy

Advisor:

Dr. Narisetti Innaiah

Editor:

Mahi Pal Singh

Editorial Board:

Vinod Jain, Dr. Ramesh Awasthi,
Bhaskar Sur, Dr. Dipavali Sen,
Mahi Pal Singh- Editor (Ex-Officio)

Printer and Publisher:

Sheoraj Singh

Send articles and reports to:

Mahi Pal Singh at Raghav Vihar, Phase- 3,
Prem Nagar, Dehradun- 248007. (Uttarakhand)
(M) 9312206414, 9760631181, 8433255386,
(Landline): 013-53549624.

or E-mail them to:

theradicalhumanist@gmail.com or
mahipalsinghrh@gmail.com

**YouTube: INDIAN RENAISSANCE
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Cheques in favour of :

The Radical Humanist to:

Sheoraj Singh,
3821/7, Kanhaiya Nagar,
Tri Nagar, Delhi- 110035. (M) 9891928222.
Email ID: srsingh3821@gmail.com

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Editorial :

Remembering M.N. Roy and His Legacy

Mahi Pal Singh

On 21st March 2025 falls the 138th birth anniversary of M.N. Roy, a very prominent and revolutionary freedom fighter, intellectual of extraordinary prowess, prolific writer, ideologue of democratic values, promoter of individual freedoms and social and economic equality and visionary who could see beyond his time. He was born in a village called Arbelia of 24 Pargana district of West Bengal on 21st March 1887 as Narendranath Bhattacharya and after crossing the age of 13 he devoted his life as a revolutionary freedom fighter. After receiving his early education in the village school, he joined the Harinavi Anglo Sanskrit School, where his father was a teacher, when their family shifted to Kodalia in 1898 and he studied there till 1905 till the age of 18.

Against the proposal of the Division of Bengal in 1905, he jumped into the movement and was expelled from the school after 10th class. After being expelled from the school, he went to Calcutta along with Hari Kumar Chakravarty and there joined National College under Shri Aurobindo and later on the Bengal Technical Institute, which has now become Jadavpur University, where he studied Engineering and Chemistry. That was also the time when he joined Anushilan Samiti which was engaged in the freedom movement and he met Jatindra Nath Mukherjee, also known as Bagha Jatin, who became his political mentor. He committed a political dacoity in order to collect funds for the Anushilan Samiti on 6th December 1907 and in the Howrah Shibpur case, which was heard in 1910-11, he was sentenced to 20 months of imprisonment. After that he was given the responsibility of procuring arms from Germany by the Anushilan Samiti to launch an armed revolution against the British government when the German government agreed to provide arms at the appeal

of Indian revolutionaries living in Berlin at the end of 1914 after the World War I started in August 1914 and Germany launched an attack against Britain, America and some other countries to win over and rule the whole world. In search of those arms, Roy left the country in early 1915 travelling in very difficult circumstances through Java, Sumatra, Japan, China, Phillipines and then San Francisco and New York in America and then fleeing to Mexico when America joined the war against Germany in 1916 when Wilson became the President of America, and started arresting Indian revolutionaries living there as they were perceived to be German agents. The mission of procuring arms from Germany, however, proved to be a hoax and was practically abandoned but during his stay in Mexico, Roy was able to get big financial aid of 60,000 Mexican Pesos and 50,000 US dollars from two Germans whom he had met earlier in Java. Later he travelled to Moscow in 1920 at the invitation of Vladimir Lenin to join the Second Comintern (Communist International), which was held between 23rd July and 7th August 1920, after the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The time he spent in Mexico was the time of his 'rebirth' as Roy himself called it. There he started writing for a newspaper run by the Socialist Party of Mexico to which the President of Mexico, Mr. Caranza, belonged. He came very close to the President and not only joined the party but also became its General Secretary. There Michael Borodin, a very close associate of Lenin, also came to meet him when his fame reached far and wide, and also because of the financial difficulties in which he and his business delegation had fallen in America. Because of the financial help given to his friends in the delegation and also his wife, who also had no money, and also because of ideological

similarity between them, they became friends. He was introduced to the Socialist Party colleagues by Roy and on his suggestion the Socialist Party of Mexico was converted to the Communist Party of Mexico in December 1918, the first Communist Party outside Russia, and Roy became its founder and also its General Secretary. It was on Borodin's recommendation that Roy was invited to Moscow along with a delegation from Mexico by Lenin, the leader of the Communist Party of Russia.

While Roy was in Mexico, a Socialist Party leader, Plutarco Elias Callas was appointed Labour Minister by President Caranza, and Roy, considering his ability, was assigned the additional responsibility of drafting the labour bill on his request.

Ultimately, on the invitation of the Russian Communist Party, Roy along with Evelyn (Trent) Roy, whom he had married, left Mexico in November 1919 after staying there for two years and a half.

About his stay in Mexico, Roy wrote – "Mexico was the land of my rebirth... It was during my stay in Mexico that the new vision became clear and the dissatisfaction with a sterile past was replaced by a conviction to guide me in a more promising future... I acquired a new outlook on life; there was a revolution in my mind – a philosophical revolution which knew no finality."

"I left the land of rebirth an intellectually free man, though with a new faith.... I no longer believed in political freedom without the content of economic liberation and social justice. But I had also realized that intellectual freedom – freedom from the bondage of all tradition and authority – was the condition for any effective struggle for social emancipation."

These ideals were to guide his future ideology and work in India.

While he was in Russia, on Lenin's suggestion, Roy also established the Communist Party of India in Tashkent with the assistance of some of his Indian friends living there. His role in the Second

Comintern was highly appreciated by Lenin and Roy was given an important place in the Comintern. While in Moscow Roy wrote a book, 'India in Transition', which was the first ever analysis of the Indian situation from the Marxist point of view. It had a strong influence on the development of the Communist movement in India. He also wrote 'Future of Indian Politics' in 1926 and 'Revolution and Counterrevolution in China' based on his experiences in China in 1930.

During his overseas journeys, Roy learnt as many as five major languages – Russian, German, Spanish, English and French.

He returned to India in December 1930 and after about seven months was arrested in July 1931 in the Kanpur Conspiracy Case of 1924 in which he had been named an accused, was sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment, six years of which were remitted by the high court and he was released after about six years of imprisonment from the Dehradun jail on 20th November 1936. After that he joined the Congress Party to participate in the freedom movement which was being led by its leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sardar Patel, Lokmanya Tilak etc. He also started publishing a weekly journal named Independent India in April 1937 to spread the message of freedom and to guide his followers in the movement. The name of the journal was changed to The Radical Humanist in April 1949 after India attained independence and it was converted to a monthly in April 1970 by his followers after his death in 1954 at Dehradun, where he had started living along with his wife Ellen Roy, a very talented and hard-working lady, who had come to Dehradun and married him, and who edited the magazine after his death till 1960 when she was murdered there. During his jail days, Roy had written about 9,000 pages, which were published in the form of books like Fascism, Materialism, Historical Role of Islam, Ideals of Indian Womanhood etc. when he came out of the prison. A part of those notes is still unpublished. It

consists of Roy's writings on philosophical consequences of Modern Science. Besides, he also wrote many letters and articles which were smuggled out and guided his friends and followers outside.

He showed the courage of conviction when, against the opinion of the nationalist Congress Party which was agitating against the British government, he favoured support to the war cause of Britain against the Nazi Germany led by Adolf Hitler, who represented fascist forces during the Second World War. It was on that point of difference of opinion that Roy left the Congress Party. He was of the opinion that the British would become so weak during the War that they would have no option but to leave the country and give independence to India. He wrote:

"If fascism wins, not only will the world go to dogs, but together with the world, India will sink into barbarism. Therefore, not only for the freedom of the world, of the victims of fascism abroad, but also for the very chances of the eventual success of our own struggle for freedom, we must see that this greatest menace to all freedom is destroyed." A war against fascism was, therefore, he argued, a war for Indian freedom and deserved the full support of all Indians. What Roy foretold came true, but was not at that time believed by the nationalists. Not only that, he was so sure of the eventual independence of the country that he prepared a People's Plan which, he believed, should be followed after attaining independence. The thought behind it was that political reconstruction was as necessary as economic reconstruction. It was followed by the draft of a Constitution of Free India – or Draft Constitution - which was released for public discussion in December 1944, almost three years before India actually got independence. The Draft visualises organised democracy as the source of all constitutional authority – the instrument for the exercise of popular sovereignty.

In his earlier days, during his stay in Mexico

and Russia, Roy had adopted Marxism as his guiding principle and it remained so even after his return to India. However, recognising the importance of individual freedom for the fullest development of a human being, in the last phase of his life he started moving away from Communism and developed a philosophy of Radical Humanism, or New Humanism, based on the principle that the centre of all human activity is and should be the human being who can progress only on the basis of scientific attitude and not religious fanaticism and blind faith which do not leave any space for questioning, but which is necessary for the search of truth. For the pursuit of this goal he founded the Indian Renaissance Institute in 1946 to spread his ideas to as many people as possible. He wrote more than 40 books explaining the importance of individual freedom for making a free society and the concept of real democracy based on People's Committees as the source of all authority of decision making.

Roy's life and work has an intellectual and motivational force for those who value and want to work for the promotion of democratic values like secularism, power to the people, promotion and protection of individual freedom and morality in politics all of which are missing in the Indian politics these days, particularly after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has come to power since 2014 under the leadership of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah.

We have to ensure that the state concentrates on the freedom and all round development of individual as an educated and rational human being with a scientific attitude, free from religious biases and absurdities so that such individuals together make a free and rational society.

By remembering such great people as M.N. Roy, who act as a guiding light, we remind ourselves of the unfinished task left behind by them and we are reminded of our duty to carry forward that legacy in our own interest and in the larger interest of the society as a whole. 🌈

Articles and Features :

Free and fair polls:

Voter rolls, not just EVMs: How Opposition is coming to a new understanding on BJP's alleged rigging

INDIA parties are pooling 'technical expertise', exchanging information and coordinating behind the scenes on the issue, Scroll has learnt.

Anant Gupta



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee caused a stir on February 27 when she claimed fake voters were being “smuggled into electoral rolls” ahead of the state’s polls in 2026, echoing allegations made earlier by the Maha Vikas Aghadi in Maharashtra and the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi.

This claim that there has been fraud in preparing India’s voter list is at the core of a new consensus emerging within the Opposition, interviews with leaders from five major parties belonging to the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance showed.

This alleged manipulation of the electoral rolls helps the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party skew elections, officials of these parties told *Scroll*. Before this, some Opposition leaders had also claimed that the Hindutva party was benefitting

from electronic voting machines being rigged.

As Banerjee addressed the press, behind the scenes, leaders of her party “coordinated actively” with the Congress party’s data analytics head Praveen Chakravarty to share “technical expertise,” Chakravarty confirmed to *Scroll*.

As proof, the Trinamool Congress circulated a list of 129 voters from a single constituency in West Bengal’s Murshidabad district whose Electors Photo Identity Card numbers had also been assigned to people in other states. The duplication of EPIC numbers, which the Election Commission says are designed to be unique to every person, would serve as cover for “ghost voters” to be brought into the state by the BJP next year, the Trinamool Congress claimed.

In a press note released on Sunday, the Election Commission admitted the duplication

error but claimed that voters cannot cast their ballots in constituencies other than their own, irrespective of their EPIC numbers. It reiterated this on Friday, promising to fix the problem of duplication in three months.

The Trinamool retorted that the resultant mismatch in photos of different individuals having the same EPIC number could still deprive voters of their right to participate in an election when they turn up at the polling booth. On Friday, the Commission said it would remove all duplicates.

Chakravarty, like the other opposition officials *Scroll* spoke to for this story, distinguished between the recent allegations of voter list manipulation and previous claims about EVM tampering. He expressed greater confidence in the evidence available for roll tampering.

“It is very clearly electoral rolls,” he said. “What else? I don’t know. But voter lists for sure.”

Aam Aadmi Party’s national spokesperson and MP Sanjay Singh described voter list manipulation as one of many tactics allegedly deployed by the BJP regime for “election management”.

Opposition allegations

The Congress was the first party to allege voter list stuffing after its defeat in the Maharashtra Assembly elections in November. To make its case, the party set up an Empowered Action Group of Leaders and Experts to look into accusations of election fraud.

The group used data put out by the Election Commission to allege that 39 lakh additional voters had been added to Maharashtra’s electoral rolls in the six months between the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elections.

Chakravarty, one of the eight members of the group, told *Scroll* that they found “something suspicious” with voter lists in between 30 and 50 of the state’s 288 Assembly constituencies.

The Aam Aadmi Party too repeatedly complained about the allegedly fraudulent deletion of names from Delhi’s electoral rolls during

Assembly polls in February. Sanjay Singh estimated that the Opposition’s lack of attention to such tactics could potentially give the BJP “5%-7% extra votes”.

“It is true that we caught this very early on and restricted some of the damage, but we could not stop it completely,” he said. “In state elections that are two-way fights, we can lose all the seats with just a 1% gap in votes.”

Aam Aadmi Party finished with 22 seats in the Delhi Assembly, less than half of BJP’s final tally of 48. However, the difference between the vote shares of the two parties was less than 2 percentage points.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party is also concerned. “It is the duty of the Election Commission of India to identify issues in the electoral rolls,” said Abbas Haider, a national spokesperson for the party. “We do it for them but they still don’t take action on our complaints. The administration works hand-in-glove with the ruling party to ensure bogus voting.”

P Wilson, a Rajya Sabha MP from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, echoed Mamata Banerjee’s concerns about bogus voters being brought in by the BJP from other states. “People are moving from one state to another wherever the election happens,” he said. “That should be stopped. It is tilting the election results in favor of the BJP.”

However, because of its strong cadre strength, the DMK did not share the apprehensions of other opposition parties when it came to voter roll fraud. Wilson told *Scroll* that his party was confident that the vigilance of grassroots-level party workers would keep bogus voters away in Tamil Nadu.

The Samajwadi Party also told *Scroll* that cadre strength was the key to counter voter roll irregularities. “It is a grassroots reality that there is an active Samajwadi Party worker in every booth, every village of Uttar Pradesh,” Abbas Haider claimed. “Our network is working to expose all forms of rigging. When the electoral

rolls for 2027 elections are published, we will point out which voters have been left out and get it corrected.”

The Trinamool announced that its grassroots cadre would be deployed to counter the alleged fraud it had uncovered. “I call upon my brave soldiers of Trinamool Congress to stay vigilant,” Chief Minister Banerjee wrote in a post on her X account on February 27. The party has begun a door-to-door survey to identify fake voters.

Party coordination

The heightened concerns about the BJP’s alleged capture of institutions such as the Election Commission means that Opposition parties are beginning to work together on claims of voter roll fraud. *Scroll* has learnt they are pooling “technical expertise”, exchanging information and coordinating between themselves on the issue.

At a press conference in February at which he raised allegations of additional voters being added to the rolls in Maharashtra, the Congress’ Rahul Gandhi was flanked by Sanjay Raut of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and Supriya Sule of the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar).

Chakravarty confirmed the Congress has been working with its two allies in Maharashtra to identify the 30-50 Assembly constituencies where the voter lists were allegedly manipulated.

“We are going to do a political campaign to take this to the people there,” he said. “We are coordinating with Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) because these constituencies also include some that they lost.”

Parties are also working together on the issue across states. “We are definitely in touch with our ally, the Aam Aadmi Party,” said Trinamool’s Rajya Sabha MP Sagarika Ghose. “We believe massive fraud with electoral rolls happened in Maharashtra, Haryana and Delhi.”

Ghose said her party is coordinating with others to raise it “in a big way” when the Parliament reconvenes on March 10.

“We are going to take it up on a national level,”

said Ghose. “You ain’t seen nothing yet.”

The Congress echoed Ghose. “There will definitely be action on this as a joint, united opposition,” said Chakravarty. “We have to stop pretending that we are a free and fair democracy. We are absolutely not.”

Taking it to the people

While the Maha Vikas Aghadi made its allegations after the Maharashtra polls concluded, the Trinamool Congress has flagged possible voter list manipulation more than a year ahead of Bengal’s election. In doing so, it is demonstrating its preparedness to counter tactics that seemingly got the better of its allies elsewhere.

The Bengal unit of the BJP responded in turn by alleging that the real intention behind Trinamool’s increased scrutiny of voter lists was to delete the names of Bangladeshi Hindu refugees and linguistic minorities, such as Hindi speakers, from them. These are thought to be groups that are sympathetic to the Hindutva party.

As political stakes rise in forthcoming elections across the country, protecting the sanctity of electoral rolls in particular and the behaviour of the Election Commission in general are likely to remain hot-button issues.

But party leaders and civil society members are less hopeful about what will come out of another protest in parliament.

“We need to increase public awareness about this through massive protests across the country,” said Aam Aadmi Party’s Singh.

Political economist Parakala Prabhakar, who has drawn attention to discrepancies in the 2024 Lok Sabha election data put out by the Election Commission for months now, expressed more confidence in citizen-led campaigns and local protests as a way to shame “wrongly elected” politicians.

“My confidence level in the political parties is quite low,” Prabhakar said. “They should have acted much, much earlier. We cannot outsource the protection of our democracy to them.”

Courtesy **Scroll.in**, 8 March 2025. 🌈

‘Upvaas’ of Dallewal: Imparting credibility, dignity and strength

Prem Singh

On 5 March 2025 one hundred days have passed since Jagjit Singh Dallewal’s protest fast. Discussions will continue on issues like minimum support price (MSP) for crops, other demands put forth under the aegis of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, talks related with the government; and coordination with the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), and also will continue Jagjit Singh Dallewal’s protest fast. Except that if it continues for still more days, then there a serious fear of the fast becoming a ‘maran vrat’.

As a result of the farmers’ protest at Delhi’s Singhu border in 2020-21, the government had withdrawn the three agricultural laws. Since then, the *yaksh prashn* has also stood out in the open about how the country’s vast agricultural sector can survive with the rapidly increasing pace of corporatization of education, health and service sectors including the public sector enterprises! Economists have not yet raised the question about the private capital that is being worshipped in corporate India, and how much of the private capital is looted public money! It is hoped that economists like Professor Arun Kumar, who have explained how much of the Indian economy is black money, will also consider this central question. Whatever be the case, a decisive point in the clash between farmers and corporate powers is not expected to happen soon.

But for Jagjit Singh Dallewal’s fast which has crossed 100 days, it can be said right now with certainty that it has become a kind of landmark in the history of nonviolent resistance to injustice. The importance of this fast increases even more when we find that

it has restored the credibility, dignity and strength of protest fasts. I do not want to refer here to the fasts that are sponsored and carried out for self-promotion but would like to mention that Abhimanyu Kohar, convener of the protest going on for more than a year at Khanauri border for their demands, has made the observation that while the media covered Anna Hazare’s 13-day fast in 2011 day and night, they have not paid even a fraction of the same footage to Jagjit Singh Dallewal’s long fast.

In fact, this comparison itself is wrong. The truth had come out at the very beginning that Anna Hazare used to fast for the media. The powers involved in that fast-episode and their intentions were also not a hidden truth. Its result was also on the same lines - India’s national and social life came under the tight grip of the corporate-communal nexus.

Seriousness, dignity and humility have always been maintained in Jagjit Singh Dallewal’s satyagraha-fast. Jagjit Singh Dallewal and the farmer leaders/supporters involved in the movement did not make the fasting site a platform for speeches. This has upheld the belief that the long-tested value of ‘weighing before speaking’ has not been lost entirely in the noise of ongoing verbosity. Needless to say, Jagjit Singh Dallewal had prepared himself for this fast. Before sitting on the fast, he had completed some of his worldly duties in order to detach himself. At that time, some of his close colleagues too did not realize that he was actually going to begin a ‘maran vrat’.

With Jagjit Singh Dallewal’s fast, there has indeed been a small revolution in the non-violent mode of resistance - a single person

standing up fearlessly against injustice through satyagrah, civil disobedience, fasting. Mohandas Gandhi used this mode of resistance in India's freedom movement while taking inspiration from global sources. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, describing Gandhi's "nonviolent mode of action as the most revolutionary core of his teachings," writes, "The greatest revolution of our time is, therefore, a procedural revolution, removal of injustice through a mode of action characterized by justice. The question here is not so much the contents of justice as the mode to achieve it. Constitutional and orderly processes are often not enough. They are then transgressed by the use of weapons. In order that this should not happen and that man should not ever get thrown around between ballet and bullet, this procedural revolution of civil disobedience has emerged. At the head of all revolutions of our time stands this revolution of *satyagraha* against weapons ..."

(*'Marx, Gandhi and Socialism'*, pg. xxxi-ii)

It's a matter of accepted common sense that the three agricultural laws withdrawn by the government will be implemented in the same or a changed form. The government had said, 'The laws are being withdrawn, not completely repealed.' This is bound to happen

due to the neoliberal consensus among the political and intellectual elite of the country. But this does not reduce the need for resistance, nor its value. As long as even a single citizen of the country is against corporatization and in favour of freedom, self-reliance and sovereignty, the need and value of resistance will remain.

Governments can fire bullets. They can rig elections. But citizens who disagree with the decisions of the government have the option to offer resistance, at the risk of their lives. This satyagraha-fast of Jagjit Singh Dallewal is an open non-violent rebellion by him and his colleagues against the corporate dictates of the government. Lohia, at the end of his above statement, said that despite its moral value and righteousness, the non-violent mode of resistance had in effect, "made only a faltering appearance to date." The protest fast and resistance at Khanauri border is an assurance against this; it has resurrected the non-violent mode of protest against injustice and infused a new faith in its credibility, dignity and strength.

(*The writer associated with the socialist movement is a former teacher of Delhi University and a fellow of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla*) 

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@yarramjaganmohan:	Very glad to listen to it. My best wishes to the speaker as well as to the IRI.
@venkatsaini5085:	Very nice. So relevant information.
@vikasmeshram4126:	Very good and informative.
@goutambhattacharya5324:	Thanks Mahipalji. Commendable.
@hemantbhallafilms7249:	Nice.

Social Justice, not just quota

Reservation for Muslims is a bad idea.

Affirmative action for Muslims is the need of the hour.

If you say yes to both these propositions — as I do — you may appear inconsistent, if not self-contradictory. That's not your fault. The fault lies with the cramping of our imagination of social justice in contemporary India. As a result, affirmative action has become synonymous with reservation, and that too in government jobs and public education. All battles for social justice turn into battles for and against quota, or quota within quota. Every group that suffers from any form of disadvantage or discrimination or just unmet need asks for reservation — ex-servicemen, sexual minorities, displaced persons. The Indian state is like a surgeon standing at the operating table with just one big knife for an instrument.

No wonder there is a demand for reservation for the entire Muslim community. The demand gained pace ever since the Sachar Committee Report (SCR) recognised Muslims as a “socio-religious group”. Though the SCR refrained from recommending reservation for Muslims, it recorded their severe educational and economic disadvantages, the first official document to do so in a comprehensive manner. In 2007 the National Commission for Linguistic and Religious Minorities recommended a 15 per cent quota for minorities (10 per cent for Muslims) in jobs and education. This demand has found acceptance among many Muslim leaders and intellectuals, as the community finds itself increasingly beleaguered on multiple fronts in recent years. No one expects this demand to be conceded by the present regime, but reservation is held out as the future frame for justice for Muslims.

A recently released report takes us beyond this conventional frame. Authored by Hilal Ahmed, Mohd Sanjeer Alam and Nazima

Parveen for the US-India Policy Institute and Centre for Development Policy and Practice, the report, ‘Rethinking Affirmative Action for

Muslims in Contemporary India’, pushes this debate forward in three steps.

First, it makes a case for why there is a need for affirmative action for Muslims. Second, it acknowledges that reservation for the community as a whole is not a good solution. Third, and most importantly, it suggests a bouquet of policies to address the real and pressing disadvantages of various Muslim communities. This report provides the right framework to think about this vexed issue in public policy and should prompt serious follow-up research.

The first point should be obvious to anyone with a basic sense of Indian society. Muslims are not just a religious minority under threat from the current political dispensation, they also happen to be a disadvantaged social group in educational and economic terms. The report updates the story documented by the SCR. Using the latest official data, it reminds us that Muslims are comparable to SC and ST communities in educational attainment, and to OBCs in income and wealth. The educational disadvantage of young Muslims is not merely a function of their economic status or even their parental education. Compared to Muslim counterparts with the same level of family income and parental education, “upper-caste” Hindus are more than twice as likely to enter higher education, go to private institutions and opt for engineering and professional courses.



Yogendra Yadav

That's a staggering inequality of opportunity. Things are much better in southern and western states and there are signs of improvement in recent times. Yet the huge gap calls for remedial action by way of affirmative action.

There are three reasons reservation may not be the right affirmative action needed in this case. There is a legal-constitutional issue. The Constitution does not explicitly allow a religious community to be recognised as a "socially and educationally backward class"; the judiciary has rejected this possibility. There is a sociological issue: Muslims are not a homogenous community; they comprise hundreds of biradaris whose social, educational and economic profile varies as widely as Hindu castes. And there is a political issue: In the present and foreseeable context, any proposal for reservation for Muslims would be used to orchestrate a country-wide counter-mobilisation, the last thing Muslims need in today's India.

What, then, is the option to address the socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination that Muslims suffer from? This challenge is different from the security and identity challenges all Muslims face as a religious minority, something they may share with other religious minorities like Christians who do not face educational or economic disadvantage. The report recommends a cluster of overlapping policies, none meant exclusively for Muslims, that could be trusted to help improve their educational and economic condition.

The report suggests an alternative religion-agnostic "quota approach". One, instead of providing separate reservation to Muslims or including all Muslims in the OBC category, there is a need to ensure that all backward Muslim communities are included in OBC lists. Currently, only half the Muslim population qualifies for OBC benefits. Evidence shows that the educational and economic condition of more than three-fourths of Muslims makes them eligible to be considered as OBC. States like

Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and West Bengal have started the remedial action of including more Muslim communities; the North Indian Hindi belt needs to follow this path.

Two, instead of one blanket category of OBC, it should be split into at least two lists of "extremely backward" and "backward" communities. The report argues against the temptation to put Muslim OBCs into a separate sub-quota (as has been done in Kerala and Karnataka). Different Muslim communities should be placed in different lists of OBCs depending on the evidence of their backwardness. Third, this religion-agnostic approach would also require that the current ban on "untouchable" Muslim communities from being classified as SC be removed. Dalit Muslims (and Christians) should enjoy the benefits of reservation. Finally, to address institutional discrimination strictly on religious grounds, there is a need for an anti-discrimination law and an Equal Opportunity Commission to monitor its implementation.

The report's recommendations go beyond reservation and the public sector. One, it backs the "spatial approach" of targeted improvement of public infrastructure in localities with concentration of Muslim population. This has been tried after SCR, moving from identification of Minority Concentration Districts to blocks, localities and villages. There is a need to fine-tune this to guard against gaming the system to benefit only the non-Muslim population in these areas. Two, the report endorses the "sectoral approach" involving substantial state support for enterprises and occupations such as weaving, lock and brass manufacture, carpet and perfume-making and the meat industry that happen to be dominated by Muslim communities. This approach could also involve targeting educational sectors where Muslims enjoy a comparative advantage or where their presence requires a special boost.

(To be Contd....on Page -23)

Does only Hindu Society Carry the Responsibility of India?

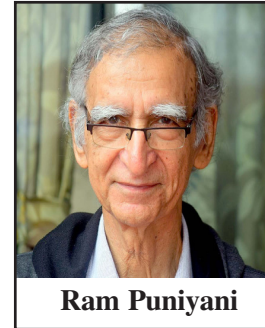
“Hindu Society Nation’s Responsible Core-Sangh seeks to unite Hindu Society, as it is the Hindu Society...that carries the responsibility of Nation” (Mohan Bhagwat, Indian Express, Mumbai Edition, Feb 17, 2025) These are the words of Mr. Mohan Bhagwat, the chief of RSS. He was addressing the RSS Workers in Bardhaman, West Bengal. Further he states that “Hindus are those who embody India’s characteristics and keep its diverse population united.”

Mr. Bhagwat is on a ten day tour in West Bengal. This formulation is not only in contrast to what the Indian Constitution stands for but is also totally the opposite of what the history of this country tells us. As per Constitution “we” the people of India is a religion neutral word and stands for all the people of this country irrespective of their religion. In contrast to RSS ideology, the Constitution of India looks at people of all religions having equal rights and responsibilities in the country.

There is a big attempt by the ideologues supportive of RSS’s Hindu Rashtra ideology to undermine and reject the diversity of religions of this country. The lovely word standing for our mixed culture, ‘Ganga Jamuni Tehjeeb’, is criticized by RSS acolytes and it is asserted that this is a distortion of the Hindu culture which prevailed here all through.

To begin with, the word Hindu itself was coined by those who crossed the Sindhu River, centuries ago. As word S was pronounced less often by them, instead H was used by them so it is the word Hindu. This stood as a geographical category to begin with; much later the different non Prophet based religions were lumped together as Hindu. Minhaz-e-Siraj, a Persian chronicler first used it in 13 century for the area which is at present Punjab,

Haryana and the land between Ganga and Yamuna. Politically it stood for the lands under control of Delhi Sultanate. In 14th Century disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya’s; Amir Khusroo popularized it for South Asian region.



As such Asoka the emperor, who embraced Buddhism and presided over a large empire, adopted the policy of equal treatment to all the prevailing religions of that time, Vedic (Brahmanism) Jainism, Ajivikas and Buddhism. Buddhism at that time spread far and wide and was the major religion of the country till Pushyamitra Shung went on the rampage to eradicate it from this land. What prevailed later was many Shramanic traditions like Nath, Tantra, Shaiva, Siddhanta and later Bhakti also became major trends, while Vedic: Brahmanism was most dominant.

The Christian community began with St Thomas establishing a Church on Malabar Coast in AD 52 and it grew slowly mainly amongst Adivasis and Dalits. Islam came in 7th Century through Arab Traders and later many victims of the caste system also took to Islam. From the 11th Century many Muslim dynasties ruled from Delhi, Ghulam, Khilji; Lodhi and finally Mughal. Earlier also Shakas and Huns had come here. These interactions between different cultures were the hallmark and they interacted influencing each other.

It is during the medieval period that this interaction became more visible. While the two major communities Hindus and Muslims adopted many aspects of culture, it was not that any

‘one’ religious community was playing the role of the core or primary community and other being subordinate. The interaction in the matters of language, Persian and Avadhi interaction led to formation of Urdu. One interestingly realizes that one of the great traditions of Hindu faith, Kumbh, taking dip in the Holy river (Ganga, primarily) had the major event called Shahi Snan, (Royal bath). Of course with Hindu Nationalist Government in the seat of power its nomenclature stands changed to Amrit Snan! (Nectar Bath)

People participated in each other’s festivals with gusto. Holy, Moharram became social events for large parts of society. The Mughal Courts had Divali celebrated as ‘Jashna-E-Charagan’ and Holi as ‘Jashn-E Gulabi’. The peak of this of course was the religious traditions of Bhakti and Sufi. The followers of Bhakti Saints like Kabir in particular were both Hindus and Muslims, the Sufi saints Dargahs were frequented by both Hindus and Muslims. People of all religions visit Velankini Church. As the United Nations high level committee on ‘Alliance of Civilizations’ formed by the then Secretary General Koffi Annan, points out that our cultures and civilizations have enriched from each other and religions have interacted with each other with positive spirit.

Freedom struggle against British slavery, where Bhagawat and his ilk were totally absent, was the period of high interaction between people of all religions. We talk of Bhagat Singh and Ashfaq Ullah in the same breath. Indian National Congress which led this movement had Badaruddin Tayabaji, R M Sayani and Maulana Abul Kalam who presided over this organization

with great enthusiasm. To cap it all people of all religions were a part of this struggle. Only the followers of Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and RSS kept aloof from this movement, which made us a nation. The likes of Bhagat Singh on one hand and Babasaheb Ambedkar on the other contributed to the inclusive nature of “India: Nation in the making.” Now RSS ideologues are denying this whole concept of ‘India Nation in the making’.

This struggle not only solidified the bonds of togetherness amongst people of different religions but also contributed to enhancement of mixed culture. For organizations like Muslim League and RSS the nationalism is built around the identity of religion. So Gandhi and others contributed to the making of modern India. The values of the freedom movement are part of our Constitution; where there is pluralism and diversity cutting across religions and languages. Mr. Bhagwat is talking of diversity within Hindu society and thinks that only Hindus are the ones who are responsible for this nation!

Bhagwat’s ideology of ‘Hindu’s alone’ is a big handicap to the progress of the country. They claim to follow Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, but their actions, training in Shakhas, through the type of issues, Ram Temple, Ghar Wapasi, love Jihad, ‘Cow as mother’ promote hate against minorities and leads to violence and intimidation of large sections of society.

World, India included, is a vast garden of rich diversity. To single out only Hindus as those responsible for the country is a divisive statement. We all Indians, irrespective of our religion, have rights and have responsibility to the nation. 🌈

The Radical Humanist on Website

‘The Radical Humanist’ is now available at <http://www.lohiatoday.com/> on Periodicals page, thanks to Manohar Ravela who administers the site on Ram Manohar Lohia, the great socialist leader of India.

– Mahi Pal Singh

Centre, state, party: The many conundrums of federalism

The question of the dominance of parties threatens to obscure issues of federalism, including on delimitation

Pratap Bhanu Mehta

There are potential minor and major storms brewing around federalism in India. The question of delimitation and the balance of representation between the states of North and South India requires political finesse. Kashmir still awaits the restoration of full statehood. Tamil Nadu and the Centre are again sparring on the politics of language and education. Tamil Nadu is accusing the Centre of withholding Samagra Shiksha funds and covertly strategising to impose Hindi. The Centre, in turn, is accusing Tamil Nadu of playing politics with the National Education Policy and falsely raising the bogey of Hindi imposition.

The horizontal imbalance between states in terms of development continues to remain a challenge. The functional division of powers between the State, Central and Concurrent lists needs to be renegotiated in light of current development predicaments. A general tendency towards growing authoritarianism will also, in its broad contours, undermine federalism. And occasionally, the politics of cultural representation — appalling stereotypes of states — also rears its head. In historical perspective, the challenges of contemporary federalism are not of the scale that federalism has faced in the past. But as in the past, the question of the dominance of parties threatens to obscure issues of federalism.

The practice of federalism is, in effect, always a messy affair. There are many different angles from which the problem can be addressed. There is a vast literature on what might be called the “first principles” administrative approach to federalism. On this

approach, it makes sense to ask the question: What is the rationale for allocating particular sets of powers at different levels of government? For what kinds of functions is the scale achieved by the central government more important than the autonomy granted to states? While this important question serves as a good starting point for thinking about the allocation of administrative power across different tiers of government, we know from the history of federalism that this pure design rationale has proved inadequate. Often, the federal compact has evolved precisely because many of the principles tried out did not work.

It has to be said that in the history of Indian federalism, the centralisation that we see was increasingly co-produced by the Centre and states. The ascendancy of centrally sponsored schemes, the new bone of contention between the Centre and the states, was largely a function of the fact that health and education, the two items that used to be on the State List, were for decades amongst the most significant failures of states. The pressure of centrally sponsored schemes was necessary to give these areas some boost. It could be, if recent evidence is any guide, that there has now been enough social evolution, capacity building and learning for more autonomy to be given to the states in these domains. The political economy of health and education has changed enough that states can now be trusted more in these domains.

But other domains are trickier. For a long

time, it was a bit of a mystery why so many states did not even exercise the revenue-generating powers that they in fact had; and one thing common to most, though not all, states was a reluctance to decentralise power to urban local bodies and panchayats within. In federalism, design has hugely under-determined outcomes.

The politics of federalism is also complicated by the fact that political, cultural, administrative and economic federalism are not governed by a single logic. We do not pay enough attention to the fact that the formal checks and balances of any constitutional scheme are actually at cross-purposes with another institution of democracy that is not a constitutional institution, but now constitutes its essence, namely political parties. The legislature's functioning has been more or less superseded by the political party, especially after the introduction of the anti-defection law. Parliament cannot effectively exercise oversight over the executive because party government and partisanship supersede all other formal allocation of powers. This is also a big challenge for federalism.

National parties are important since they knit different regions together. But the national parties can also supersede the demands of federalism. A chief minister is not just a constitutional functionary, the head of government of a state. A chief minister is also part of a party hierarchy that may supersede their function as chief minister. This is even more true in a system where party structures are more centralised. The states are already inserted into the political logic of the party; the chief minister is answerable to the party hierarchy as much as to the state.

This feature explains two odd features of Indian federalism. When we think of federalism, we often think of the relationship between the Centre and individual states. But in a way, there are three actors here

(ignoring local government, for a moment). There is the Centre, individual states, and the states taken together. In a way, the GST is a perfect example, where states together take collective decisions that are binding on all states: Technically, the determination of GST rates is not a Centre versus state issue. The interesting question is: Could this model of a collection of states taking decisions that extend to all states be used elsewhere as well? For instance, in principle, there is no reason that a collection of all states, not the Centre, determines whether a particular set of conditionalities have been fairly applied. It would be in the interest of all states to come up with rules that are fair across all states, since they would be binding across all states. And all states, not just the Centre, would pay the price for any exceptions granted. This is not a panacea. But it is an underused mechanism.

But one way of thinking about this is that when we speak of that unmeaning slogan, cooperative federalism, we think of the states and the Centre cooperating, not states cooperating with each other. Think of a range of issues, airshed management for example or water, where states need to get into the habit of cooperating rather than the conversation being mediated by the Centre, or sometimes even the judiciary. One reason collectivities of states have been a weak mechanism is because states cannot act politically independent of the party.

So, the question is: Is the latest spat over Tamil Nadu about DMK versus BJP, or is it a federalism issue? That it is sometimes hard to tell is a sign that the wires of party structures and federalism are always crossing each other.

The writer is contributing editor, *The Indian Express*.

Courtesy **The Indian Express**, 15 March 2025. 

Hate Speech:

Is calling an Indian Muslim a ‘Pakistani’ a crime in law?

The use of the slur in public to invoke violence clearly qualifies as hate speech.

Its use in other contexts may be more difficult to target.

Vineet Bhalla

Is calling an Indian Muslim a “Pakistani” against the law?

In February, the Supreme Court ruled that calling someone “Pakistani” in private may be in poor taste but does not amount to the offence of hurting religious sentiments.

However, on March 7, a Delhi court held that Bharatiya Janata Party leader Kapil Mishra’s statements referring to people protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as “Pakistanis” “appear[ed] to be a brazen attempt to promote enmity on the grounds of religion”.

Promoting enmity on grounds of religion is an offence under Section 196 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which in 2024 replaced Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code.

That very same day, BJP MLA Gopal Sharma repeatedly referred to Congress chief whip Rafeek Khan as a “Pakistani” in the Rajasthan Assembly, leading to an uproar in the House.

Legal experts *Scroll* spoke to explained that context is key to determine whether using “Pakistani” as a slur is against the law. When the word is used in public to invoke violence, then it is covered under the laws on hate speech. However, it would be unreasonable to expect criminal law to govern the use of the slur in private speech.

Some also cited the need for a broader anti-discrimination law to outlaw the slur.

Go-to slur

Indian politicians have long used the word “Pakistan” to attack Indian Muslims.

One of the earliest cases of such a matter being brought before court is from 1994, when a public interest litigation was filed in the Bombay High Court against Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray for his writings in the party newspaper *Saamana* during the Bombay riots in 1992-’93. Thackeray had called Muslims “traitors” who created “mini-Pakistans”, threatening that they would meet the same fate as “the domes of the Babri Masjid”.

The petition demanded that Thackeray be booked under the hate speech provisions of the Indian Penal Code: Sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion) and 153B (assertions prejudicial to national integration).

The High Court dismissed the petition on two grounds: “Stray sentences could not be interpreted in isolation” and “it did not make sense to rake up the issue afresh” considering that “both the communities had begun to live in harmony”.

In contrast, in its order on March 7, the Delhi court order against Mishra articulated the problem with the “Pakistani” slur: it held that “unfortunately in common parlance [reference to Pakistan] is often used to denote the members of a particular religion”.

In fact, the imputation of the slur goes beyond just religious connotations. “It is a way of saying that Muslims don’t belong in India,” said Prateek Chadha, a Delhi-based Advocate on Record at the Supreme Court. “The implication, therefore, is not only that you’re a traitor who does not have the interest of India in heart, but that you

can never be Indian.”

This may be sufficient to qualify as an offence under Indian criminal law, according to Sumit Baudh, professor and executive director of the Centre on Public Law and Jurisprudence at the OP Jindal Global University.

“Given the geopolitical background of hostilities between Indian and Pakistani national identities and deeply entrenched sentiments of ill will and suspicion against each other, calling Indian Muslims ‘Pakistani’ could be considered an imputation that they do not ‘bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established or uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India’,” he said.

Making such an imputation is an offence under Section 197 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita – which replaced Section 153B of the Indian Penal Code. Section 197 covers “imputations and assertions prejudicial to national integration”.

The popular spread of the notion that being in favour of Pakistan means being against India is indicated by the increase in the number of Indians being booked in the last few years for allegedly shouting pro-Pakistan slogans.

However, while being booked might mean legal harassment and even stretches in prison, it would be unlikely that the police will be able to secure convictions for these charges. A 2024 Supreme Court judgment held that extending good wishes to Pakistan, or to any other country, for that matter, is not a criminal offence.

Context is key

Legal experts said that the context would determine whether the use of “Pakistani” as a slur against an Indian Muslim would qualify as a criminal

offence.

Naveed Mehmood Ahmad, senior resident fellow and the Crime and Punishment Team lead at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, a legal think tank, said that “in the context of leading or inciting communal violence, the use of ‘Pakistani’ as a slur may be covered under hate speech provisions”.

Without these qualifiers, however, it is more difficult to qualify the slur as a criminal offence. In private speech, for example, there are no grounds for criminality since regulation of speech under Article 19(2) of the Constitution only extends to public speech, explained Chadha. “The state has no business regulating what you say in private,” he said.

Delhi-based criminal lawyer and legal writer Abhinav Sekhri agreed that it was the context in which the slur is used which would determine whether it is being used in a hateful manner or not. “The bare text of the law won’t provide for that context,” he said. “Is it being used in a derogatory way? Is the impact such that the criminal law should be getting involved in it? Such analysis will have to be done by courts to determine whether something is an offence.”

However, the possibility of misusing the criminal justice system means that one should be wary of relying on criminal law to address



A cricket game at the National Stadium in Karachi in 2004.
Credit: Confederation of Voluntary Organisations, India.

the misuse of the slur, argued Arvind Verma, professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Indiana University, Bloomington in the United States and former Indian Police Services officer.

“Abusive language should only be addressed as a civil offence,” he said. “Such defamation is better handled by a civil suit; else it gives unnecessary powers to police that are likely to be misused.”

Ahmad agreed. “Our hate speech laws are so vague and widely misused for innocuous statements that I would refrain from going in the direction that if someone calls someone ‘Pakistani’ then they should be jailed for two years,” he said.



Credit: Amit Gupta/Reuters

New law needed?

Delhi-based lawyer Shah Rukh Alam said that the use of the “Pakistani” slur, such as by Kapil Mishra against Muslim protestors, was more than a problem of offensive speech.

“Hate speech causes structural discrimination,” she said. “And that is exactly what calling somebody a ‘Pakistani’ does: it raises doubts about Muslims’ loyalty – a mistrust that rests deep in the North Indian psyche – and suggests that Muslim political mobilisation is in itself a conspiracy.”

Mishra’s reference to anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protest sites as “mini-Pakistans” qualified as hate speech since it

implies that Muslim loyalties were not with India and their political mobilisation was dangerous, she said. This sentiment was used to allegedly incite violence against the protestors.

However, simply criminalising this speech might not be the best solution. “Because such prejudice about national loyalty and belonging builds up slowly, over time, you can’t throw somebody in jail for simply calling somebody else a ‘Pakistani’,” she said. But, she said, “there has to be a very strong cultural, political and social reaction to this”.

“This is not a law and order problem alone but that of an individual or group being targeted or discriminated against,” Alam said. “It must not be treated as a criminal law problem, but as a constitutional problem.”

Baudh similarly argued that the problem was urgent and pressing and current laws were not enough: India requires an anti-discrimination legislation to deal with this problem, he said.

He underlined that the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita which replaced the Indian Penal Code in July 2024 is a generic criminal legislation that does not recognise inequality as a factor of hate speech. He suggested that India needs a strong anti-discrimination law that holds people accountable for both criminal and civil violations.

Such a law, Baudh said, should not just focus on intentional hate but also on the impact of discrimination, especially on religious minorities.

He also highlighted a gap in legal protection. While Article 15(1) of the Constitution bans discrimination based on race and religion and Article 15(2) extends this protection to discrimination from private individuals and businesses, “religious and racial minorities are not protected from discrimination per se” due to “a glaring omission in the anti-discrimination law in India”. He argued that India needs a single, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation rather than separate laws for caste, religion and gender discrimination.

Courtesy **Scroll.in**, 16 March 2025. 🌈

Today on the occasion of Karl Marx's 142nd death anniversary!

Karl Marx had written an essay on choosing a profession in his matriculation examination at the age of seventeen. Generally, students write and speak on any topic to pass their studies. And later they forget it. But Karl Marx did not do that. Whatever he had written about his future profession for that examination, the writer had not hesitated in weaving lofty dreams in it. The most important thing he had written was this. "That instead of accepting work under someone that involves just following orders, we should give priority to such work by starting our own business or independent work, in which we can also do public service. No matter how much fame a writer or poet gets, he can never become big or great without doing public service. Doesn't the thinking of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, who considers him his Guru, match with Karl Marx? Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia used to insist that the salary of a sweeper and a high ranking official should be equal. And his Guru Mahatma Gandhi used to insist that the wages of a barber and a lawyer should be the same. That means, according to Karl Marx's theory about the value of labor, no work is small or big. Equality lies in this.

Unless we serve ourselves, we will not serve the happiness and peace of the people around us. And it is not right to go mad after just abstract ideas and exercises of words. This applies specially to the so-called intellectuals.

One important point of this essay drew the examiner's attention. And that was "How does the circumstances limit your ambition?" And just like with society, even before you make your own decision, some relationships are already decided. And our nature is inborn. It is not possible to change it and do any fixed profession.

Even at such a young age, Karl Marx's understanding of social structure seems to be at

an amazing level.

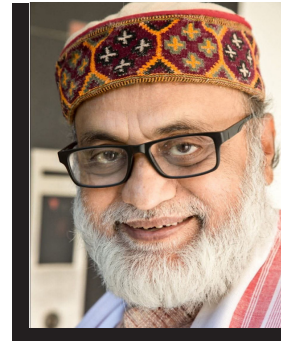
The literature of writers like Herder influenced him. That geographical area and the physical conditions of the time have a deep impact on human culture.

This was an idea that reached the common people then. Or the

other reason was the kind of restrictions that were imposed on the people of Jewish religion during Karl Marx's young age. And the kind of restrictions that were imposed on the people of Jewish religion, from tax to prohibition of doing any industry, to government jobs. And the mixed thoughts of the literature of writers like Herder could also be the reason why Karl Marx was ready to do social, economic, cultural and political analysis even at such a young age.

Karl Marx was born on 5 May 1818. His family and parents had been practicing as religious leaders for many generations. (Jewish) But his father Hisael Marx was a famous lawyer. He was influenced by both French and German cultures. Therefore, he studied the books of Voltaire and Leibniz very diligently. From a political point of view, he can be called a Prussian nationalist. Karl Marx's mother's name was Henrietta. She was a housewife. She never participated in the intellectual development or intellectual struggle of her son. And on top of that, she had eight children. She spent all her time serving her husband. Out of the eight children, only Karl Marx showed his ability in the intellectual field. The rest were normal.

Father Heschel Marx accepted Christianity two hundred years ago, in 1824. Karl Marx was



Dr. Suresh Khairnar

six years old at that time. And along with the change of religion, Heschel also changed his name. And he started being known as Heinrich. And what was the effect of this change of religion on Karl Marx's life? It is not known, but he escaped the consequences that he could have had to face if he had remained a Jew. But he himself remained anti-Semitic to some extent till the end of his life. It cannot be that the reason for this was that father abandoned Judaism.

In Trier, the neighbours of the Marx family were Prussian government officials named von Westphalen. He was fluent in many languages. He was a fan of Shakespeare and Homer. Karl Marx became close to the family because of his polyglot knowledge and interest in literature. His daughter Jenny and Karl Marx's sister were close friends.

Later Karl Marx also got attracted to Jenny. Although Jenny was four years older than Karl Marx. Karl Marx decided to marry her at the age of eighteen. Because Jenny was very beautiful and blessed with other qualities, Karl Marx remained loyal to Jenny till the end of his life.

Karl Marx took admission in Bonn University in the summer of 1835. After living there like an ordinary student with great difficulty for a year, his father got him admitted in Berlin University. And there, along with studying jurisprudence, Karl Marx, due to his passion for reading, studied all kinds of subjects ranging from history, philosophy, geography, literature and aesthetics, his field of study. And along with poetry, he was obsessed with exploring the secrets of the world and along with studying books on all these subjects, he developed the habit of taking notes. Due to this, in his passion for studies, he studied books like Lessing, Solger, Winkelmann, Luden's History of Germany very diligently. And along with this, he tried to study English and Italian languages with the help of books. But he could not make much progress in them.

Due to his studious nature, he could not make

many friends. In his leisure time, he used to prepare his own formula of elements and rejecting the theory of new ideas, he accepted Hegel's ontology. Till then he was not aware of the dormant power within him. And this time was the biggest transitional period of his life. And in this situation, he wrote in a letter to his father, "That (10 November 1837), as one phase of life ends and I enter the next phase, I feel that this is the time when the future direction of my life is likely to be decided."

And then he was completely stuck in Hegel's Philosophy of Modern Age. On the other hand, the father was very disappointed with the letter of his son. He wrote to him that "at least learn something under a senior lawyer or do some government job. But Karl Marx wrote that "I want to become a professor". In 1841, he wrote a thesis on Democracy and the Philosophy of Epicurus. And got a doctorate degree on the same thesis. But his father was not alive to see his success. He could not see the proof of Karl Marx's educational qualification due to his sudden death due to some illness in May 1838 at the age of 56.

When he did not get the job of a teacher in the Prussian government as per his wish due to his revolutionary ideas, he turned towards journalism. And by his luck, he got the opportunity to publish the first issue of a newspaper named 'Rheinische Zeitung' on 1 January 1842. And due to the retirement of the first editor in October of the same year, Karl Marx had to involuntarily take up the responsibility of the editor.

But the Prussian government's information department found Karl Marx's writing on social, political and other topics quite offensive. And due to the government's ill-will, Karl Marx had to leave the post of editor due to the conflict between the government and the newspaper's managers over the right to information and freedom of expression.

Anyway, he was eager to find time to study economics. So, after working as a newspaper

editor for only five months, on 17 March 1843, he decided to leave the newspaper job and depart for his homeland to devote himself to more serious thinking and study. But before that, he thought of taking on Hegel in an ideological confrontation.

By the way, Karl Marx was greatly influenced by Hegel's theory of anti-evolution. Due to Karl

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Social Justice, not just...

Three, the report hints at engaging with the private sector, though its proposals are nebulous at this stage. Any enforcement of a quota may be counterproductive here, but the state can mandate diversity requirements to qualify for governmental subsidies and contracts. Finally, we need to look beyond the state and think of innovative ways to nudge NGOs, self-help groups and community charities to address the needs of local Muslim communities.

None of this is going to happen in the near future under a regime that draws its sustenance from anti-Muslim politics. But someone needs to draw up a blueprint and keep it in a drawer for future use. The approach adopted by this report looks like the smartest feasible option we have for the foreseeable future. 🌈

Marx's revolutionary ideas, he moved from Germany to France and from France to Belgium and from 1849 till his death on 5 May 1883, he stayed in England. Where he became friends with the son of a mill owner like Friedrich Engels. And together they published the Communist Manifesto in 1848. And after Karl Marx's death, Friedrich Engels published the volumes of Capital. And he also took the responsibility of maintaining his family. This kind of friendship is rare. And Karl Marx's wife Jenny, despite being from a rich family, has sacrificed herself to take care of Karl Marx's intellectual ability. Such wives are also rare. But due to personalities like Jenny and Friedrich Engels in Karl Marx's life, Karl Marx devoted more than forty years of his total 65 years of life to the thought of socialism and the establishment of an ideal society according to it, to make a classical analysis of the capitalism that arose after the industrial development of the world. (Died 14 March 1883 in London.) Due to the continuous practice of knowledge like our sages, today on the pretext of Karl Marx's 142nd death anniversary, the need for socialism is being felt for the entire world in the background of the growing danger of capitalism and free marketism. And for that, in the true sense, the socialists from India to the entire world have got an opportunity to unite. And this can be the true tribute to Karl Marx.

Dr. Suresh Khairnar, 14 March 2025, Nagpur. 🌈



"The people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything, that is done in a public way, by their public functionaries. They are entitled to know the particulars of every public transaction in all its bearing."

Justice K K Mathew,
former Judge, Supreme Court of India,
(1975)

DEI – WHERE ARE WE?

Jawaharlal Jasthi

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – the three ideals adopted by the government of the United States of America in its administration are fit and relevant for a country reputed to be the strong hold of democracy and human rights. But the country is now held in the suffocating grip of white supremacy and religious superiority. Diversity has become an anathema and the policy is reversed with such an enthusiasm that it is being implemented even before the new president took oath of office. The ground is prepared and pillars started to fall down.

Air Force General Brown, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is sent home unceremoniously. It is the same person who was praised by the same president when he was appointed Chief of Air Staff in 2020. It is not that he is found unfit to be the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff. When he became the Chief of Air Staff, he acknowledged the services of many officers who were deprived of the opportunities because of the colour of their skin. The possible allegation now is that he came to occupy the position by virtue of the color of his skin under the policy of DEI adopted by the earlier president who happened to be a Democrat. General Brown is replaced by Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan Caine, a white man. He doesn't have the qualifications prescribed for the post. It is the openly declared policy of the new president to erase all the footprints of that policy alleging that it led to injustice to efficient people and advantage to inefficient ones. Diversity, for him, means pollution and contamination.

It may be recalled that India faced the same situation when the policy of positive action was adopted to give opportunities to socially and economically backward classes of people.

Now it has become the cornerstone of the constitutional policy. Even then, the government is not able to compel the private sector employers to adopt the same policy in regard to their employees selection. Strangely, in the case of America, the private sector is bending backwards to adopt the policy of government even in the absence of any such dictate from the government. They have gone to the extent of erasing the policy of diversity already in operation in their respective organisations to fall into the good looks of the government. All these days we are under the impression that the corporate powers are dictating policy to the American government by virtue of their money power. Now the roles are reversed.

The two sources of power – money and politics - are identified since the days of having something like a government. The two were playing the game of cat and mouse. It may be political economy one day and economic politics the other day. But largely they are growing together with mutual understanding and cooperation. Political power is getting enhanced and concentrated by drawing constitutions and regulations in the name of democracy for the benefit of the people. We can see the seeds of authoritarianism in democratic constitutions like India and America as well. We console ourselves by saying the results of the constitution depend on the persons implementing it. However tightly the constitution is drafted, there will be situations where the executive will have discretion. It is the same with judiciary as well. The court is expected to give judgment according to law. Whatever the law, the judge will have discretion. That is why the prime minister of India is able to announce that the state where

his party is in power will have opportunity to grow faster. He calls such a state as 'double engine'. That double engine has only one source of power, that is, the Central government that can dispense favours or troubles at its discretion. It is a **single power double engine**. Political power and influence are weaponized. You can't say it is nepotism or partiality. It is after all, sanctioned by the constitution or at least not forbidden by the constitution. Money also plays its part, but only as a weapon in the hands of political power. It has no independent identity.

Even money can be accumulated without any limits. Its power increases directly in proportion with its quantity. Spread thinly over the population it gets no recognition. But when accumulated it starts showing its power. It becomes capital. Not satisfied with its own power it tempts to get political power too. It can purchase everything it wants. After all, everybody has a price. You have only to identify it. But political authority can do something to prevent such accumulation of money. That is how the Chinese government prevented Jack Ma from expanding his empire by preventing his public issues. "What you already have is more than enough. Rest with it" they said. There are many such other persons in the country with limited (may be high) quantity to prevent them from becoming a source of power. But the money in other democratic countries is more intelligent. There is no such limitation on them. They are free to accumulate to any extent. But after reaching a certain level, the threshold, it starts to act. After all, you cannot eat it all, not even your next generation. What is the use of accumulation over such a long time? The only other power equal to money power is political power. History is full of stories where the politician got money power and the moneyed man got political power. The two are interchangeable. In most cases the politician tended to control or acquire the money

power using the political power. Even now there is such a danger where the politician may wield his power to deprive the moneyed man of his money in the name of democracy or social justice.

It may not be necessary for a capitalist government to control the power of money. But in a democracy or a socialist country it is always possible that the government may be obliged to exercise its sovereign power to control money power. When political power is likely to do something to control the money power, the money approaches politics with an offer. "Look, I know you have the power to confiscate my money and render me worthless overnight. But what is the use of it? All the money goes to the account of government. Neither of us is benefitted. You too are in politics like me. You too need money. Of course, you can raise it in no time just by making a call while in power. But you may get a bad name which erodes your reputation as an honest leader. To some extent you can do it without the danger of reputation. But it would not be enough for your purpose. If you let me have the money that I have with me now, I will be able to provide you with the required money for elections. Meanwhile I will be adding more to my coffers, I agree. I will not bother you with legal problems that I may face. I know how to take care of it. But I will be able to ensure that any of your opponents are discredited or even annihilated, if necessary, before the next elections. Let us be practical instead of ideal. Leave me alone."

The deal is done. Both the powers agree to live together, side by side. But money plays at a lower individual level while politics plays at a higher national level. There is always a danger of politician using his power to usurp the money. Money has to grow to such a level where the politician cannot afford to disrespect it, has to deal with it as an equal. That is what happened in the case of the United States of

America. The person that holds the highest political power has joined hands with the richest person in the world. Together they formed the government. Being equal partners in the venture one is *de jure* president and the other is *de facto* president. The government has become a **double power single engine**. A perfect case of **sympiosis**.

But it seems such an elaborate plan is also not necessary. The money power just bends and pays homage to the political power. Otherwise, what is the meaning in the so-called giant corporations falling in line to implement the policy of defying diversity even before the government demands it? In fact, the order is kept in abeyance by a court. The major corporations like Google, Meta and Amazon are anxious to please the president by declaring their adoption of his policy. The CEO of Accenture has gone to the extent of telling their staff that the company will be withdrawing the diversity goals adopted in 2017 and discontinue the career development programs for people of specific demographic groups. They tried to justify the same as a consequence of “evaluation of internal policies and practices and the evolving landscape in the US including recent executive orders with which we must comply.” The giant corporations are spread all over the world. As a result, the policy will be implemented in the branches in all the other countries. That is the effect of the high power. When America catches cold, the world starts sneezing!

Elon Musk, the richest man in the world is already on the throne dictating terms. Mark Zuckerberg, the second richest man, has the Facebook under his command. Jeff Bezos, the third richest man is the owner of Washington Post. Where is the freedom of speech? Their freedom, of course, is ensured. They are really

free as they are beyond accountability.

There is a tradition in America that when the president enters office, he has to put all his business interests in a Trust and not interfere with it in their administration. But Trump refused to put himself in Trust. Perhaps it would not have been feasible also even if he agrees as his interests are so vast to be contained in a Trust. There is already news that he is establishing relations with royalties to benefit through his businesses. At the top level it is called cooperation and adjustment, not corruption. It can be always argued that it is in the interest of the great country, that is, the United States of America. That is real sympiosis!

But under the US system, the policy that may be adopted by the private sector need not be politically correct. Even when the government compels them to follow the government they can object if they want by going to court. But in this case, they are falling in line even when the executive order itself is stayed by a court and there are no direct orders to the private sector to fall in line. In a free country it is not necessary for a private company to be politically correct. Power centers are the black holes around which everything else rotates. If it happens in a country supposed to be enlightened, progressive and stronghold of democratic values, what is going to be the future of democracy? Is democracy losing its lustre? Is it due to lack of eternal vigilance? Whose responsibility is vigilance and how is it to be exercised?

Jawaharlal Jasthi,

Hyderabad, 6-3-596/65 Naveen Nagar

1 March 2025

Khairatabad, HYDERABAD- 500004

Ph: 990 850 2144 

Error regretted: By error in place of the April 2025 issue of The Radical Humanist, the April 2024 issue was sent by post. The inconvenience caused is regretted and the current issue is being sent. - Editor

A very sad moment in American History

Thanks everybody for joining me for a very serious issue. Yesterday we witnessed a very sad moment in American History. We saw the president of the United States, aligning with the dictator of Russia namely Vladimir Putin to undermine the independence of Ukraine and its democracy.

Let us be clear. Trump is showing us one of the world's most brutal dictators as his friend. And our all time friends of Europe as his enemies. He wants a world which is safe for dictators and Oligarchs and extremely dangerous for democratic nations.

It will not surprise you when I am telling you that Trump is lying as he often does. Yesterday Trump said that Ukraine has started a war. That's not true. Russia invaded Ukraine twice, first in 2014 and again in second in 2022. Russia occupies 20 % of Ukraine territory. Since Putin's horrific invasion on Ukraine, 1 million people have been killed or injured. Every single day Russia pounds hundreds of missiles and drones on Ukraine cities. Russian forces have kidnapped thousands of children from Ukraine and brought them back to Russia in "Re- Education camp." These atrocities led the International court to declare Putin as a war criminal & issue an arrest warrant against Putin.

Trump calls Ukraine's president Zelensky a dictator, it is a lie. Zelensky won 75% of votes in the free election. Actual approval rating is higher than Trump. In this brutal war Ukraine Parliament continues to function. And free and unfettered political debate or discussion goes on. Trump argues that our European allies support little in this war. He claims that the USA has spent 3 times more than the combined European Union. But that is another lie. In fact, Europe has provided more help to Ukraine than the USA. It is not that Trump is lying again. That is not new. But it reveals all about USA that where he wants to take our country? & In fact, the entire world.

Trump is cozying (happy or comfortable space) up to Putin. So what is Putin and what kind of the world he wants to build? Putin is a dictator who crushed the movement for democracy after the end of the cold war.



Bernie Sanders

Russia holds a sham election every six years where Putin gets 90% of votes. And authority does want to hide this fact. There is no freedom of speech and free media in Putin's Russia. Protests against Putin's regime are violently suppressed. Ten of thousand people are put in jails for protesting against Putin's Russia invasion on Ukraine. Political opponents are jailed & even some were killed by the state police. Hundreds and thousands have fled from Putin's Russia to save their lives since his invasion of Ukraine. But Putin has controlled his regime in his country. There is a mutual deal between Russian Oligarchs & Putin to perpetuate their interest by helping each other. These crony capitalists helped Putin to enjoy absolute power. Putin's allowed offshore tax benefits in billions of dollars to these oligarchs. But that is not the perspective of US People.

We know & are proud of the fact that the US is the longest standing democracy of the world. We know that many hundreds and thousands of American people have given their lives for that cause. We also know in the world that our allies are those countries which have democratic forms of government.

In these critical moments of history, I hope all USA citizens regardless of political perspectives will stand for yes Democracy and no to oligarchy and authoritarian government.

***Bernie Sanders**, is Senator of Democratic Party, Vermont State, US. 🇻🇹

Why and How to Protect Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)



Emily Newman

As promised, President Donald Trump started his second term issuing executive orders to eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs within the federal government; DEI offices and policies within the military, Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security; and any acceptance of transgender people and transgender troops, including banning “identification-based pronoun usage” in the military. He threatened legal action against private entities—like public companies, non-profits, and universities—that use DEI and claimed in his inaugural address that he would “forge a society that is colorblind and merit-based.” (He should read *When Colorblindness Isn't the Answer* by renowned humanist Dr. Anthony Pinn, plus many other books.)

As expected, he hasn't provided any directives to form a meritocracy or address DEI goals of improving organizational culture and substantive equality. Instead, he and his team are scapegoating DEI for their failures and perpetuating the falsehood that white, cis-gender, able-bodied, straight, Christian males are always the best candidates (while simultaneously proving the contrary). It's not shocking that someone known for hiring his family and friends, despite their incompetence in the given role, doesn't understand or care about the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Diversity refers to the variety of people being represented and can include characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical and mental disability,

age, culture, class, veteran status, or religion. Collaboration with different perspectives and ways of thinking helps us expand our understanding of each other, our work, and society.

Equity addresses the practice of fairness and justice by focusing on societal disparities and allocating resources. This includes ensuring that groups that have been historically disadvantaged or those who will be most impacted by an action have decision-making authority. While equality assumes all people should be treated the same (like the Golden Rule: “do unto others as you would have them do unto you”), equity considers a person's needs and adjusts treatment so the end result is equal (like the Platinum Rule: “do unto others as they'd like done unto them”).

Inclusion creates a welcoming and empathetic organizational culture where all feel heard and have a sense of belonging. People are valued and respected not just for what they do for others but also for who they are.

People like Trump incorrectly see DEI as a way to force race and gender into every aspect of society. Many don't realize DEI efforts in the United States go back to 1865 when veterans from the US Civil War received support obtaining jobs after their service. In the 1930s, multiple laws were established to assist blind and severely disabled business owners. This was all before Affirmative Action and the Civil Rights Movement prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in the 1960s. DEI aims to dismantle the oppressive systems that harm us all. (To understand these systems, how they intersect, and how we can all take steps to not let them disconnect and divide us, check out white supremaculture. info.)

Here are a few ways we can take action to protect DEI:

- Use your purchasing power to speak up against companies ending their DEI work and in support of those keeping it despite Trump's threats. Forbes is keeping track of those dumping DEI and CNBC and others are tracking which are holding the line. You can also directly contact them or tag them on social media to make a bigger impact.
- Establish and sustain DEI practices in your offices and organizations.
 - ❑ Ensure hiring includes blind admissions to avoid name bias, application questions (beyond just inputting one's resume) to understand their skills, interviews including those most impacted by the position, and work projects (preferably paid) to see them in action as a potential employee and colleague.
 - ❑ Improve retention with regular educational trainings (not outdated sexual harassment videos but useful content on how to have respectful interactions), checking in on workloads and strategies, addressing conflicts and microaggressions, and offer flexible hours, remote work, and hybrid options whenever possible. Provide growth opportunities and be open to feedback to

encourage people to stay long-term. Our society too often puts perfectionism over progress and quantity over quality, leading to burn out. Invest time, energy, and money into improving organization or company culture.

- ❑ Seek guides, like this one from the Human Rights Campaign, and partners who can help.
- Make online and in-person spaces more accessible. Look around and consider how easy it is for people to participate in different activities in various locations. This could mean physical changes like ramps, elevators, signage, and sound systems; personnel changes like ASL interpreters, transcribers, technicians, and greeters; social changes like the terminology we use and assumptions we make; and so much more. Think about what makes you feel included and when you feel represented, and how you can speak up to educate others. Listen when others share their experiences and perspectives.

Eradicating DEI practices will not only hurt individuals, it will have endless consequences for employers and institutions. We need a society and a government that values its people and is dedicated to making life better for them.

***Emily Newman** is the Program Manager at the American Humanist Association's Center for Education. 🌈



Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I Fell down and got back up again.

– Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

Legal Article:

Liberty Can't Be Curtailed Citing Participation in Protests: Kerala HC

Sanjeev Sirohi

It is definitely a matter of immense satisfaction to note that while according paramount priority to the personal liberty of citizens which is ostensibly also a fundamental right of every citizen as enshrined as a basic fundamental tenet under Article 21 of the Constitution, the Kerala High Court in a most learned, laudable, landmark, logical and latest judgment titled *Sharmina A vs Sub-Divisional Magistrate & Ors* in *Crl.MC.No.10742/24* and cited in *Neutral Citation No.: 2025:KER:16397* and *Crime No.138/2024* of Thalapuzha Police Station, Wayanad against the Order/Judgment dated in *MC NO.686* of 2024 of Sub Divisional Magistrate, Perinthalmann that was finally heard on 13.02.2025 and then pronounced finally as recently as on 18.02.2025 has minced absolutely just no words whatsoever to state in no uncertain terms most unequivocally that the liberty of citizens is sacrosanct and cannot be curtailed merely because they have participated in public protests. It also must be highlighted and is really worth paying attention that the Single Judge Bench comprising of Hon'ble Mr Justice VG Arun made the key observation while quashing an order that had directed a woman to execute a bond of Rs 50,000 along with sureties to maintain peace for one year. Very rightly so!

At the very outset, this pertinent, progressive, pragmatic and persuasive judgment authored by the Single Judge Bench comprising of Hon'ble Mr Justice VG Arun of Kerala High Court at Ernakulam sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 1 that, "The challenge in this *Crl.M.C* is against Annexure A1 preliminary order under

Section 130 of the BNSS issued by the Sub Divisional Magistrate, Perinthalmanna requiring the petitioner to show cause why she should not be ordered to execute a bond for Rs.50,000/- with sureties to keep peace for a period of one year. The basis for issuing the order is Annexure A2 report of the Station House Officer, Kolathur Police Station stating that, by repeatedly indulging in illegal activities, petitioner is likely to cause breach of peace and disturb public tranquillity in the locality."

To put things in perspective, the Bench envisages in para 2 while elaborating on the facts of this leading case that, "Learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that, among the crimes referred in Annexure A2 report, the allegation in *Crime No.138* of 2024 registered at Thalapuzha Police Station is that the petitioner, along with 12 other individuals, held a procession to commemorate the death anniversary of a lady named Kavitha, who was associated with a Maoist group. The allegation in *Crime No.123* of 2024 registered at the Nilambur Police Station is that on 22.01.2024, between 18:50 and 19:10 hrs, petitioner and other accused belonging to Purogamana Yuvajana Prasthanam organised a demonstration, disrupted traffic and shouted the slogan "In the land of Babari, Justice is only Masjid". The 3rd crime, registered as per Annexure A5, pertains to a protest by the petitioner and 7 others against an NIA raid in Pandikkad. According to the learned counsel, voicing one's opinion and expressing dissent is every citizen's fundamental right and petitioner's liberty cannot be curtailed, by reason of her participation in demonstrations

and voicing her opinion. It is contended that, for invoking the power under Section 126 and compelling a person to execute bond under Section 130 of BNSS, the Sub Divisional Magistrate should reach a prima facie conclusion that the activities of that person is posing imminent threat to the peace and tranquillity in the locality. In support of the contention, reliance is placed on the decisions in *Kuldip Singh Chawla and Others v. The State of Bihar* [1988 Supreme (Pat) 107], *Ashish Khanna v. State of Bihar through S.D.M.* [2007 Supreme (Pat) 1130] and *Bijay Sankar Sen and Ors. Vs. State of Assam and Others* [2021 Supreme (Gau) 415].”

Be it noted, the Bench notes in para 3 that, “According to the learned Public Prosecutor, repeated registration of crimes against the petitioner for holding demonstrations and disrupting traffic shows that she is an imminent threat to peace and tranquillity. Hence, petitioner has to be restrained, by requiring her to execute the bond under Section 130 of BNSS.”

Do also note, the Bench then notes in para 4 of this balanced judgment stipulating that, “The contentions advanced give rise to the question whether petitioner’s liberty can be curtailed, by requiring her to execute bond for keeping peace for participating in demonstrations to protest against the policies of the Government. While answering this question, it has to be borne in mind that Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees to every citizen freedom of speech and expression, right to assemble peaceably without arms and to form associations or unions. Indeed, those rights are subject to reasonable restrictions and cannot be exercised contrary to public order, decency, morality or against the sovereignty, integrity and security of the State.”

While citing the relevant and remarkable case laws, the Bench then hastens to add in para 5 of this brilliant judgment propounding

that, “A perusal of the impugned order shows that, other than relying on Annexure A2 report, the Sub Divisional Magistrate has not formed an independent opinion that the activities of the petitioner are an imminent threat to the peace and tranquillity in the locality. As held by the Apex Court in *Madhu Limaye v. Sub-Divisional Magistrate Monghyr And others* [1970 3 SCC 746], even though an order directing execution of bond for preventing breach of peace may have the appearance of an administrative order, in reality it is judicial in character. Therefore, reasons are to be stated in the order passed by the Magistrate. This Court in *Santhosh M.V. and Others v. State of Kerala and Others* [2014 KHC 522] has also held that, while initiating proceedings under Section 107 Cr.P.C. (126 BNSS), Magistrate must pass a preliminary order, stating nature of information received and the relevant factors which influenced him to form an opinion that the concerned person is likely to cause imminent breach of peace, making it essential to take preventive action against that person.”

Finally and far most significantly, we see that the Bench then encapsulates in para 6 what constitutes the cornerstone of this notable judgment postulating precisely that, “The liberty of a citizen being sacrosanct, cannot be curtailed in a casual manner, by referring to crimes relating to public demonstrations. Mere participation in demonstrations, holding of banners or shouting slogans, cannot be perceived as activities in violation of the reasonable restrictions mentioned in Article 19. Moreover, mere mentioning of the crimes pending against a person will not satisfy the requirement of giving reasons and the apprehended breach of peace must be imminent. The conduct or wrongful acts, which are projected as the reason for issuing the order must have occurred recently and must be relatable to the apprehension of likelihood of breach of peace.

(To be Contd....on Page -34)

The Humanist Frame

The Democratic Challenge

(Summarized by: **Vinod Jain**)

Francis Williams

The most significant political fact we have to deal with in the second half of the twentieth century is the universal acceptance of the idea of democracy. With equal vehemence and possibly equal sincerity Capitalist West and Communist East proclaim themselves the only true democracies.

The more democratic side, that is the side giving most weight to the popular will, has been victorious in practically every major war for the past 250 years. Yet the triumph of the idea of democracy, as what politics is fundamentally about, is astonishing in both the speed and the breadth of its advance. Central governments have been in existence for at least 5,000 years, democratic ones for less than twentieth of that time.

The idea of democracy has swept the world as no other has ever done: it has become the yeast which is today the activating agent in every major social eruption in Africa and Asia as well in America and Europe.

An alliance between the Western Allies and Soviet Russia against Nazi Germany was natural and satisfying to most ordinary people because it seemed a genuine expression of unity in a war against counter-democratic principles. Communism in western eyes is a distortion of democracy, but Nazism was its complete negation, founded on principles wholly antithetical to it. With the defeat of Nazi Germany the triumph of the democratic idea became complete.

As rival Christians have now settled down to doing after trying to kill each other for so long. We have to find other ways to make it possible for rival Democrats to live with each other. This is the primary political function of

Humanism, which alone is fitted for it.

Change is inherent in democracy, but it is inimical (hostile) to all systems of authority, whether Christian or Muslim, Capitalist or Communist which believe themselves to be possessed of absolute and final truths. And this conflict between democracy and authoritarianism remains even if the authoritarian systems themselves contain important democratic elements.

Since the Middle Ages the history of Christianity as a social and political force has been the history of a struggle between the slowly developing idea of democracy and the religious doctrine of Christianity, with the latter almost continuously on the retreat. Medieval Christianity could encompass the whole edifice of feudal society, it could endorse serfdom and stamp its moral seal upon unchangeable class privilege and class exploitation — concepts which appear to us today as not only undemocratic but also unchristian — because feudal society was a closed society in which the primacy of the religious law was accepted as a principle by all, although not honoured in practice by most. In that society the authority of the Christian Commonwealth might be avoided, it could not be fundamentally challenged. It was supreme in all branches of human activity, political, economic, social, because all activities were seen as part of a single system directed to a single end and that end a Christian one.

The modern civilization has permitted its increasing domination by two great materialist heresies (belief or opinion which goes against traditional religious doctrine): the heresy of twentieth-century Capitalism and the heresy

of twentieth-century Communism.

The common belief in democracy, which is real enough in both cases, twentieth-century Capitalism and twentieth-century Communism confront each other on the world stage with the same implicability (unwilling to stop being hostile towards someone) as the two main branches of Christianity, Catholicism and Protestantism, formerly did on the European (stage), or as Christianity and Islam did earlier.

However, the schisms (a deep disagreement between two groups) within democracy have this advantage when set against those between Christians: neither Capitalism nor Communism as yet actually claims supernatural origin. Marx, though prophetic, is not God. There are thus some grounds for hoping that Communism may outlive its terrorist and totalitarian phase more quickly than Christianity did. But they have had the power to do so for only just over forty years and there are some signs that they are less pleased with murder than they were. It may be unpleasant if one is a fallen Minister to be sent as an Ambassador to a remote and inconvenient territory or to find oneself posted to a subordinate job in a Collective, but it is preferable to being killed, and less final. The formerly unlimited powers of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment without trial have been ended, and there is now a good deal of evidence that not only is the ordinary Soviet Citizen much better fed and clothed than he was but that he feels a good deal freer than he did. We cannot build too much on this; but forty years is not long in the history of religions and it is something that the authoritarian materialist religion of Communism should give some evidence of turning away from violence so much more quickly than the supernatural religions did.

At the same time problems central to the future of humanity, as for example the balance between birth-rates and food-resources, or the fact that the United States with less than 10 per cent of the world's population is now using up

nearly two-thirds of the world's mineral production, are pushed to the periphery of politics, being lucky indeed to find a foothold even there.

Having got ourselves into such a situation, is there any way in which we can escape from it without mass murder and suicide?

The short answer is that there is none unless we are prepared to stop thinking politically as Capitalists, or Communists, Christians, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists, and think as Humanists. The world's democratic dialogue can only be conducted in a global humanist frame. A world in which men have both hydrogen bombs and closed minds is altogether too dangerous.

The Humanist does not deny that real conflicts of national interest exist and are likely to go on existing, that the passion for clothing religious, political and economic beliefs in ideological vestments runs so deep that it is not likely to be easily eradicated, and that these ideological differences are not only genuine but of great significance to the future of the human condition.

But politics is a matter of social organisation. Its business is that of finding means by which men can live together. It is concerned with the possibilities and limitations of human action.

Where the democratic idea takes hold in politics, as it has now done in some form or another over most of the world, these possibilities and limitations have to be made understandable to ordinary citizens.

Something more than consent is required if democracy is to be more negatively successful — there must be a common belief in the value and importance of what is being done and a common sense that all have in some measure the opportunity of contributing to it.

The history of political advance is the history of ever-widening loyalties. The loyalties we now require have to be wide enough to embrace the human race as a whole.

Humanism offers the possibility of such a loyalty. It sees man in his true stature as the highest product and only agent of evolutionary process. It provides a frame within which conflicts of world political systems fall into place.

We cannot be sure that they will follow reason in their political arrangements even when the path of reason is clear and unimpeded. But at least Humanism builds no deliberate barriers to human understanding and sets no booby-traps of it's own along the political road. Nor does it

ask that those who travel shall be blindfolded. It makes instead the revolutionary proposal that we should advance with our eyes open and our minds ready to learn from experience, and should take with us an honest knowledge of our past to enrich our future. It does not offer a sure guarantee against political disaster: nothing can do that. But at least it offers us the means to arm ourselves against the worst follies of ignorance and intolerance, and a route to the mountains. We cannot expect more. 🌈

(To be continued)

Liberty Can't Be Curtailed...

Contd. from page - (31)

In the case at hand, the impugned order does not even indicate the factors that had prompted the Magistrate to form an opinion that, unless prevented, activities of the petitioner will result in breach of peace and disturb public tranquillity. For the aforementioned reasons, the Crl.M.C is allowed. Annexure A1 order and all further proceedings thereon are quashed.”

All said and done, the bottom-line of the aforesaid discussion is that the Single Judge Bench comprising of Hon'ble Mr Justice VG Arun of Kerala High Court at Ernakulam has made it indubitably clear in this noteworthy judgment that the liberty of citizens is sacrosanct and cannot be curtailed merely because they have participated in public protests. It thus certainly merits no reiteration that all the courts in India must definitely pay heed to what the Kerala High Court has held so very clearly, cogently, commendably and convincingly in this leading case! No denying! 🌈

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Book Review :

Rajnarayan is not a name but history

Dr. Suresh Khairnar

After reading the 512 page book titled “Rajnarayan is not a name but history” edited by my Lucknow friend Shahnawaz Ahmad Qadri, I am writing this article as a self-confession and to review the book. Although Shahnawaz ji had been urging me for a long time to write something on Rajnarayan ji. But whatever I had heard about Rajnarayan ji from the leaders of the Praja Socialist Party of Maharashtra since childhood, he was nothing more than a ridiculous person. But after reading this book, I have no hesitation in accepting that the image I had about Rajnarayan ji was wrong. And after Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Rajnarayan ji was one of the people who truly lived up to his “prison, vote and shovel principle”.

Raj Narayan ji, born 30 years before independence (23 November 1917), lived a total of 69 years. (Died 31 December 1986) Born in a royal family of Kashi, Raj Narayan ji lived a life like a fakir. Although being the father of four sons and a daughter and being born in a feudal family himself, in the era of so-called political successors, none of his family members are in politics. All of them lived a normal life, that too on their own strength, educated and got jobs. Recently, the third son Mr. Jai Prakash, who retired from the job of Uttar Pradesh Government and lived in Allahabad, died. The eldest son Bhuvaneshwar Prakash died of illness in his youth. The second son Mohanji lives in the village and does farming. And the younger son Om Prakash, retired from the job of a bank and lives in Varanasi. And daughter Savitri Devi is married in Azamgarh. The reason for giving all this in detail is that what was the image of Raj Narayan ji in our own eyes? And what is the

real situation? People should know this, so I am giving it.

Raj Narayan’s political career started when he was 13 years old (1930). He started his life as a student leader of Banaras University. And he was first arrested in 1939 for anti-war protests. So, he was imprisoned for five years before the age of 30, until independence was achieved as per Lohia’s jail, shovel and vote.

After independence, as per the slogan of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia “He who tills the land and sows it is its owner”, all the people who were Jyothidar (owners) of their ancestral land were declared owners of their share of the land.

The Satyagraha movement for Dalits’ entry into Vitthal temple of Pandharpur in Maharashtra was started in 1948 under the leadership of Saneguruji. And there is a lot of discussion about it. But in 1956, the Satyagraha movement for Dalits’ entry into Kashi Vishwanath temple was led by Rajnarayanji. And during that Satyagraha, police and army were deployed. But Rajnarayanji did Satyagraha without caring about the army and police. In which the police beat him till he was covered in blood. And he was imprisoned for six months in an injured state. But he took rest only after Dalits were allowed to enter the temple and digging out the plaque outside the temple that read “Entry of Dalits is prohibited”.

And in the same way, the British rule was removed, but in 1957, despite ten years of independence, the statues of the British were present everywhere. Rajnarayan ji was the first leader who, on this issue, regarding the statue of Queen Victoria in Benia Bagh of Banaras, first requested the government in a way that “now the native people have come in

place of the British, so these statues, which are symbols of slavery, should be removed.” But when the government rejected the demand to remove the statue, how was Rajnarayan ji going to agree? So he started a movement in a hallaboli style. And despite heavy police arrangements, he reached the statue with his companions and stopped only after demolishing it.

However, during his act, the police were continuously lathi-charging him. And after that, he was put in jail for 27 months. This means that Raj Narayan ji has been in jail for a longer period after independence than before independence. Apart from the 19 months of emergency.

And in that too, in the light of the 1971 Bangladesh war of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, no leader from all opposition parties, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee, was ready to contest the election against her. Raj Narayan ji alone accepted this challenge and contested the election from Rae Bareilly. And even after losing, he did not give up. Because he filed a petition in Allahabad High Court against Indira Gandhi ji on the charge of rigging in the election. And despite everyone making fun of him (even the socialists), Raj Narayan ji did not give up. He said that “Mrs. Indira Gandhi has rigged the election.” And surprisingly, Raj Narayan ji won his case against Mrs. Indira Gandhi in Allahabad High Court.

And anyway, there was a student movement going on in India from Gujarat to Bihar. And it was being led by Jayaprakash Narayan. On 12 June 1975, a judge named Jagmohan Lal Sinha of Allahabad High Court said in his judgment that “Mrs. Indira Gandhi won the election because of using corrupt methods in her election. Therefore, she is disqualified from the membership of Lok Sabha”. And there was an earthquake-like atmosphere in the whole world. And mainly after the independence of India, for the first

time in the history of our court, a judge raised the prestige of the court by giving a judgment against the person sitting on the highest post in the country. And the people who considered Rajnarayan ji a clown suddenly started considering him a national level leader. And since then, the word Netaji in front of Rajnarayan ji’s name has continued even after his death.

Indira Gandhi, fed up with the movement of Jayaprakash Narayan and the defeat of Raj Narainji’s case and the strike of railway employees led by George Fernandes, declared emergency on 25 June 1975.

And after nineteen months, on the basis of reports of various agencies, the fifth Lok Sabha was dissolved in January 1977 and elections were announced. And Raj Narayan ji announced from jail itself, “that I will contest the elections against Mrs. Indira Gandhi.” Although he was released on the 8th of February, he remained firm on his decision. His well-wishers said “that you should contest elections from two places.” For this, he was asked to contest from Pratapgarh. (Because out of the five assembly seats from that parliamentary constituency, three were with the Socialists!). Therefore, all the comrades insisted that he should contest from both the places. But he did not agree. And he stood only from Rae Bareilly. And won against Mrs. Indira Gandhi by 52 thousand votes.

And that is why Raj Narayan’s name was written in golden letters in the history of Indian democracy. He was given titles ranging from the Jimmy Carter of India to the Giant Killer. The media of India and the world have given him great respect. I mean, what all sentences did the same media not use about Raj Narayan as a clown a few days ago? And today the same media is praising him and building a pool of praise for him.

In 1977, as Health Minister in the Janata Government, he took the decision to give equal

status to Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Unani, and other traditional systems of medicine, which were neglected in India, with Allopathy for the first time.

I had tried a lot for this in my days in Homeopathy College as the college's GS. I had gone to Delhi (1971-72) and met the then President Shri V.V. Giri at Rashtrapati Bhawan with a delegation. I had demanded that Homeopathy and Ayurvedic systems of medicine, Unani and some other traditional systems of medicine which have been in practice for more than thousands of years, should be given the same status as Allopathy, taking classical cognizance of them. And within five years of my demand, Raj Narayan ji took this decision immediately after taking charge of the Health Ministry, so I went to Delhi and handed over a special thank you memorandum to him.

For me, the most important thing is that, considering the relationship of Jansangh with RSS, I had told respected S.M. Joshi ji during the Emergency, "that we can form an alliance with Jansangh for the elections for the time being, but by merging Socialist Party with this party, the Socialists will suffer a great loss. Because Jansangh is the political unit of RSS. Therefore, it will be a very wrong decision for the Socialists to form a party with a party whose ideological commitment is Hindutva, which is against socialism and secularism and which supports the capitalist system. And in this process, the Socialists will suffer the most. Therefore, an electoral alliance for the time being is fine. But forming a party with Jansangh is absolutely wrong." And that is why I personally was not on the side of Janata Party. And I was made the President of Maharashtra Janata Party for Amravati Lok Sabha on the insistence of JP. So, in that capacity, respected S. M. Joshi ji said that "In your election, I myself will bring JP, Jagjivan Ram and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit to Amravati for campaigning

with all my might." But when I did not agree, he requested me to become the General Secretary as the President of Maharashtra Janata Party.. I refused that too. Because today there is no need to tell how wrong the experiment of Janata Party with Jansangh was.

This is why when, within a few days, Raj Narayan ji saw the people of the Sangh interfering with the ministers of the Jana Sangh, he became alert and raised this issue before the formal Prime Minister Morarji Desai. But Morarji Bhai, who had worked as a collector in the British Raj before independence and considered himself more Gandhian than Jawaharlal Nehru and Vinoba Jaiprakash, simply ignored it. As, just before the Gandhi assassination, a police officer named Nagarwala, who was the Home Minister of Mumbai state, had written to Morarji Desai on 30 January 1948, a few days before, "I find the activities of barrister Vinayak Damodar Savarkar suspicious and this man is conspiring to kill Mahatma Gandhi. Therefore, please allow me to arrest him". So Murarji Desai got angry at Nagarwala and scolded him saying "Beware if you touch Savarkar, riots will start in Maharashtra." To bring out how old is Murarji Desai's sympathy for Hindutvaists, I am quoting from Manohar Mulgaonkar's book 'The men who killed Gandhi'. Anyway, since the Congress was an old religious party, it had an affinity towards RSS. Rajnarayan ji was the first to raise the issue of dual membership within the party. But some people, in their greed for power, did not like what Rajnarayan ji said. So Rajnarayan ji resigned from his ministerial post. And came into the role of opposition against the government of his own party. And was trying to create public awareness on the issue of dual membership in the entire country. But since the media was full of RSS people from the very beginning, a special, fast-paced campaign was launched to tarnish the image of Rajnarayan ji. And seeing all this, he raised

the flag of rebellion in July 1979 and broke the Janata Party and formed Janata Party Secular. And brought down the government of Morarji Desai. However, Madhu Limaye was fighting the battle intellectually regarding RSS in this work. And in the initial days, George Fernandes was supporting him. Who later went on to play the role of Hanumanji of RSS. And he has supported the Gujarat riots in the Lok Sabha. And he has given a clean chit to the incident of burning of Father Graham Staines and his two children, who had come from Australia and was serving the lepers of Manoharpukur of Kandhamal district of Orissa 25 years ago. I am shocked to see this phase of political downfall of George Fernandes in the last political innings of his life. Because I have seen with my own eyes the dissolution of the party of secular, socialist and more famous than Rajnarayan ji, socialist party in the presence of the last president of Samajwadi Party, George, in the lawn of Vitthalbhai Patel in Delhi with Acharya Kelkarji. And I myself was present in Gandhinagar from 27 February 2002 to 2 March, right from becoming the president of NDA in the new century to the state sponsored riots in Gujarat. And Narendra Modi, despite George being the defense minister, did not allow the army to come out of Ahmedabad airport for 24 hours. What responsibility was our country's defense minister discharging in Gujarat when he told this to three thousand soldiers and their commander, Lieutenant General Zameeruddin Shah? And George Fernandes, who saw the Gujarat program with his own eyes, giving a speech in support of the Gujarat riots in the Lok Sabha, I felt that this was the beginning of George Fernandes' political suicide. Therefore, in the fight against dual membership, Raj Narayan and Madhu Limaye both put their political careers at stake and fought against the Sangh. And the media wing of the Sangh has tried to tarnish the image of these two

socialist leaders by running a program to destroy their idols. Therefore, our dear friend Shahnawaz Qadri sahab has spent money from his own pocket on Raj Narayan ji, which is a sign of his loyalty and commitment towards Raj Narayan ji. In this 512 page book, apart from memoirs, ideological articles, interviews given by Raj Narayan ji, articles written by Raj Narayan ji himself, and 144 pages of information have been given on the issues raised on 31 important issues about his parliamentary work from the Parliamentary Library. He has played a historic role in his parliamentary life on very important and important issues of the country. Any amount of praise for Shahnawaz Qadri sahab for providing very important information in the form of documents is less. Special heartfelt thanks to our friend Shahnawazi for doing the important work of highlighting the neglected swan of Indian politics.

I myself was present with Acharya Kelkar in the conference organized at Vithalbhai Patel Lawn, Delhi, for the merger of Socialist Party into Janata Party. The party was dissolved under the chairmanship of George Fernandes. Perhaps Acharya Kelkar would have been there at the time of the formation of the party (in 1934 in Nasik). I came into this world nineteen years later (in 1953) and hence I did not get a chance to be present at the time of its establishment. But I want to say that it is the irony of time that since the childhood of my heart, due to Rashtra Seva Dal, I was watching with my own eyes the conference of the merger of a party close to me. And I and Acharya Kelkar were forced to see that immersion in a very sad state of mind, as if seeing the dearest person of our life being burnt in fire.

Dr Suresh Khairnar is Ex. President of Rashtra Sewa Dal.

Courtesy **Countercurrents.org**, 14/03/2025. 

Kissay Korat Kacheri Kay: Beacons of Power

Raju Z. Moray

Kissa No.9 (16.03.2025)

Many of my friends and contemporaries at the Bar accepted judgeships at Humbug Hi when offered and became milords.

All have now retired.

Today, I shall recount three _kissas_ involving three of them.

Once, when I was vacationing with my family at my birthplace in Southern Maharashtra famous for its Mahalaxmi Temple, a milord friend happened to come there on an official visit.

He and his wife were staying at the Government Circuit House.

It was not too far from our house and they dropped by to meet us.

A visiting milord of Humbug Hi on an official visit to a District was a big thing.

He was accorded the protocol status of a Minister and considered as a VIP.

As a result, there was a motorcycle pilot cop and a nice car with a red beacon at milord's disposal besides the driver and one police constable to accompany him as bodyguard.

All these trappings of power, especially the white car with the red light on top impressed my son who was then around four years old.

This milord and his wife had known my son since he was a baby.

Observing his fascination for the official car, they offered to take him along with them for sightseeing throughout the day.

My son was overjoyed.

When he was dropped off late in the evening from the _lal batti_ outing he could not stop talking about how every policeman on every road saluted the car, how traffic was stopped to let it pass, how on occasion the pilot bike sounded a siren.

All in all, his day was made.

He was fascinated.

We were invited for breakfast the next day at the Circuit House with milord and his wife before they departed for Humbug City.

As they were leaving, my son quipped "Uncle, just tell my Dad what he should do to get a car with a red light like yours!"

We all had had a good laugh then.

But the fascination for the _lal batti_ is not confined to small children alone.

It made the wife of another milord (who used to practice in the Family Court of Humbug City) make her husband drop her off at the Family Court before proceeding to Humbug Hi in his official car!

Just imagine the scene when a HC judge's car enters a Family Court's crowded compound.

The subordinate court judges in those days were officially transported in their official vehicles which mostly were Maruti Omni Vans discarded by other Government departments.

Four of them shared one rickety old Omni van which had "Nyayadhish" painted in Marathi prominently in red on all sides.

Perhaps to stop people pelting stones at them these "Nyayadhish" vans had iron meshing welded outside all their windows.

Curious bystanders used to peer inside whenever these vans stopped at traffic lights.

They may have wondered what kind of dangerous "animals" were being transported in these cages.

These Family Court judges stared in awe (and perhaps a latent aspiration) as milord's wife got dropped off in their compound in milord's new Baleno car even as their old Omni Van struggled to restart after they had squeezed their way out of it like the last bit of toothpaste from a reluctant tube.

Such an ostentatious display by milord's wife

may have impressed clients and perhaps even helped in enhancing her fees but it certainly did not translate into any favourable orders for milord's wife from the "Omni-present" FC judges of those days.

In courts during those days, the "Omnis" were not afraid to decide the fate of "Balenos".

Three cheers for that bygone era!

The last _kissa_ about use (or misuse) of a _lal batti gaadi_ is about a newly appointed milord's wife who used to anxiously await her hubby's return from Court once every week.

She would then promptly leave in his official "red light vehicle" to go and buy vegetables from the crowded market in the vicinity where ladies from their housing society did their weekly shopping.

Milord had still not been allotted an official accommodation at that time.

Milord's wife used to get the vehicle parked in front of a 'No Parking' sign and disembark making sure the neighbouring ladies got a good look at her emerge all decked up from the "lal batti waali gaadi".

She used to order the vendors to load the purchased veggies in the red beacon car and drive off haughtily while the other ladies waited for rickshaws to take them home.

As I recall these _kissas_ I can't help thinking that the lure of the "red light car" is

universal.

It is one of those "trappings of power" which stares you in the face.

As we have seen, beacons of power and sirens of authority impress not just little children but also infect the better halves of those who, by merit, strategem or good fortune come to hold such positions of power.

Mercifully, someone had the wisdom a few years ago to take such childish trappings away from milords and other so-called VIPs by mandating that no cars would henceforth be permitted to use beacons in Humbug City.

As a result, in Humbug City at least, the beacons of power have stopped blinking but the sirens of authority can still be heard wailing sometimes.



Raju Z. Moray

practices law in Mumbai. For more than 30 years, he has been a contributor of articles and poems to publications of the Lawyers

Collective. He is the author of several books including Court Jester (2017), The Locked Down Lawyer (2020) and Tales of Law & Laughter. His new book *DYC: For Better or Verse*, circumscribing the former CJI's legacy, is now available. 🌈

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Dear Friends,

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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

Readers' Comments

Dear Editor,

Always good to receive the latest copy of RH. As such that in pursuit of truthful information, I request you to hold an open seminar on India's alleged democracy, deeper undemocratic perspectives of India's constitution as well as critical assessments of Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar.

Thanks.

Sincerely,
GB Singh

Mahi Pal ji, Thank you very much for uploading in Hindi the life and work of M.N. Roy and your very good narration on the subject.

Regards,

Debabrata Pal,
12 March 2025.

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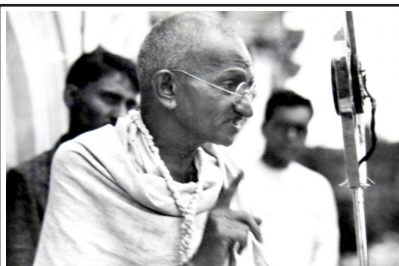
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First they ignore you, then they
laugh at you, then they
fight you, then you win.

– Mahatma Gandhi

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Members of the CSSC welcoming the guests at M.N. Roy Memorial Lecture



Dr. Sunilkumar Lawate being presented with a shawl and a memento



Audience at the meeting



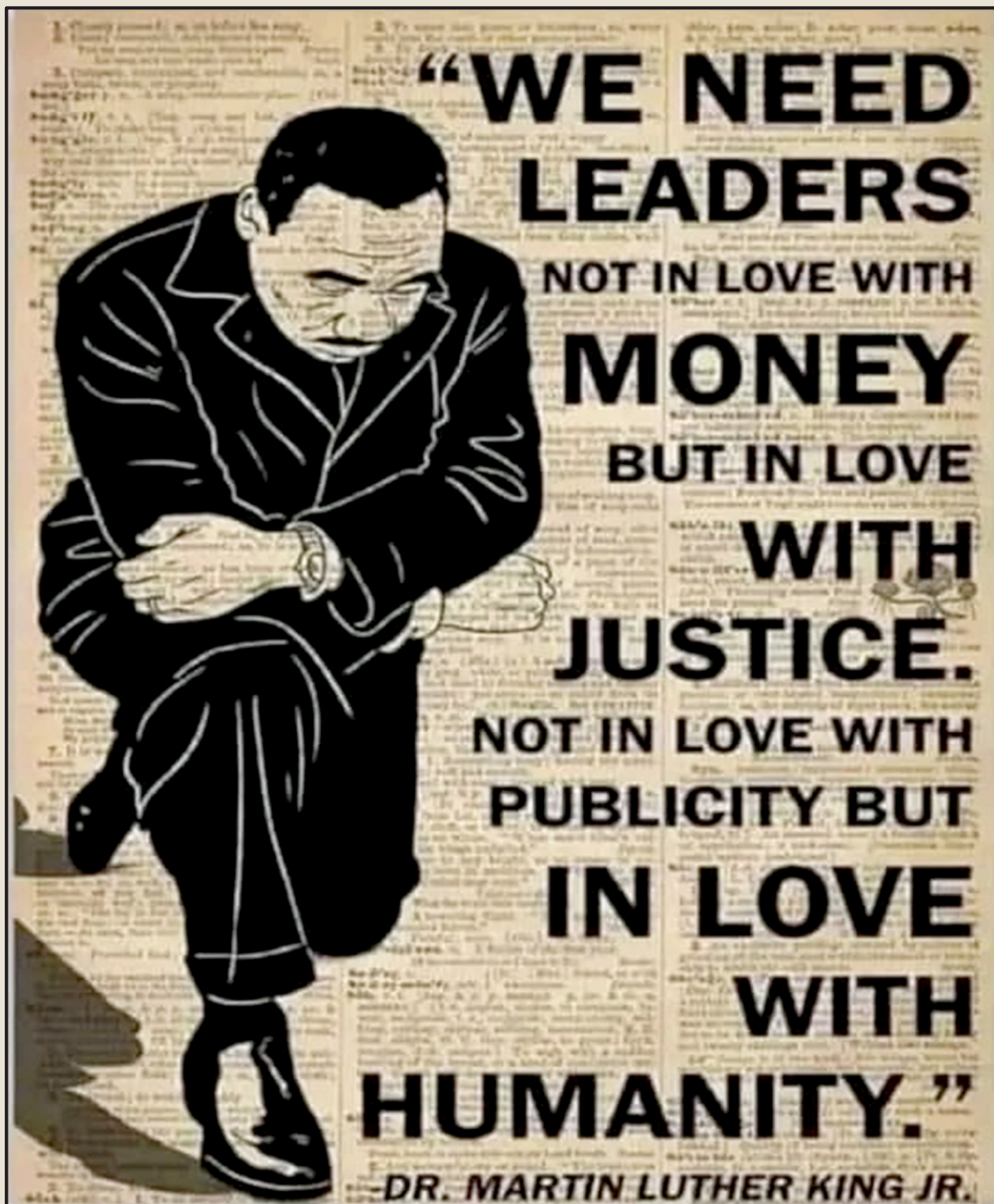
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