

THE RADICAL HUMANIST



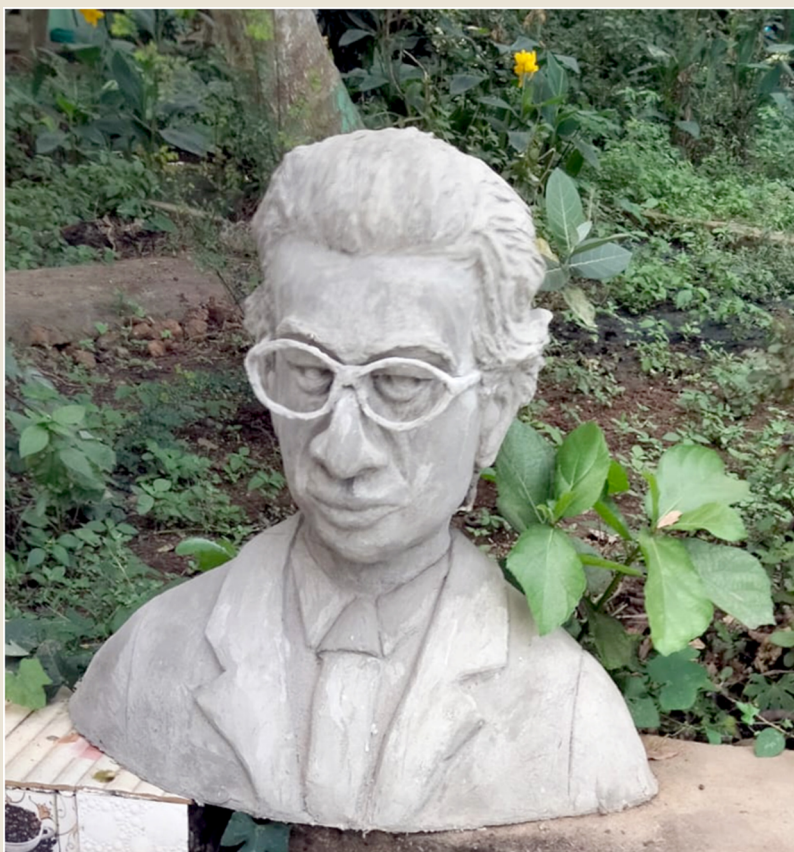
ESTABLISHED : APRIL 1937
(Formerly in the name of 'INDEPENDENT INDIA'
from April 1937 to March 1949)

Founder
M.N. ROY

Vol. 89 Number 03

JUNE 2025

Rs. 15 / MONTH



**M.N. Roy, the great exponent of grass-roots democracy,
civil liberties and human rights**

663

QUOTES FROM SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY BY M.N. ROY

“Science is the most reliable guide to truth, and the only dependable instrument of progress.”

“Superstition and blind faith are the enemies of freedom, Philosophy must be brought down from the clouds and made to walk on the earth, hand in hand with science.

Man is not a fallen angel, but a rising animal.

“A moral order can be built on the foundation of reason and human solidarity, without the crutches of religion.

The dignity of man lies in his power to think, to reason, and to act with responsibility.”

“Freedom is not a luxury, it is the condition for the flowering of human personality.”

The individual is the end, not the means.

Religions were born out of fear and ignorance. They thrive on unreason.

“God is a hypothesis which is no longer necessary.

Radical Humanism is not just a philosophy, but a call to action –action guided by reason and a love for humanity.”

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THE RADICAL HUMANIST

Vol. 89 Number 03, June 2025

Monthly journal of the Indian Renaissance Institute
Devoted to the development of the Renaissance
Movement and to the promotion of human
rights, scientific temper, rational thinking and
a humanist view of life.

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Editorial :

Party-less Democracy or Politics for Grass-roots Democracy as Expounded by M.N. Roy

Mahi Pal Singh

Here we are going to discuss a very important issue related to grass-roots democracy concerning party-less democracy or politics as expounded by M.N. Roy in his book 'Politics, Power and Parties'. The book offers a critique of contemporary political systems and the bold outlines of a theory of grass-roots democracy based on his rare combination of experience and knowledge of ancient and modern thought both Eastern and Western. His theory of grass-roots democracy was one aspect of the philosophy of Radical Democracy which he evolved during the last decade of his life.

We are going to discuss why it is necessary to have a party-less democracy for a democracy to be really a representative democracy. The kind of party-based political system that we have today may in theory be a representative democracy because the legislative assembly members or the Members of Parliament who make laws and run the government are elected by the people. But how far they represent, or continue to represent, the will of the people who elect them needs to be examined a bit seriously.

Democracy in theory means a government of the people and by the people and it is supposed to work for the welfare of the people in accordance with their will, and election is supposed to be the expression of their will. Therefore, election becomes the focal point in a democratic system. As such, winning the elections and ruling the people becomes the most important thing for the people who want to rule the country and the people. In a party-

based system of democracy, the people who want to govern or rule become members of a political party. Then they seek party tickets for contesting elections. For getting these party tickets, the candidates either have to dole out huge amounts of money to those party leaders who distribute these tickets or manage to get their favours to get these election tickets. Spending huge amounts of money for winning these elections for managing the voters, conducting rallies and managing the election booths and agents etc. may be very important, but that comes second. The first thing is getting the tickets. The candidates know well that without the blessings and favours of the party bosses, or supremos, as they are called these days, it is impossible to get these tickets. And even if they succeed in getting the tickets and also winning the elections, they know well that next time also they would need the same favours of the party bosses for getting the election tickets. It is not their work or accountability towards the voters who elect them which would get them the tickets next time however good their work may have been, but their faithfulness to those party bosses who gave them the tickets. Their remaining accountable to the ticket distributing leaders of their parties becomes their most important work after winning the elections. They know that they can conveniently ignore their voters for five years and yet get re-elected the next time by using the money and muscle power, and managing the election by managing the electoral rolls, the EVMs and the administrative machinery, most of which is done for them by

their party which is in power and in a position to do all this, as they did in the Delhi, Haryana and Maharashtra assembly elections held recently and also the parliamentary elections held in 2024.

In some of the recently held elections during the BJP or the NDA regime led by Narendra Modi, we have seen how the elections are manipulated in favour of the ruling party. The appointment of the Election Commissioners is manipulated as the Chief Justice of India has been removed from the Selection Committee of the Election Commissioners against the ruling of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India and a Cabinet Minister has been put in his place besides himself and the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha. It obviously gives the government the decisive majority of two-to-one and it can always have the Election Commissioners of its choice. Such Election Commissioners are bound to feel obliged to the government or the ruling party and are surely going to favour the Prime Minister, and the ministers who come from the ruling party, in the conduct of elections. In such a situation, it is not difficult to understand the overwhelming support of the former Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. Rajiv Kumar, to the ruling BJP in getting the whole electoral machinery work for its electoral victory in spite of the very high resentment of the voters against the ruling BJP as reflected during the poll campaigns. Obviously, the election results, particularly in the three assembly elections, do not reflect the will of the people. But these election results do reflect how the party-based elections can manipulate the electoral process to defeat the will of the people and deprive them of their true representation in the governance of the country.

M.N. Roy could foresee these basic flaws in the party-based electoral process as early as 1944, when he prepared the Draft Constituion for Free India. In that Draft he

presented an alternative to this system based on People's Committees selecting their own candidates from amongst themselves who would be accountable to them and not to some party bosses and who would be liable to recall if they do not work according to their wishes and directions.

Although the phrase 'political party' does not find any mention in the Indian Constitution also, yet it is the most powerful institution which controls the whole system of democracy and governance. The purpose of parties is to capture power and retain it as long as they can do so, and adopt every legitimate or illegitimate means to do so. The party in power takes advantage of their present position to rig the next election. Since elections are central to attaining power, the party system controls not only the legislature and the executive but even the judiciary, by influencing it through the political power of making appointment to places of power including the appointment of Supreme and High Court judges, besides appointment of State governors and other Chairmen and members of various statutory institutions. Desired judgements are obtained even in the Supreme Court through obliging and 'committed' judges, as they are called, who are paid back through nominations to the Rajya Sabha, as Governors or Chairmen of statutory institutions as after retirement benefits. We have seen some such nominations in the recent times.

The ruling BJP also collected thousands of crores of Rupees by instituting the scheme of Electoral Bonds to facilitate donations to political parties. It also misused the central agencies like the Enforcement Directorate, the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Income Tax Department for extorting money from industrialists and big businessmen as donations by pressurising them and used the money thus collected for influencing the voters and also the media houses who have become

their poll campaigners and voter influencers. It is because of the institution of political parties that big money has entered elections which have become a multi-crore affair.

We know that political parties have established themselves in the electoral politics as deep-rooted and necessary institutions, though evil, through the passing of time not only in India but elsewhere in the world also. But it is also true that this very system has also deprived the people of their sovereign power, though theoretically the sovereignty still belongs to them. The only system through which they can reclaim it and reassert themselves is through the abolition of the party system and by adopting the People's Committee system for introducing grass-roots democracy as suggested by M.N. Roy. What Roy suggested long ago may still seem to be mere philosophical theory, but we must not fail to appreciate the fact that all revolutionary changes have had their beginnings in philosophical utopias before becoming a reality. In fact, the great socialist leader Sh. Jayaprakash Naryan was very much impressed with Roy's idea of People's Committees and wanted to discuss further details of the plan with Roy, but before they could meet again, Roy had breathed his last.

Reflecting on party-based politics in an article titled "Politics Without Party" published in *The Radical Humanist* in 1949, Roy wrote: "No matter whatever may be the name, a political party is formed with the sole object of capturing control of the State, sooner or later. The object is justified with the argument that only in an office a party can put its programme into practice. Therefore, by adopting one of the Indian terms for its name, a political organisation does not cease to be a party, that is to say, only a part of the people or the class or the community it claims to represent. Otherwise, there would be no sense in the idea of representation. Since by its very nature, a

party is bound to be exclusive, a minority organisation, party-politics cannot be democratic politics in the true sense of the term. Political practice is monopolized by a minority of professional politicians; and the bulk of the community are given no place in the practice; they are to follow one party or the other. Democracy therefore can never be practiced through the intermediary of party-politics which, by its very nature, reduces the demos to the status of camp-followers.

"Obviously, the rejection of the party-politics means a resolution to practice politics on a much wider field, so that the entire people may actively participate in it. Under the party system, the people can do no more than vote for this or that candidate who is nominated by respective parties. Political practice cannot be truly democratised unless the people can nominate as well as vote for a candidate.

"It goes without saying that this change-over cannot take place from today to tomorrow; nor will an entire country discard the old practice and adopt the new one all at once. It will be a process, and the process itself will be uneven.

The change-over from party-politics to democratic politics will be brought about gradually by raising the intellectual level of the people, by quickening their sense of self-respect and self-reliance. Therefore, democracy is not possible without education."

He also said, "Civil liberties will have a greater chance of survival so long as several parties alternate in power or contend for power and the control of the State by one party claiming to be the sole custodian of political interest is antagonistic to democracy."

(For further details of Roy's views on this topic you may read the book 'Politics, Power and Parties' which is available at our website: www.indianrenaissanceinstitute.com along with his other books at the *The Radical Humanist* page.) 

Articles and Features :

98% of ED cases involving politicians filed against opposition leaders: TMC's Saket Gokhale

The Hindu

Trinamool Congress leader Saket Mr. Gokhale on Saturday (May 3, 2025) said 98% of the cases filed by the Enforcement Directorate against politicians were against Opposition leaders. "The remaining two% are those who went and joined the BJP's 'washing machine,'" he said. Mr. Gokhale referred to Thursday's (May 1) statement of ED Director Rahul Navin, to claim that the surge in cases post-2014 was at the behest of Narendra Modi, who came to power the same year. Speaking at an event on ED Day, Mr. Navin said the anti-money laundering law had been "largely ineffective" before 2014 and there has been a significant step-up in enforcement activity since then. In a post on X, Mr. Gokhale said, "Yesterday, the head of central agency ED admitted that there's been a surge of cases filed

after Modi Government came to power in 2014." "In the last 11 years, a total of 5,297 cases were filed by ED. How many were taken to court for trial? Only 47," he said.

The TMC Rajya Sabha MP said the conviction rate in ED cases is only 0.7%. "That means out of every 1,000 cases filed, accused were found guilty in only seven cases," he said. "Therefore, out of every 1,000 cases, 993 cases are filed by ED purely to keep a person in jail because getting bail under the draconian PMLA is almost impossible," he said. According to the ED Director, 1,739 cases filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act are under trial at present. He said out of the 47 cases decided by courts, the conviction rate was 93.6% with only three acquittals.

Courtesy **The Hindu**, 3 May 2025. 🌈

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Revised w.e.f. 1 August 2024

In SAARC Countries:

For one year - Rs. 300.00

For two years - Rs. 550.00

For three years - Rs. 800.00

Life subscription- Rs. 4000.00

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In other Countries: Annual subscription (Air Mail) \$ 150.00; GBP 100.00

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On May-Day:

Less Pay, More Work is Injustice to Working Class

Instead of paying double for overtime, efforts are underway to legitimize it under the pretext of making India a developed nation.

Dr. Akshay Kumar & R. Harikrishnan



Anganwadi workers holding a protest rally seeking regularisation and higher wages in India. Photo/CITU

Anganwadi workers holding a protest rally seeking regularisation and higher wages in India. Photo/CITU

Come Labour Day (May 1) and it is an appropriate time to reflect on the constitutionally and legally mandated rights of the working class. Of these rights, reasonable working hours (8 hours a day or 48 hours a week) are important.

In India, these worker's rights were also included in the Factories Act 1948. Section 59 of the Factories Act entitled the workers to wages at the rate of twice their ordinary rate of wages, in respect of overtime work (if more than 8 hours a day).

This clause had been openly violated across the country under the government's watch. In the last few months, CEOs of a few companies have openly called for increasing weekly hours, but there has been no mention of paying double wages.

More intriguing was the justification of this discourse of over-exploitation by some media channels and the silence of the Union Labour Minister as well as the state governments, who utter no word against these calls for open violations. The chairman of L&T S.N. Subrahmanyam recently reignited the debate. During an interaction with employees, the chairman of the multi-billion-dollar conglomerate, Subrahmanyam, was asked why L&T was still making its employees work on Saturdays.

"I regret I am not able to make you work on Sundays. If I can make you work on Sundays, I will be happier, because I work on Sundays," he said.

He further questioned what his employees did at home when they're not working. "What do you do sitting at home? How long can you stare at your wife? Come on, get to the office and start working."



*Saga of
J&K's
Anganwadi
Workers:
Paid a
Paltry
Rs 5100
for
Keeping
Rural
Healthcare
Alive.*

‘Over-work is Good’ Argument is Flawed

Quite obviously, his comments generated heated debate among the Indian work force. Over 9% of this workforce is suffering, while over 40% are sad, according to the Gallup Workplace Report of 2024.

Another report by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and digital healthcare platform MediBuddy pointed out that 62% of employees experience work-related stress and burnout.

Earlier, another corporate pundit, Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, had advocated for a 70-hour work week, which was followed by Bhavish Aggarwal, CEO of Ola, terming Saturdays and Sundays as Western concepts, while former CEO of Niti Aayog, Amitabh Kant and some other also shared such opinion.

Their bold assertions of open exploitation are presented under the garb of “nationalism” as all of them

boast of making India a developed nation, for which the Indian middle-class and working-class should overwork or, say, be over-exploited.

However, their understanding of a “developed India” differs from that of the Indian working population, including the blue-collar job holders. It is also profoundly flawed on various accounts.

The United Nations Report of 2021 claimed that long working hours could have severe consequences on employees’ physical and mental health. The same report claimed that work-related injuries and illnesses kill nearly two million people annually.



*Uttarakhand Tunnel Collapse:
Efforts on to rescue 40 trapped workers*

Looking At Data

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) 2023 report titled “Working Time and Work-Life Balance Around the World” argues that Luxembourg, Ireland and Norway are the first three with the highest labour productivity by GDP Per hour.

Luxembourg has the highest labour productivity with \$146 GDP per hour, followed by Ireland \$143 and Norway (\$93). The average weekly working hours of these countries are Norway (33.7 hours), Luxemburg and Ireland (35.6). These countries also fall among the top in various development indices, including the World Happiness Index, per capita income, etc.

Now take the example of countries where working hours are among the highest in the world.

Bhutan tops the list with 54.4 average work hours, followed by UAE with 50.9 hours average work per week, followed by Lesotho (50.4 hours), Congo (48.6 hours), Qatar (48 hours), India (46.7 hours), Liberia (47.7 hours) and Bangladesh (46.9 hours).

Notably, having more working hours neither brings development nor increases the per-capita income. India’s per-hour labour productivity is

\$8, placing it at the level 133 among the lowest productivity level countries.

Most countries with the highest working hours are poor; their GDP is very low, their per capita income is relatively low, and poverty is very high. For instance, Lesotho, which stood at the third slot, had a per capita income of \$2596 in the year 2023 and stood at the 167th slot, while Congo had a per capita income of \$1135 and stood at the 182nd slot. Similarly, India is on the list of countries with the highest working hours at \$9160 and stands at 124th position in the list of a total of 183 countries.

They also lag behind in the happiness index as Lesotho stood at 141st rank, Congo stood at 99, and India at 136 slots in the list of 145 countries as per World Happiness Index 2022. Among the top listed countries with the lowest working hours per week was Luxembourg at the 6th slot, Norway at the 8th, and Ireland at the 13th slot, as per the same report.

It is clear from these figures that increased working hours have nothing to do with the development of a nation and its public. A question then arises: Are these corporate pundits oblivious to these facts? Surely not, and their intentions are obvious.



Why is unemployment pushing Indians abroad to work in unsafe conditions?

Pay Disparities

Corporate leaders like Subrahmanyam and Murthy intend to increase their profit and wealth on the pretext of making India a developed country. As per media reports, Subrahmanyam earns Rs 51 crore in annual salary, which means Rs 14 lakh daily.

His responsibility is to increase the profit of his company and his benefits. He knows that unemployment in India is very high (9.2%), and that over 38% of IIT graduates across 23 campuses in India were not placed in 2024, while the minimum salary package reached a mere Rs 4 Lakh.

Moreover, the profits of corporate houses have been ever-increasing. Following the reduction of corporate tax in 2016, data reveals that the profit of private sector/corporate houses in India went up to a 15-year high in 2023. However, the employees' salaries of these private-sector companies remained stagnant from 2019 to 2023.

While the private sector's profit has increased by around 400%, their employees' salaries increased a meagre 0.8-5%. In fact, if one were to include inflation and increasing expenditure, then a person earning Rs 38,000 in 2008 and a person earning Rs 1 lakh in 2024 have the same purchasing power. This is quite unsettling to imagine.

Another grim reality is that India's richest 1 percent own more than 40 percent of total wealth.

The CEO of Bombay Shave Company, Sudhanshu Deshpande claimed that 2000 corporate families in India, owned over 18% of India's total wealth, but they paid less than 1.8% of the tax. The Union government's budget 2024 revealed that the contribution of tax paid by the middle class and common masses has surpassed the corporates' contribution in tax.

Overall, the scenario sums up like this: the tax on the common masses, including the middle class, has increased, their salaries are stagnant,

and now steps are being taken to increase working hours. On the other hand, corporations pay less tax, their income and profit are growing, and now they are proposing to increase working hours to increase their profit.

They are free to do so, as the labour laws in India have been rampantly violated, and perpetrators remain unpunished. The employees or workers can be thrown out of the job at any time, as evidenced by the protest of the Maruti Suzuki workers of Gurugram, who demanded permanent jobs and pay parity.

Workforce Exhaustion

Another reality of the Indian working population is that they already work over 13-15 hours daily, which accounts for 90 hours a week.

For example, if anyone who is going to a government/private office or for manual labour has to reach his/her work site by 8.00 or 9.00 AM, then the family has to wake up at around 5.00 or 6.00 AM to freshen up, prepare breakfast for family including children, pack lunch and then travel for anywhere between one to three hours. But these three to four hours before office timings are never included in the working hours, while in the evening, the same three to four hours are spent reaching home, preparing food, and being ready for the next day's work.

The private sector workers only visit their homes to prepare for the next day. Does anyone count this time as working hours?

The situation and struggle for working women is even more grave. So, in promoting a 90-hour work schedule, does Subrahmanyam want people to remain in the office for 13 to 15 hours? Then, imagine when they will have to wake up to manage daily chores.

What about health, education, family responsibilities, caring for old parents and relatives, celebrating festivities, etc? The majority (99 per cent) of the working masses would never be able to become corporate CEOs

like Subramaniam and would remain in the category of workers or the middle class.

Their community bonds—not wealth—are their true source of strength and joy. While elites like Subrahmanyam believe everything has a price, the working class knows what money cannot buy.

There are also gaping holes in Subrahmanyam's development theory. L&T constructed the Ram Temple, but its roof started leaking after the very first rainfall. Similarly, the Pragati Maidan tunnel, also constructed by L&T, is frequently flooded during rains. This could be why L&T donated around Rs 85 crore through electoral bonds to political parties, as revealed in media reports.

The developing and developed countries have been implementing a four-day work week and are trying their level best to maintain a work-life balance among their employees as studies have found stress and depression levels peaking in workers. People working in the corporate sector are fed up with the toxicity, and many have committed suicide as the bosses continue to talk about increasing the toxicity rather than reducing it.

It appears from their statements that they still treat the Indian masses as slaves, and the happiness of their families is not worthy of their consideration. It is symptomatic of the colonisers' mentality for their colonised and it appears to be an effort to justify modern-day slavery under the garb of making India a developed nation, which is not at all the development of its public but only of a few

corporate houses and their bosses. Data also reveals that the rich-poor income inequality in India is worse than during British rule.

'In Praise of Idleness'

In the book 'In Praise of Idleness', Bertrand Russel has established the significance of fewer working hours – four hours per day – and has advocated for an increase in free time and leisure.

"Leisure time cultivated the arts and discovered the sciences. It wrote books, invented philosophies and refined social relations. Even the liberation of the oppressed has usually been inaugurated from above. Without the leisure class, humankind would never have emerged from barbarism," he aptly wrote – a lesson our corporate leaders should perhaps follow.

The Labour Ministers of all the states, Union Territories and Unions should also reflect on their constitutionally mandated duties and responsibilities to devise policies for workers while opposing and rejecting the open calls of violation of Labour laws.

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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

Pahalgam Tragedy: Rising Spiral of Hatred

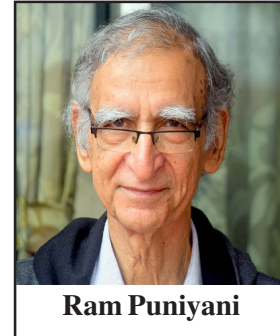
The killings of 26 tourists in Baisaran near Pahalgam were one of the worst tragedies in recent times. Baisaran is a lovely spot reachable only on horses or by walking in the uneven terrain. The killings left the whole nation in deep grief. While the terrorists killed tourists after confirming the religion of the victims, one Muslim, the local person escorting the tourists, tried to resist and was killed. Kashmiri porters also carried the tourists to safe places and opened their houses and Masjids for the guests. Kashmir observed Bandh and many processions giving the slogans of 'Hindu Muslim Unity' were taken out, while all over the country Muslims and other groups took out the candle marches and offered condolences for the martyrs.

Mr. Modi was due to be in Kashmir at that time but just a few days prior he cancelled his Kashmir trip. He was in a gulf country when the attack took place. He cut short his trip and headed back home and rather than going to Kashmir, he went to Bihar to attend a rally where he gave a powerful warning to terrorists. The message that terrorists were Muslims and victims were Hindus was the undercurrent of the whole narrative which was circulated.

The ceasefire has been declared by Mr. Donald Trump, while Mr. Modi has a different interpretation of the cease fire. Meanwhile the Godi media had the heyday spreading hate and different channels reported winning over different cities of Pakistan while sitting in their plush studios. The Godi media fell to unimaginable lows, had a further fall in smashing the ethics of journalism, long abandoned by them.

The worst outcome has been the increase in hate against Muslims. Islamophobia, gripping the country with increasing intensity is reaching unimaginable heights. In Latur a Muslim was labeled as Pakistani, Kashmiri and beaten black and blue. Humiliated by this he committed suicide. The Kashmiri students in an Utrakhand hostel

were thrown out in the middle of the night and they had to stay put up in front of Deharadun Airport. The worst of this was seen when Vijay Shah, a minister in BJP's MP Government called Colonel Sophia



Ram Punyani

Qureshi, the military spokesperson of the Indian army, as 'sister of terrorists'. For the sake of face saving he did apologize for this.

Mithila Raut, who works with Center for Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai, in an article in Dainik Loksatta (Marathi) enumerates the number of Hate incidents as reported in the papers. As per her article, there have been many incidents of anti Muslim incidents after the Pahalgam attack. In one of the shocking incidents in UP, Shamli's Toda village one Sarafaraz was attacked by Govind. Govind stated that you have killed our 26; we will kill your 26! In Punjab's Dera Bassi in Universal group of Institutes, Kashmiri students were attacked in the hostel.

One Shabbir Dhar, a Kashmiri living in Masoori had a shop selling shawls. He was attacked along with his shop assistant and was threatened as the culprit of Pahalgam killings and was threatened not to come back again. In Haryana's Rohtak village the Muslim residents were threatened to leave the village by 2nd May.

These are some of the incidents which have been culled out from selected newspapers. How the atmosphere of Hate has been intensified is very clear from these incidents. The atmosphere of the society has been gradually worsening. The Hindu rightwing has already created an atmosphere against Muslims. Initially it was created by use of medieval history, where the training in RSS shakhas, the Godi media and social media created an enemy image for Muslims.

Formation of Pakistan gave another major pretext to the communal politics to assert that Pakistan has been formed by the Muslims. This is a totally distorted version of the account of History, as the formation of Pakistan was a combination of three factors, British Policy of Divide and rule, Muslim communalism and Hindu communalism. Two Nation theory was first articulated by Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savakar.

After the formation of Pakistan, the propaganda was that partition took place due to Muslims and this became an additional point of Hate. As such it was the formation of two states simultaneously, India and Pakistan. Pakistan was to be in Muslim majority areas. The add-on to anti Muslim propaganda came from the complex Kashmir issue. The exodus of Kashmiri pandits in 1990 was yet again used against Muslims. Exodus of Pundits happened when the V.P.Singh Government supported by BJP was ruling at center and pro BJP Jagmohan was the Governor of Kashmir. Ignoring all that, the anti Muslim angle in Pundits emigration was the central point around which the hate against Muslims was exaggerated.

So step by step more issues have been used to torment the Indian Muslims. The voices of amity have been muted and every occasion now is turned into adding to the prevalent Hate against Muslims, every occasion is used to vitiate the

hate which is used by the RSS-BJP to intensify its agenda of Hindu nation.

The issue of Pahalgam has also brought to fore the change in the nature of Indian diplomacy. As per Shimla agreement (1971) between Indira Gandhi and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto the India Pakistan issues were to be sorted out in bilateral manner, without mediation from the third party. With Donald Trump dominating the scene and Modi unable to confront him, the equations seem to be changing. Globally not many countries came to side with India.

The core point is to solve the Kashmir issue based on Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Doctrine of Insaniyat, Kashmiriyat and Jamhooriyat (Humanism, Democracy). We need to live in peace with our neighbors, as Vajpayee again said; 'Friends can change but not neighbors'. The reflections of Hate Pakistan as is the wont of Hindu Right wing supplemented by the loud mouthed and hate spewing Indian God media, directly reflects badly on Indian Muslims. It vitiates the possibility of an amicable atmosphere at home, in the country.

The intensification of communal problems due to the Pahalgam issue needs to be grasped and war and Hate mongers have to be negated for peace and prosperity of our country. So far Pakistani was main abuse for Muslims, Kashmiri has been added to the hate point. 🌈

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- Mahi Pal Singh,
Editor, The Radical Humanist

After ceasefire, a reckoning

Did Operation Sindoor (OS) advance India's national interest? The answer depends as much on political common sense as it does on expert knowledge of strategic affairs and foreign policy. What is our national interest? Or, whose interest is our national interest? Who decides what is in our national interest? These are political questions that cannot be left to experts.

An assessment must begin by defending the Narendra Modi government from two unfair criticisms, one from warmongers and the other from peaceniks. On the one hand, the political leadership and the armed forces must not be blamed for not taking the operation to its "logical conclusion". No doubt, it is tempting to hold the Modi government to its sarkari boasts and darbari hyperbole. Yet, an understanding of national interest suggests that any action like OS had to be a limited operation — focused and short. Quick cessation of hostilities was built into the logic of such an operation. At any rate, no one should wish to see the "logical conclusion" of a war between two nuclear powers. The ceasefire must, therefore, be welcomed.

You don't have to be a security expert to see that if Russia could not inflict a decisive defeat on NATO-backed Ukraine, there is no way India could have forced a 1971-type defeat on China-backed Pakistan. The fantasy among a loud section on social media of Indian forces capturing Islamabad, enforcing an "endgame" or dismembering Pakistan is just that, a deleterious fantasy. It takes only a moment of clear-headed thinking to realise that a divided and shattered Pakistan is not in India's national interest. The last thing India needs is an Afghanistan-like neighbour — ever-turbulent, full of weapons, short of legitimate authority. A stable, democratic and peaceful Pakistan is in our national interest.

On the other hand, the government should not be damned for organising a strike in the first place. No doubt, any military action is no solution to the Kashmir problem, unless the long-standing alienation of the



Yogendra Yadav

Kashmiri people is addressed in a democratic frame. At the same time, an adequate resolution also requires a response to the terrorism that is patronised by the Pakistani deep state, and that cannot be checked by Pakistan's political leadership. You could debate what should have been the best response. Arguably, the quiet but firm route taken by the Manmohan Singh government after the Mumbai terror attacks was more effective. But you cannot rule out a strike aimed at terrorist bases as one of the legitimate options. As long as there are nation states and armies, the use of armed forces to protect citizens from a massacre like Pahalgam would constitute legitimate national interest.

A fair assessment of Operation Sindoor would involve three questions. How effectively did it deter the terrorists and their minders? To what extent did it enhance the country's internal unity in the face of such aggression? And in which ways did it buttress India's position in the global arena? Sadly, India's real national interest has suffered on each of these counts.

The question of the military success or otherwise of OS is best left to defence experts and strategic analysts. All we have in the public domain at this moment is the PM's extraordinary statement in his address to the nation: "Pakistan ki taraf se jab ye kaha gaya ki uski ore se aage

koi aatanki gatividhi aur sainya dussahas nahin dikhaya jayega toh bharat ne bhi us par vichar kiya (India considered [Pakistan's offer for a ceasefire] once the Pakistani side said it won't carry out terrorist activity or military misadventure any more)." If that is true, if the Pakistani state has admitted its involvement in terrorist activities and promised to mend its ways, then OS has more than met its objective of deterrence.

The trouble is that the PM offered no details. Who spoke? To whom? Was this a written promise? If not, why was it trusted? Why was it included in an address to the nation? Why has the MEA shied away from reiterating the PM's claim in its press briefing? In the absence of answers, the claim of resounding military success remains debatable.

On the internal signal, the picture is clear and sorry. The Pahalgam massacre was followed by a spontaneous and united nation-wide outrage, cutting across all communities. The Kashmir Valley joined the rest of the country in expressing its disgust at this Pakistan-sponsored attack. The Opposition stood by the government. This moment of "one nation one emotion" was a rare occasion to mobilise the national resolve against the terrorist.

In the wake of Pahalgam, minorities and Kashmiri students have been targeted. Those who spoke against it, including the widow of a soldier martyred at Pahalgam, were viciously trolled, as were even the Foreign Secretary and his family. A government ready with FIRs against any social media infringement cannot wash its hands of these acts by its own eco-system. The plight and death of 22 civilians who suffered the brunt of Pakistan's shelling along the border and LoC were marginalised. The ruling dispensation allowed national interest to be subjugated by petty political interests and its divisive DNA.

The biggest setback is to India's much-touted stature in the international arena. While many

countries issued generalised condemnation of Pahalgam, no major power from the G-20 or QUAD joined India in holding Pakistan responsible for supporting terrorism or in objecting to the IMF loan to Pakistan. The coercive diplomacy on the Indus Waters Treaty found no support, especially after the churlish claim by the Union Minister of Jal Shakti, no less, of not releasing even "a drop of water" to Pakistan. The advantage in the global perception battle, thanks to the MEA's measured and professional statements along with the very powerful symbolism of women officers of different faiths, was undone by the warmongers within the ruling party and the ignominious disinformation campaign by darbari TV channels.

The manner of announcement of ceasefire confirmed this backsliding. While US President Donald Trump's claims of having prevented an Indo-Pak nuclear war may have few takers, it is hard to deny that the US played the mediator, if not the monitor. The world may take with a pinch of salt Trump's claims of using the trade deal as a carrot and stick to achieve the ceasefire, but no one can rule this out in the next few months when trade negotiations are due for conclusion. The PM and MEA have ruled out an Indo-Pak dialogue on Kashmir mediated by the US, but this could clearly be the beginning of the US monitored India-Pakistan relationship, something Indian foreign policy has avoided for well over 50 years.

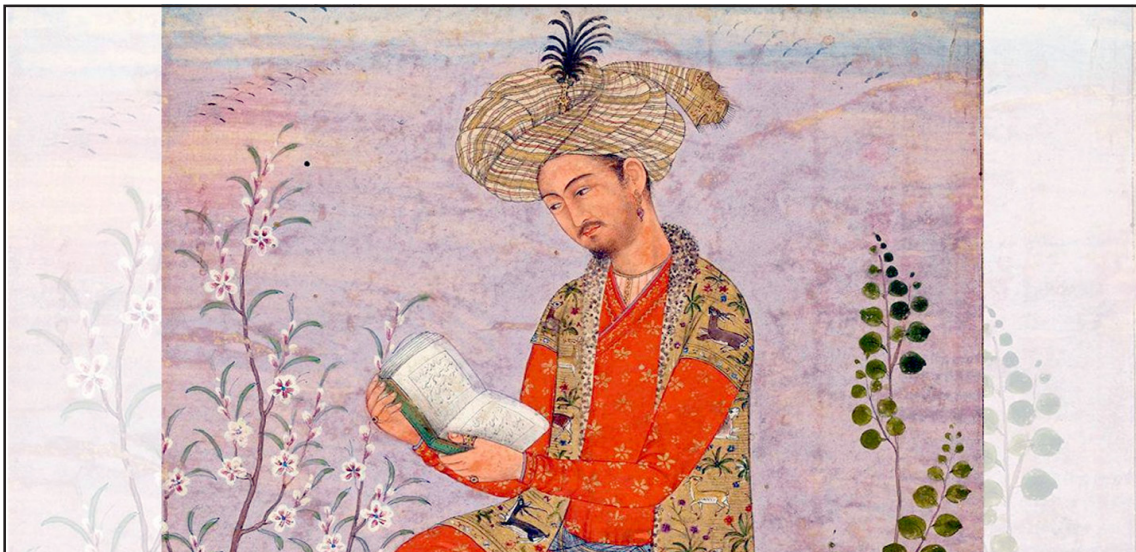
Notwithstanding the PM's silence and the strenuous denials by the MEA, the fact remains that the world got to know about the ceasefire from the US, before India or Pakistan declared it. The ruling party's aggressive posturing and the support of pliant media may well persuade the Indian public to the contrary, but for the rest of the world, the message of the ceasefire was clear: POTUS had arm twisted India into it. That cannot advance our national interest. Nor is it a tribute to sindoor. 🌈

Battle for history:

India's complex history cannot be wished away through textbook revisions – it must be confronted

Education must empower students to question, investigate, and understand the past – not as a monologue, but as a conversation among diverse voices.

Hasnain Naqvi



An idealised portrait of Mughal Emperor Babur, c1605-10. | in public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

When the National Council of Educational Research and Training rolled out major revisions to the Class 7 Social Science textbooks last month, it sparked a debate about historical accuracy and ideological intent.

Key historical chapters on the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal empire were eliminated from the textbooks that are used by schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education.

At the same time, new material was included highlighting ancient Indian dynasties and Hindu pilgrimage sites, including the recently concluded Maha Kumbh.

The revised content emphasises some aspects of India's ancient heritage – focusing on dynasties such as the Mauryas, Shungas, and

Sâtavâhanas – while virtually erasing centuries of Muslim rule.

False binary

At the heart of the controversy lies a fundamental question: should education prioritise verifiable history or cultural memory? While epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata play a crucial role in shaping India's civilisational identity, historians warn against equating mythology with history.

The former embodies symbolic truths and values, while the latter relies on documented evidence and critical inquiry.

The new chapters devote considerable space to sacred geography such as the 12 jyotirlingas or representations of Shiva and the four



*The Allahabad Fort,
constructed by
Mughal Emperor
Akbar, on the banks
of the Yamuna where
it meets the Ganga,
in this illustration by
Robert Montgomery
Martin, c1860.
Credit: in public
domain, via
Wikimedia Commons.*

Himalayan pilgrimage sites of the Char Dham. But they do not adequately distinguish between devotional tradition and historical fact.

Critics argue that such an approach undermines the core objective of history education: to foster critical thinking and an evidence-based understanding of the past.

Ideological shifts

These changes are part of a larger pattern of curriculum revisions influenced by the dominant political ideology. Under various governments, education has frequently become a battlefield for contesting narratives.

NCERT revisions in 2023 had already removed chapters on the Mughals in Class 12, along with material about Dalit writer Omprakash Valmiki and the theory of evolution in Class 10.

These deletions were heavily criticised by historians as attempts at erasure, particularly of the contributions of Muslims and minority groups to Indian history.

Dissent and support

Reactions to the recent changes are deeply polarised. Scholars such as Audrey Truschke assert that erasing the Mughals from textbooks does not erase them from history, but it does

deny students a fuller understanding of India's pluralistic past.

Others, such as academician Apoorvanand, warn that the revisions portray Indian history as exclusively Hindu, sidelining centuries of Islamic and syncretic influences in the subcontinent.

Meanwhile, supporters of the move – particularly from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party – defend the changes as a necessary corrective to what they see as a colonial and Marxist legacy in Indian historiography. By spotlighting ancient Indian knowledge systems and spiritual traditions, they argue, the new curriculum fosters national pride and cultural self-awareness.

NCERT Director Dinesh Prasad Saklani rationalised the omission of sensitive material, such as about communal riots, on the grounds that such topics could damage the mindset of young learners. However, this approach has been criticised as an attempt to sanitise history and suppress uncomfortable truths.

Selective memory

One of the most glaring examples of selective representation is the inclusion of the recent Maha Kumbh Mela in the new curriculum. The

event is described in glowing terms, with references to the participation of over 660 million pilgrims, emphasising its cultural magnitude. Yet, conspicuously absent is any mention of the stampede in Prayagraj, which resulted in several deaths and injuries.

This selective omission has raised red flags among educators and historians, who see it as a deliberate move to present an idealised and conflict-free narrative.

Such portrayals, they argue, strip historical events of their complexity and hamper students from understanding the socio-political challenges that accompany large-scale religious gatherings in modern India.

Rewriting or reclaiming?

The deeper issue here is the evolving definition of history itself. Is history simply a chronicle of rulers and battles, or does it also encompass the social, cultural, and political experiences of all communities? By removing entire chapters on the Mughals and the Delhi Sultanate, the new textbooks not only marginalise a significant part of India's past but also risk presenting a monolithic version of history that aligns with a specific ideological worldview.

At the same time, incorporating India's spiritual and cultural traditions into education is not inherently problematic – provided there is clarity about what constitutes history and what belongs to the realm of belief. The problem arises when myth is repackaged as fact and when cultural pride is used to justify historical distortion.

Identity politics

The textbook revisions reflect a broader ideological battle playing out in Indian society: the struggle between inclusive, secular education and ethnocentric nationalism. This is not merely an academic concern but one with serious implications for how future generations perceive themselves, their country and their place in the world.

Critics have gone so far as to call this process a form of “cultural genocide”, suggesting that erasing Muslim contributions from textbooks is part of a larger project to redefine Indian identity along religious lines. Historian S Irfan Habib has described the revisions as “Hindu nationalist propaganda”, while Harbans Mukhia sees them as attempts to unify the Hindu vote through cultural consolidation.

Balanced curriculum

The need of the hour is not to eliminate religious or cultural references from textbooks but to present them in a nuanced and balanced manner. The Mughal Empire, for instance, should be taught not just as a political period but also in terms of its artistic, architectural, and cultural contributions.

Similarly, events like the Maha Kumbh can be included with full transparency, acknowledging both their spiritual significance and logistical challenges.

A robust history curriculum should encourage students to think critically, engage with multiple perspectives and understand the past in all its complexity. By doing so, education can become a bridge between tradition and reason, rather than a tool for ideological conformity.

The textbook changes are not just about what students learn – they are about how India defines itself as a nation. Education must empower students with the ability to question, investigate, and understand the past – not as a monologue, but as a conversation among diverse voices.

In the end, history cannot be wished away. It must be confronted, understood and taught honestly. Only then can we prepare a generation that will be capable of building a future that honors the richness – and the contradictions – of India's complex heritage.

Hasnain Naqvi is a former member of the history faculty at St Xavier's College, Mumbai. 

Replace Portions on Kashmir, Palestine Conflicts with Gita or Mahabharata: DU Academic Council

The Wire Staff

According to a report, the suggestion was made for the 'Psychology for Peace' course in the undergraduate psychology syllabus at Delhi University.

New Delhi: A member of the Delhi University's Academic Council has raised concerns over "undue scrutiny and interference" in the psychology syllabus at a meeting of the university's standing committee on academic matters, PTI reported.

The member, Monami Sinha, who is an associate professor at the University-run Kamala Nehru College, is also a member of



the standing committee.

As per the report, Sinha said the 'Psychology of Peace' course, designed for the undergraduate level, was "a major point of discussion, especially unit 4," which deals with conflict resolution through case studies, like the Israel-Palestine conflict and the Kashmir issue.

Sinha claimed that there were calls to remove this unit altogether, with assertions that the Kashmir issue was 'already resolved' and that teaching the Israel-Palestine conflict was unnecessary.

The report further said that instead, it was proposed that "the unit be replaced with Indian philosophical texts, such as the Mahabharata

and the Bhagavad Gita, to reflect indigenous perspectives of peace."

The standing committee on academic affairs is headed by Prakash Singh, a political science faculty member and director of the university's south campus.

The standing committee is said to have also objected to content related to dating apps and social media. Significantly, Sinha told PTI that the proposals "were made to drop the Minority Stress Theory from the syllabus – a key framework for understanding the psychological experiences of marginalised groups."

Additionally, she noted "objections to the inclusion of themes like caste discrimination, misogyny and prejudice under 'Psychology of Diversity', with suggestions to adopt a more 'positive' approach instead."

The report underlined that Sinha felt, "The nature of the objections appears politically motivated," and added that academic decisions "should be based on pedagogy and research, not ideology."

The course is being re-designed as the University had adopted in 2022 a four-year undergraduate programme based on the National Education Policy brought by the Narendra Modi government.

The syllabi for all courses are being revised. After the standing committee ratifies the syllabus, it is thereafter dispatched to the academic council.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 3 May 2025. 🌈

In a challenging time, Indian Muslims must look within while demanding justice from the state

Najeeb Jung and Ishrat Aziz

THE RECENT TRAGEDY in Pahalgam has once again exposed the fragile fabric of Hindu-Muslim relations in India. Reports of violence targeting Muslims have surfaced from various parts of the country, adding to an already tense atmosphere. Sadly, this is not a new phenomenon; the climate of suspicion and hostility has been steadily building over the years, and has accelerated over the past decade. Against the backdrop of global Islamophobia, Indian Muslims today face some of the most difficult times in their history. However, it is also important to acknowledge an uncomfortable truth: Over the past 75 years since Independence, Indian Muslims have not always taken proactive steps toward societal reform. Often influenced by conservative clergy, calls for modernisation and reform have been repeatedly resisted. Yet, the need for change is urgent. Reforms initiated from within the Muslim community itself, rather than those imposed externally, will have a far greater chance of acceptance and success. It is crucial for Indian Muslims to embrace a secular outlook that aligns with the broader national interest. Strengthening secularism would not only enhance their own social standing but also contribute to India's unity and progress.

A clear path to self-reformation includes several critical steps:

Reforming Muslim personal law:

The community must champion reforms ensuring equal status for women in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance. There must be much greater emphasis on women's education, including higher education, and it must be ensured that they find a voice in society. Such measures are

not alien to Islamic principles but resonate strongly with the Quranic emphasis on justice, equality, and human dignity. These principles, in fact, converge with the values enshrined in India's Constitution, especially the Directive Principles that stress fraternity and equality. Modernising waqf laws: Existing waqf regulations, rooted in an agrarian past, are ill-suited to today's industrial and service driven economy. Unlocking waqf assets and making them liquid would unleash significant resources for the welfare of the Muslim community and the nation at large. However, reform must be community driven, not forced by governmental fiat, as has been the present effort. Any effort to force reform and changes in laws will be met with resistance and is likely to fail.

Rejecting job reservation:

Instead of seeking reservation in employment, Muslims must demand constitutional guarantees—security of life, protection of property, and a fair, level playing field. Strength through merit, not political crutches, should be the guiding philosophy. Embracing true secularism: Indian Muslims must insist on the complete separation of religion and state. The end of the Hajj subsidy was a positive step toward real secularism; similar government interventions in religious matters must be firmly rejected moving forward. However, it's fair to say that this may apply to other faiths as well.

Understanding reform as fulfilment of faith:

Reform should not be seen as a betrayal of Islam but as its true fulfilment. The Quran repeatedly emphasises welfare, progress, and societal well-being. Therefore, there must be greater debate among all sections of Muslims

in an effort to think in the context of the times we live in and accept the need to adapt to modern society. Committing to national advancement: Indian Muslims must strive to contribute meaningfully to India's greatness through education, research, innovation, sports, and economic development. A vision of national progress must be deeply intertwined with community aspirations. Advocating for national unity: It should be the mission of Indian Muslims to work tirelessly for the peace, unity, and integrity of India — from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Gujarat to the Northeast. As a community numbering over 200 million — equivalent to the population of Brazil, the fifth-largest country in the world in land mass — they have the power to shape a brighter, more harmonious future for India. But self-reform cannot and must not be the domain of a select few. It requires a broad-based, democratic consultation involving clerics, scholars, social scientists, economists, retired civil servants, business leaders, NGOs, and other stakeholders. Only a multidisciplinary and inclusive approach can create sustainable, credible change.

At the same time, the government bears

an equally vital responsibility. A level playing field must be ensured. Threats, violence, biased policing, and hateful rhetoric must cease. The Government of India must renew its commitment to secularism, uphold constitutional values, and initiate genuine dialogue with the Muslim community to rebuild trust. Without such measures, it is unreasonable to expect a beleaguered community to rally itself with confidence.

The road ahead is challenging but not insurmountable. Reform driven by Muslims themselves, supported by a fair and a just state, can lay the foundations for a stronger, united India. In fact, reforms initiated within India will not only leave a lasting impression on its neighbours as well but indeed be an example for other Islamic countries.

In a challenging time, Indian Muslims must look within while demanding justice from the state.

Najeeb Jung and Ishrat Aziz: Jung is former vice-chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, former Lt Governor of Delhi, and currently, chairman, Advanced Study Institute of Asia. Aziz is former ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia, UAE, Brazil and Tunisia. 🇧🇩

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‘United States is The Biggest terrorist State’

Controversial Deportations Spark Debate on US’s Role in Global Conflicts

Sandeep Pandey



UNITED RESISTANCE: Palestinians protest the blockade during the Great March of Return in Gaza, 2018. Photo/Public Domain

A Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil had been detained by the authorities in the United States as he had organised demonstrations in support of Palestine during the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. The official reason being given is that he failed to mention his association with United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East.

Israel contends that some UNRWA employees were working for Hamas and has banned it. An immigration judge, after hearing conducted inside a Louisiana jail where immigrants were kept in a double-fenced razor wire thousands of miles away from where he was detained, has finally ruled the deportation of Mahmoud Khalil.

Ranjani Srinivasan, a doctoral student in urban planning also at Columbia University in New York, had her US student visa revoked

because of having been part of pro-Palestinian demonstrations. As the State Department revoked her visa, her enrollment was withdrawn by the University, reducing her to a *persona non grata*. Her departure from the US has been described as ‘self-deportation.’ She has been accused of being involved in activities supporting Hamas, a terrorist organisation.

Had she not fled she would have been arrested by Department of Homeland Security of the US administration. A Homeland Security official has said that it is a privilege to be granted a visa to live and study in the US. He also said that when anyone advocates for violence and terrorism that privilege should be revoked and that person should not be in the US.

Badar Khan Suri was a post-doctoral fellow at Georgetown University when he was

arrested because he is married to a Palestinian Mapheze Saleh, whose father used to work with Hamas in the past. I was part of a delegation along with Badar Khan Suri which went to Gaza in January 2011 on a humanitarian mission. For now Badar Khan's deportation from the US has been stalled by a court.

A 31-year old Ph.D. scholar from India at a university in Connecticut with a five-year funding guarantee suddenly finds that his monthly stipend will be stopped from May because he wrote two pro-Palestine pieces in 2023. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has confirmed that visas of over 300 foreign students have been similarly revoked.

According to him US gave visas to come and study and get a degree, not to become an activist that tears up university campuses. He admits that actions of these students, even though lawful, could harm American foreign policy interests.

Trump's threat to stall funds to universities

Donald Trump administration is also threatening to slash federal funds to about 60 universities, including Columbia, as these institutions have allowed anti-Semitism protests on campus. However, Harvard University has decided to stand up to the attempts by Trump administration to dictate terms to it rather than surrender as some of the other institutions are doing.

Trump administration defied the independence of judiciary when it deported 200 members of an alleged Venezuelan gang against an order forbidding it from doing so, by saying that a single judge in a single city did not have the authority to block its actions. Trump justified the deportation by saying that they were bad people. However, the judge has said that the Trump administration officials could face criminal contempt charges for violating the court order.

Homeland Security is also preparing to

deport 5,32,000 people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, who came to the US in 2022 under the humanitarian parole programme.

Considering the history of US, the scale of violence it has committed overwhelms any violence done by terrorist groups. US is responsible for the most number of people killed in a single incidence of attack, close to 1.5 lakhs in Hiroshima and additional 70,000 in Nagasaki, three days later in 1945 in World War II. People who got killed in these two bombings were not combatants, but ordinary civilians. US has not apologised for the biggest terrorist attack so far in the world.

In the Vietnam war about 38 lakhs people are estimated to have been killed, half of whom were civilians. US itself lost about 58,000 soldiers.

In Iraq about 5 lakhs children were starved to death because of sanctions imposed by US on Iraq. A total of 15 lakhs people, mostly ordinary civilians, were killed by the US in the aftermath of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Over 50,000 civilians killed in Gaza

In the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas over 50,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, have been killed yet Israel's hunger has not been satiated. It has infringed a truce deal and re-launched attack on Gaza since March so that it can have the remaining 59 hostages back who were among the 251 abducted by Hamas on 7 October, 2023.

So far 141 hostages including 114 Israelis have been released by Hamas in exchange for 1,995 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails as part of a peace deal brokered by Egypt, Qatar and US. Israel is holding thousands of Palestinians and bodies of 72 Palestinians in its jails, including that of a minor. The complicity of US in this war crime has been widely decried globally.

Considering that Native Indians are the original inhabitants of what is today US,

majority of whom languish in reservations, the moral authority of the US in describing others as terrorists and deporting them is questionable.

US Presidents would appear to be the most bad people if the scale of violence and their misadventures were compared. As a country it'll be held responsible for killing most number of people on earth in all wars taken together.

Free thinking and speech

I was detained at San Francisco airport in 2005 when some right wing Hindtuva organisations complained to the Homeland Security that one terrorist and Naxalite was coming from India. I was invited by mostly educational institutions in US and Canada for close to a month long trip to talk about the anti-Coca Cola movement in India. After a couple of hours of interrogation at San Francisco airport I was allowed to enter the US.

The final question a Homeland Security officer asked me in a secluded room was why did I make a statement that US is the biggest terrorist state in a press conference in Manila in 2002. I said that I opposed the nuclear weapons made by my country and therefore had a right to oppose the military policy of US which was a bigger player in the game of

warfare. The officer said that I was entitled to my opinion and welcomed me to the US.

It may not be possible for me to enter US again after writing this article. But a bigger loss I'm saddened by is the academic freedom under threat on US campuses. Imagine if the Free Speech Movement had not taken place in the 1960s on University of California, Berkeley campus, where would the US be today globally as the defender of human rights and democracies?

US had held high standards of human rights, at least within the country, and university campuses have played important role in it. I credit the UC, Berkeley campus for making me an activist and I consider it part of my education. I learned more outside the four walls of classroom on the UC, Berkeley campus than inside.

Unfortunately the short sighted US leaders of the present administration are bent upon destroying the environment on campuses which encouraged free thinking and speech. That is a big loss for democracies around the world as so many international students get a chance to study in these institutions.

Courtesy **Kashmir Times**,
01 May 2025. 🌈

Reader's Comments

On M.N. Roy

There is a misconception and undstanding the greatness of M.N. Roy.

Any ref. to him is either affixed or suffixed by his association with Lenin and Stalin as though it was a badge of honour and an epoch making event in his life.

Actually it was an honour and privege of Lenin and Stalin that M.N. Roy came to them, hardly in his twenties, having been invited by Lenin after he came to know him for establishing the first Communist Party in Mexico outside Russia. Lenin was surprised to meet M.N. Roy in his twenties. But it is the astute sharpness of Lenin who discovered the potential and brilliant intellect of Roy so much so that on Lenin's request Roy presented his thesis on the spread of Communism in Asia at the Second Comintern (Second Communist International) as on an equal podium level with Lenin and Stalin! As a matter of course, nothing special about it.

P.A.S. Prasad

Hindus and Muslims are inseparable, so are India and Pakistan

in South Asia, by Arundhati Dhuru, Saeeda Diep and Sandeep Pandey*

On 22 April attack on Pahalgam tourists was carried out by the terrorist organisation The Resistance Front. The Indian security forces carried out attacks on nine sites on 7 May early hours which are believed to be camps of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahiddin and Jaish-e-Mohammad. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has claimed that at least 100 terrorists have been killed. These strikes have been followed by counter offensives and attempted/foiled attacks from both sides. Number of civilians now getting killed are adding to the 26 killed on 22 April. It remains to be seen when this chain reaction would end. By that time many more civilian lives would be lost on both sides.

India wanted initially to precision target only terrorist camps. But Pakistani strike on a Gurudwara and Masjid in Poonch has expanded the domain of attacks. A fight against terrorism is now converted into two countries fighting each other. Terrorists have achieved their objective.

Hopefully, the war will stop before it reaches a point where one of the sides will get desperate and think of using the nuclear weapons option.

The objective of eliminating terrorism will remain a distant dream. Most likely more 'jihadists' are going to be provoked to take up arms to avenge the killing of their brethren. It has been proved from the destruction of Babri Masjid, which resulted in the first terrorist attack in India in the form of serial bomb blasts in Mumbai in early 1993, that act of destruction will result in reaction.

Dr. Manmohan Singh was not tempted to attack Pakistan after the much bigger Mumbai

attack in 2008. His government pursued the legal course against the accused as a result of which some were punished and some are waiting to be punished. After a hiatus of more than a year Kuldeep Nayyar took the first delegation of Indian civil society to Pakistan and the peace process adopted by the government subsequently delivered dividends which at least ensured that there was no repeat incident in the remaining 6 years of Manmohan Singh. India Pakistan relations had shown visible signs of improvement when he quit as Prime Minister.

The wisdom of using peace as a tool for solving entangled relationship between the countries is not lost. But the incumbent government of India, instead of insisting on a joint enquiry, if necessary with the involvement of a third or more parties, to identify the culprits and then prosecute them has chosen a populist method, for political expediency, of unilaterally launching an attack on Pakistan. If just means are not followed it is unlikely that the stated objective would be achieved.

At the end of the war we'll be left with more bitterness. Communal hatred on both sides has already taken the form of madness. The narrative built by the frenzied media would destroy whatever possibilities of rapprochement that existed. Trust has been completely lost. And, lastly there would be no guarantee that several years down the line another terrorist attack would not take place.

A possible solution to the problem is friendly relations with Pakistan. Somewhere, the beginning would have to be made by

somebody. A dialogue between the two countries followed by putting into place confidence building measures should ultimately lead to both governments working in tandem to eliminate the threat of terrorism. We must remember that Pakistan has paid heavier price as a result of terrorist incidents. As late as in March a train from Quetta to Peshawar with 380 passengers was hijacked by Balochistan Liberation Army, an incident in which many people got killed in the subsequent shoot-out. So, we have to start with the basic premise that everybody cannot be a sympathiser of terrorism in Pakistan. Hence India's priority should have been to see that saner voices in Pakistan are strengthened so that democratically elected government is in control of things and the military or the ISI don't play a determining role. The support extended by the people of Pakistan to Imran Khan's party during the last elections is ample proof that people desire an independent democratic rule. Imran Khan will always be remembered for having opened the Kartarpur Sahib corridor for Indian pilgrims, an act which was praised even by Narendra Modi on the day of its inauguration. As a confidence building measure India could have opened a corridor to the Ajmar Sharif dargah for Pakistani pilgrims. This one act could have generated enormous good will for India inside Pakistan. Strong ties between the two countries at the people to people level are the only way to wean away whatever support exists among people for terrorist organisations inside Pakistan.

How long are we going to keep looking at Pakistan as an enemy? It was part of India till 1947. Many Indians have gone and settled there. Many in India still have family ties. How can you expect a husband-wife married across the border to pledge their

loyalty to only one of the countries? If the reality is a shared history, customs, culture, families, languages, etc. India and Pakistan have been artificially divided. India is a living proof that Hindus and Muslims can co-exist even after more than ten years of a sustained effort to divide the communities by various governmental and non-governmental acts. The political division has been imposed on a social unity at the grassroots. Hindus and Muslims can never be divided in the way Meiteis and Kukis have been divided in Manipur. Hence, if Hindus and Muslims can co-exist why can India and Pakistan not? Going forward there are only two ways. Either we exist as good neighbours or perish together by dropping nuclear weapons on each other.

If the former chiefs of RAW and ISI, A.S. Dulat and Asad Durrani, respectively, can write a book together, if Narendra Modi can make a surprise visit to Lahore to attend a family function of Nawaz Sharif and present a shawl to his mother, why shouldn't common Indians and Pakistanis be not allowed to live in an atmosphere of trust, peace and friendship.

We hope wisdom will prevail among the civilian population and good sense will guide the political ideologies on both sides and visionary leadership will take the step in right direction to solve the problem of terrorism once and forever.

***Arundhati Dhuru** is with National Alliance of People's Movements in India

***Saeeda Diep** is with Centre for Peace and Secular Studies in Lahore, Pakistan

***Sandeep Pandey** is General Secretary of Socialist Party (India). They and their children Maryam, Ayesha, Bakht, Chaitanya and Anandi refuse to consider citizens of other country as their enemies.

Courtesy **Countercurrents**,

11 May 2025. 

Free Speech:

Full text: ‘A good citizen and true patriot’, say 1,000 scholars in defence of Ashoka professor

Scroll Staff



***Ali Khan
Mahmudabad
was arrested
based on a BJP
Yuva Morcha
leader's
complaint on
his Facebook
posts on
Operation
Sindoor.***

More than 1,000 signatories have endorsed a letter of support for Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad who was arrested on Sunday for his social media posts on India's military strikes that were carried out on May 7.

Khan was arrested under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita that included inciting secession, and insulting religious beliefs based on a complaint filed by a Haryana leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party's youth wing, the Yuva Morcha.

"It is preposterous that we have come to such a pass in India that even praising the army, albeit while criticising those who clamour for war, can now invite such targeted harassment and attempted censorship," said the letter of support for Khan. The signatories include veteran historians Romila Thapar and Ramachandra Guha and scholars such as Jayati Ghosh, Nivedita Menon and Ram Puniyani.

The letter pointed out that in his posts on

Facebook, Khan "analysed how any distinction between the terrorists or non-state actors and the Pakistani military has now collapsed" while the optics of the women officers chosen for India's media debriefs was "proof that the secular vision of the founders of our Republic is still alive".

"Far from being misogynist or anti-national, Prof Khan's posts are driven by a clear moral vision of what being a good citizen means and are actually the words of a true patriot who is concerned with the lives of both soldiers and citizens," says the letter.

Full text below:

Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad is an associate professor and head of the Department of Political Science at Ashoka University (Haryana, India). He has recently been maliciously targeted by the Haryana State Women's Commission about some posts he made on social media following the hostilities between India and Pakistan. Following the

summons, it has been highly unfortunate that a large number of media houses have also chosen to distort and misquote him in order to malign his image and spread misinformation.

The Commission has completely, and it seems deliberately, misread his posts and has accused him of “vilifying” India’s army, “violating dignity and outraging women’s modesty, disparaging women in uniform and attributing malicious communal intent to the Government of India and Indian Armed Forces as well as inciting communal distress and attempting to disturb internal peace”.

From a bare reading of his original posts, it is clear that Prof Khan praised the strategic restraint of the armed forces, analysed how any distinction between the terrorists or non-state actors and the Pakistani military has now collapsed, and said that the optics of the women officers chosen for media debriefs was “important” as proof that the secular vision of the founders of our Republic is still alive.

He even applauded the Indian right wing for their support for Colonel Sofia Qureshi and invited them to also equally loudly oppose mob lynching and the bulldozing that Indian Muslims and others are frequently subjected to. Most importantly, he emphasised the importance of peace and pointed out that it is the poor who suffer disproportionately during conflict. Far from being misogynist or anti-national, Prof Khan’s posts are driven by a clear moral vision of what being a good citizen means and are actually the words of a true patriot who is concerned with the lives of both soldiers and citizens.

Anyone acquainted with Prof Khan knows that he has been engaging with and writing about issues of national, regional and international importance for many years. His knowledge of languages and his deep understanding of the social, political and religious landscape of India are reflected in his articles. His social and public work at the grassroots has always been

concerned with bringing people together, and he has always advocated for resolving differences through dialogue. In his post titled “The blind bloodlust for war!” Prof Khan has used the Gita as well as instances from Islam to illustrate the moral conundrums of going into wars that are driven by egos, pride and self-interest.

It is preposterous that we have come to such a pass in India that even praising the army, albeit while criticising those who clamour for war, can now invite such targeted harassment and attempted censorship. Haryana has one of the highest rates of crimes against women in India and we urgently need to focus on addressing violence and strengthening the rights of women rather than inventing offences where there are none. Crucially, neither does the Commission have the legal jurisdiction to issue this summons to Prof Khan nor does keeping an eye on the issue of cross-border terrorism or UGC Codes of Conduct falls under its ambit. Indeed, there is a much stronger case for summoning those who have made rape threats against Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri’s daughter or against the Madhya Pradesh Minister who called Colonel Sofia Qureshi a sister of the Pakistanis. However, through its actions, the commission has shown how constitutionally protected freedom of speech continues to be under threat from forces that seek to spread hatred and destabilize India.

We, the undersigned, demand that the Haryana State Women’s Commission retract its summons and issue a full and public apology to Prof Ali Khan Mahmudabad for the manner in which it has deliberately and maliciously slandered him. We also call on Ashoka University to stand by its faculty member especially during this time when he has done nothing except carry out his duties as a teacher, a citizen and a person who believes in harmony and peace.

Courtesy **Scroll.in**, 19 May 2025. 

Courts Should Not Be Swayed Only By Allegations in FIR When Deciding Bail: Delhi HC

Sanjeev Sirohi

It is absolutely rational that while taking the right step in the right direction at the right time, the Delhi High Court while striking the right chord in a most learned, laudable, landmark, logical and latest judgment titled *Amit Agrawal vs State of NCT of Delhi & Ors in Bail Appln. 4475/2024 & CRL.M.A. 36662/2024* and cited in Neutral Citation No.: 2025:DHC:3108 that was pronounced as recently as on May 1, 2025 has minced absolutely just no words to hold unequivocally that courts when deciding bail petitions should not be swayed by all the allegations and multiple offences in the first information report (FIR) or chargesheet but must instead examine the specific allegations against the particular accused who has sought bail. Absolutely right! This is exactly the approach that all the courts must demonstrate while deciding bail! No denying it!

At the very outset, this brief, brilliant, bold and balanced judgment authored by the Single Judge Bench comprising of Hon'ble Mr Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani sets the ball in motion by first and foremost putting forth in para 1 that, "How long is long enough, before a court realises that an undertrial has been in custody for too long, and the constitutional promise of speedy trial has been repudiated ? It is this concern that is at the heart of the present judgement."

As we see, the Bench observes in para 2 that, "By way of this petition filed under section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 ('BNSS'), the petitioner seeks regular bail in case FIR No. 0077/2023 dated 14.10.2023 registered under sections 406/420/467/468/471/120-B/34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 ('IPC')

at P.S.: Economic Offences Wing, Delhi."

As it turned out, the Bench enunciates in para 3 that, "Notice on this petition was issued on 06.12.2024; pursuant to which Status Report dated 20.01.2025 has been filed on behalf of the State. Reply dated 03.02.2025 has also been filed on behalf of the Customs Department – the complainant in the subject FIR."

To put things in perspective, the Bench envisages in para 7 that, "Briefly, the present case arises from an alleged criminal conspiracy between one Jayanta Ghosh, a former employee of the Customs Department; co-accused Vijay Singh, a data entry operator with the Customs Department; and co-accused Deepesh Chamoli, who was employed as Senior Manager at the Punjab National Bank, Sansad Marg, New Delhi. The allegation is that the criminal conspiracy was hatched with the intention of cheating the Customs Department of unclaimed and unaccounted amounts lying deposited in their bank accounts towards refund of customs duty to importers."

Do note, the Bench notes in para 8 that, "The modus operandi alleged to have been employed by the accused persons was to forge various official documents, including scrolls, forwarding letters and cheques, using the official stamps and signatures of customs officials. It is alleged that these forged documents would in-turn be used to show bogus entities as beneficiaries who were eligible for customs duty refund, in order to misappropriate government funds."

Do also note, the Bench then notes in para 12 that, "Upon a conspectus of the facts and circumstances obtaining in the matter, the considerations that weigh with the court at this

stage are the following:

12.1. From what has come-forth on the record and based on the submissions made, it appears, the role alleged against the petitioner is that he acted as a conduit for the other accused persons to channel and siphon-off funds lying unclaimed with the Customs Department, which monies were routed through the certain bank accounts. There is no allegation that the petitioner himself was involved in forging any scroll or cheque or other document relating to the Customs Department.

12.2. There is also no material on record to prima-facie show that the petitioner was aware either of the 'nature' of the money that was being routed through the bank account(s) or of the scale or quantum of the offences allegedly committed by the other accused persons.

12.3. It is a matter of record that a chargesheet in the matter has been filed against the petitioner on 12.01.2024, in which the prosecution has cited 49 witnesses. The chargesheet alongwith the documentary evidence produced by the prosecution run into some 10,000 pages; but charges are yet to be framed and trial is yet to commence.

12.4. The petitioner's nominal roll shows that he has already suffered judicial custody for about 13 months. However, regardless of the maximum punishment prescribed for the offences alleged against the petitioner, the court must never lose sight of the fact that, as of now, the petitioner is only an accused pending trial and has not been held guilty for any offences as of date. As argued on behalf of the petitioner, he cannot be detained in custody endlessly awaiting completion of trial."

It would be instructive to note that the Bench then hastens to add in para 13 noting that, "On point of law, a quick overview of the principles of bail jurisprudence laid-down by the Supreme Court may be made at this juncture:

13.1. An undertrial is required to post bail in order to secure his presence at the trial, for which

purpose an undertrial is handed over from the custody of the court to the custody of an appropriate surety. The effect of granting bail is not to set an undertrial completely at liberty but to release him from the custody of law and entrust him to the custody of his surety; and the surety is bound to ensure his production at the trial. (Sunil Fulchand Shah vs. Union of India, (2000) 3 SCC 409, para 24 quoting Halsbury's Laws of England, 4th Edition, Volume 11, para 166)

13.2. Bail may be denied if the court is not satisfied that an accused would remain available to face trial; or the court is of the view that he would intimidate witnesses or tamper with evidence or otherwise interfere in the course of justice. The 'operative' test that a court must apply for grant or denial of bail is the test of 'necessity', namely to answer why it is necessary to detain an undertrial in custody. (Sanjay Chandra vs. CBI, (2012) 1 SCC 40, para 22).

13.3. The purpose of pre-trial custody is neither 'punitive' nor 'preventative', meaning that an accused cannot be held in custody only with the intention of punishing him for an offence which is yet to be proved against him; nor is bail to be denied on the presumption that he would commit an offence if enlarged from custody (except where additional twin conditions prescribed by the Legislature under certain special statutes). (Sanjay Chandra vs. CBI, (2012) 1 SCC 40, para 21)."

Most significantly, the Bench encapsulates in para 13.4 what constitutes the cornerstone of this notable judgment postulating that, "Pertinently, bail must not be denied as a mark of disapproval of the alleged conduct of an accused; nor should it be denied for giving to an accused the taste of imprisonment as a lesson. (Sanjay Chandra vs. CBI, (2012) 1 SCC 40, para 23). This is a common pitfall since oftentimes courts get swayed by the allegations contained in an FIR or a chargesheet and tend to proceed on the textual gravity of the offences

alleged, meaning that courts get blinded by the multitude of penal sections foisted against an accused by the prosecution, which builds a textual narrative in the FIR or in the chargesheet. It is important therefore, for a court to look into the specific allegations against a particular accused, and how, if at all, those allegations are supported by the material or evidence available on record.”

Equally significant is that the Bench then also underscores very rightly in para 13.5 propounding precisely that, “It is extremely important to appreciate that the consequences of pre-trial detention are grave : an accused, who is otherwise presumed innocent until proven guilty, is subject to psychological and physical deprivations of jail life; and is even prevented from contributing to the preparation of his defense. (Moti Ram vs. State of M.P., (1978) 4 SCC 47, para 14).”

Be it noted, the Bench while citing the relevant case law notes in para 13.6 that, “In its decision in Mohd. Muslim vs. State (NCT of Delhi), (2023) 18 SCC 166 the Supreme Court has referred to a piece authored by Donald Clemmer titled ‘The Prison Community’ in 1940, to highlight the dangers of unjust imprisonment. Quoting the author and a decision of the Kerala High Court, (A Convict Prisoner vs. State, 1993 SCC OnLine Ker 127) the Supreme Court has flagged the risk of ‘prisonisation’, that is the risk of an undertrial losing his identity; coming to be known only by a number; losing his personal possessions and personal relationships; status, dignity and autonomy over his personal life, all of which affects his self-perception. It has also been highlighted that if an undertrial belongs to the weaker economic strata of society, imprisonment leads to immediate loss of livelihood, scattering of families and alienation from society. The Supreme Court has observed that the courts must be sensitive to these aspects, since in the event of acquittal, these losses would be irreparable.”

Most remarkably, the Bench expounds in para

13.7 holding that, “It would therefore be sacrilege for a court to disregard the presumption of innocence which enures to the benefit of an accused, while on the other hand failing to ensure speedy trial. The right to speedy trial is the flip-side of the presumption of innocence. It has been held that the right to speedy trial is implicit in the broad-sweep of Article 21 of the Constitution; and a procedure prescribed by law that deprives a person of liberty can only be said to be reasonable, fair and just on the anvil of Article 21 if it also ensures speedy trial. (Mohd. Muslim vs. State (NCT of Delhi), (2023) 18 SCC 166, para 2 quoting Hussainara Khatoon vs. Home Secretary, State of Bihar, (1980) 1 SCC 81).”

Most rationally, the Bench points out in para 14 that, “It is crucial for a court to recognise and be conscious of the right of an accused to speedy trial; and to prevent that right from being defeated, rather than wake-up much too late and lament that such right has been defeated. In Mohd. Hakim vs. State (NCT of Delhi), 2021 SCC OnLine Del 4623 a Division Bench of this court, of which the undersigned was a member, has urged courts to act as doctors instead of coroners, to highlight that a court seized of a bail petition must endeavour to assess the pace at which a trial is proceeding and to not wait for too long, by which time the Article 21 right of an accused is already trampled upon.”

It would be worthwhile to note that the Bench then notes in para 15 that, “In the present case, for example, the chargesheet comprising about 10,000 pages was filed over 01 year ago citing 49 prosecution witnesses but charges are yet to be framed. It is therefore obvious that trial will take a long time to conclude. In the meantime however, the petitioner has already suffered more than 01 year of judicial custody and has been exposed to ‘prisonisation’; and there appears to be no cogent basis to satisfy the test of ‘necessity’ as discussed above for his continued detention.”

As a corollary, the Bench then holds in para

16 stipulating that, “Upon a conspectus of the foregoing legal position, and considering the allegations in the subject FIR insofar as they relate to the petitioner, this court is accordingly persuaded to admit the petitioner – Amit Agrawal s/o Mahender Kumar Agarwal – to regular bail, pending trial, subject to the following conditions:

16.1. The petitioner shall furnish a personal bond in the sum of Rs.5,00,000/- (Rupees Five Lacs Only) with 02 sureties in the like amount from family members, subject to the satisfaction of the learned trial court;

16.2. The petitioner shall furnish to the Investigating Officer, a cellphone number on which the petitioner may be contacted at any time and shall ensure that the number is kept active and switched-on at all times;

16.3. If the petitioner has a passport, he shall surrender the same to the learned trial court and shall not travel out of the country without prior permission of the learned trial court;

16.4. The petitioner shall not contact, nor visit, nor offer any inducement, threat or promise to any of the prosecution witnesses or other persons acquainted with the facts of case. The petitioner shall not tamper with evidence nor otherwise indulge in any act or omission that is unlawful or that would prejudice the proceedings in the pending trial;

16.5. In case of any change in his residential address/contact details, the petitioner shall promptly inform the Investigating Officer in writing; and

16.6. The petitioner shall not open or close any bank account, without giving to the Investigating Officer 30 days prior written notice; and would furnish to the Investigating Officer the full particulars of any such action that he may take.”

For sake of clarity, the Bench then clarifies in para 17 stating that, “Nothing in this order shall be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the pending case.”

What’s more, the Bench then directs in para

18 holding that, “A copy of this order be sent to the concerned Jail Superintendent forthwith, for information and compliance.”

Furthermore, the Bench then adds in para 19 observing that, “The petition stands disposed of in the above terms.”

Finally, the Bench then draws the curtains of this robust judgment directing and holding in para 20 that, “Pending applications, if any, also stand disposed-of.”

All told, we thus see that the Single Judge Bench of the Delhi High Court comprising of Hon’ble Mr Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani has made it indubitably clear which must be always most strictly followed by all the Judges in India while dealing with bail cases that they should not be swayed away easily by all the allegations and multiple offences that are mentioned in the first information report (FIR) or chargesheet as they may be false also but must instead examine the specific allegations with a judicial mind against the particular accused who has sought bail. There can be just no gainsaying that the Courts must also unfailingly adhere to the time tested dictum which even the Apex Court has repeatedly given topmost priority that, “Bail is the rule and jail is the exception”. It merits just no reiteration that this will ensure that innocents don’t just keep languishing in jails on mere suspicion or on mere allegations as we have seen that many cases later turn out to be false but the life of innocent is ruined who suffers jail sentence for no fault before being even convicted which is nothing but “judicial murder” which cannot be ever justified on one pretext or the other! What also definitely has to be duly acknowledged is that in such cases, the innocent is also most irrationally deprived from the most basic legal and Constitutional right of contributing to preparing for his defence which Judges must always bear in mind as has also been reiterated by the Delhi High Court so very commendably in this leading case! There can be just no denying or disputing it!

Sanjeev Sirohi is an Advocate. 🌈

The Concept of Sthithi Pragya According to the Bhagavat Gita

P.A.S. Prasad

It embodies the idea of inner strength, calmness, and wisdom that allows a person to navigate life's challenges with grace and composure and detachment.

Roy's life and times are known to those who are interested to know about the greatness of Roy as a revolutionary and philosopher; committed human freedom in all aspects understood in modern times. But about his core strength and the origin of springs of the fountain of his incredible understanding of events and his vast knowledge, little is known. His daring, courage and brilliance require better understanding than what we know about him. It is like six blind men trying to understand the shape of an elephant, each according to his own perception. Then I chanced upon the concept of *Sthithi Pragya*, propounded in the Bhagavat Gita and M.N. Roy is the concept personified!

This concept has the following elements:

1. Inner strength 2. Calmness, 3. Wisdom. These elements allow person to navigate life's challenges with 4. Grace, Composure and Detachment.

How Roy personifies these elements fully integrated in his personality is a fascinating subject that his life, times and legacy tell us.

1. Coming to inner strength, Roy was propelled in life because of his inner strength. It was the spring that gave him immense self confidence which made him cross insurmountable obstacles with ease, effortlessly like a cheetah's long leap. It came naturally to him. When he joined the group of Jatin Mukherjee to fight the British, and participating in the Hawrah-Shibpur dacoity case, he never thought of the risk of death or lifelong imprisonment while still in his teens. Later the same inner strength took him to far away

countries across the oceans in his twenties. He never seems to be aware of the risks when going to new countries. He would finance himself and so on. His sole aim seems to be how to free the world from domination, and exploitation of the weaker. He had yet to crystallise his mode of action. He found the solution after reaching Mexico. He founded the first Communist Party outside Russia thinking how to get rid of capitalist exploitation of the masses.

Calmness. Roy's calmness is like the calmness before tempest, the tempest being his penetrating, dazzling, incomparable intellect and courage. He had the immense courage of facing grave unknown dangers even without knowing the possible outcomes, like when he joined Jatin Mukherjee's group to fight the British rulers after procuring arms. He did not flinch from the fact of the vast disparity in the relative might of the British and the negligible resources of his group except commitment to a cause, indomitable courage and readiness to make any sacrifice. His calmness is reflected when he fled India to escape arrest in India and to fight from a foreign soil by arranging arms supplies to his comrades in India to enable them to fight. After ultimately reaching Moscow and his escape from the terrible wrath of Stalin is all a saga of Roy's calm and cool courage. There are no references to mood swings taking umbrage and quarrels. He remained calm. Even after his return to India going to jail where his health was shattered and settling down at Dehradun he remained calm as ever. His inner calm was reflected in his outer calm while he faced every danger with equanimity.

3. Wisdom. Much can be written on Roy's wisdom which guided his activities all his life.

He was not led into extremist activities. It was a temptation when he joined Jatin's Mukherjee's group in the early days of Roy's evolution. His wisdom was at the root of Roy's dazzling and penetrating intellect. Though his academic education was not very high

he learnt and acquired formidable knowledge in all important branches of various disciplines. He acquired fluent command over five languages: he could, read write and speak. He could learn rapidly, e.g., after learning chess in Mexico he defeated the Mexican national champion in six months. He was dexterous in firing with both hands. His discretion emanated from his wisdom. It was evident in his writings, his prodigious output of many important books and pamphlets. It is incredible how in a comparatively short life span he could write so much. Even in jail also he wrote fascinating books like *Fragments from a Prisoner's Diary*!

M.N. Roy's grace, composure and detachment. If we look at Roy's life and times we notice that Roy had the dual qualities of grace and composure. He had abundant charisma.

When he met in his teens Jatin Mukherjee, he was liked and trusted by Jatin. He was entrusted by Jatin to procure arms from neighbouring countries. When Roy fled to America to evade arrest in India he met Evelyn Trent in Stanford. Their mutual love led them to marry. After they escaped to Mexico, Roy met the Mexican President who was impressed by Roy's grace and composure resulting in their friendship and trust. Roy established the Communist Party first time after Russia. He travelled to Russia at the invitation of Lenin. Lenin was impressed and found Roy trustworthy, though Roy was in his twenties only. Soon Roy was made a member of the politburo and thereafter presented at the Second Comintern (Second International Communist meet) his thesis on the spread of Communism

in Asia along with Lenin's thesis and both were adopted.

In Moscow Roy met Nehru. Nehru recorded the meeting in his autobiography. Later Nehru looked after Roys' welfare till the end. When Roy was in jail, Einstein pleaded with the British for the release of Roy.

There are certain positive endearing traits in the personality of Roy which made him a great man he was. He was unassuming and modest, a model of humility. He made no distinction between individuals in position and power and ordinary people. My uncle who was an ardent follower of Roy went to Dehradun to meet Roy with his friends. He was astonished the way Roy treated them, so unassuming and homely, no ego in Roy about his achievements. He was modest.

Roy's detachment was evident in all his activities, while leaving India not knowing whether he would come back or not and while leaving Mexico which he considered as his second home. The Mexicans too were in love with him. The house where Roy lived in Mexico still goes by the name M.N. Roy. He parted company with his wife Evelyn Trent while returning to India and she went back to her native place Stanford. The house where Roy settled permanently in Dehradun was sought to be gifted to him by his friends and admirers like Justice V.M. Tarkunde, but Roy declined and advised them to give it to Indian Renaissance Institute instead. Roy had no fascination or attachment to things, money and valuables.

Lastly, he made lie hunting his creed. He could not stand hypocrisy and humbug. He was committed to the freedom of the individual in all its dimensions. His treatise on human freedom has given to the modern world of thought the philosophy of Radical Humanism.

Roy was the tallest among his peers. There is no one like him.

My humble tribute to the great man, M.N. Roy. 🌈

Report of the global conference ‘India Summit’ organized at Hyderabad

A global conference ‘India Summit’ was organized at Hyderabad, the capital of our country’s Telangana state, on 25-26 April by the joint initiative of Samriddhi Bharat Foundation and Telangana Government. In which 400 delegates from about 100 different countries around the world participated. The background of these delegates was from politics, education and social activist. The Chief Minister of the state, Shri Revanth Reddy and his cabinet gave active cooperation for the arrangement and success of the conference. Not only this, but some ministers of the state also participated in the discussions. Around 70 years ago in 1955, a global conference called ‘Bandung Conference’ was organized in Delhi, the capital of the country, under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. After World War II, the problems of the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and South America and their solutions were discussed in the context of non-alignment and foreign policy. The policy was chosen. The burning question was how the newly independent countries of above three continents chart their own path of self-sustained human growth peacefully without being swayed by either the capitalist bloc of America on one side and the communist bloc of Soviet Russia on the other side. The country’s Prime Minister Nehru had a lion’s share in creating that ideology known as the ideology of Non-Alignment.

Exactly 70 years later in the year 2025, under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition parties in Parliament, 400 representatives from 100 countries attended the Hyderabad Conference. This was the first attempt to bring the factors that were progressing for the development of people in their own countries at the local level in different countries around the world on one platform.

The objective of the organizers of the conference as the host was clear.

The organizer was not at all interested in increasing the percentage of voters by two to five percent for the elections of their party. But the question was how to create a new global order, freeing ourselves from the clutches of right-wing countries and external forces that have gained power by subverting the representative electoral system and reactionary religious mode of thought that are emerging at the global level, against democracy and human values.

The world has changed a lot in the last seven decades. Global politics has also changed a lot. The authorities supported by these right-wing extremist religious forces have started turning back the hands of the clock of worldly human-centered development in each country. In each country, the death knell of modern institutions and cultures that came into existence with the cooperation of knowledge-science-technology in the past seven decades has started ringing. It has created a serious challenge at the global level for the survival of human civilization in the long run.

After World War II, all countries of the world, no matter how serious the problems within their own countries and with each other, especially neighboring countries, have resolved peacefully through discussion, internal cooperation and faith in the rule of law. To solve the internal problems of the country and international problems between two countries, the fascist dictatorial methods of violence, military clashes and weapons of war were abandoned. In World War II, the Nazi dictator of Germany, Hitler, adopted those vile and inhuman methods to completely exterminate the Jews as a community and Hitler’s political opponents throughout Europe.

The USA and European countries have established the Holocaust Museum as a study center. So that the future generation of mankind can learn from it and not repeat such mistakes again and again.

The unanimous conclusion of the current Hyderabad Conference was that in the last two decades of the 21st century, especially after 2010, the treatment of all kinds of minorities of those countries, such as religious, ethnic, racial, gender-based, and the immigrants settled in every country, by the majority population has not only gradually become such that it will repeat 'that Hitler's racial holocaust', but has also been increasing. The majority population of that nation has continuously treated all kinds of minorities as if they were a threat to the national interest and security. This majority have become hostile, hateful and violent towards them. In which there is both direct and indirect open and tacit consent of the ruling party. (These minorities presence are now being propagated as a serious threat to nation states.) Now this ethnic, casteist and cultural nationalism has assumed an intolerant and violent form in a very short period of time.

The second question was, 'Who is dangerous for the nation-state civil society?' This was the main discussion in this conference. It was observed in the India Summit that the main threat to the modern nation-state is the dictatorship of the extreme right-wing 'majority fanatic-ethnic-ruling party' in that country. Because it is based on the pre-nation state philosophies or pre-modern loyalties that have inspired cultural nationalism, the entire existence and development of the modern nation state is based on the philosophies and values of rationalism, liberalism, secularism and globalization. Cultural nationalism (ultra-nationalism) is completely against these values because it is based on divisive politics and xenophobia. This cultural nationalism does not believe in modern civic values such as liberty, equality and fraternity, which are democratic

values constitutions of modern nation states. Thus, cultural nationalism (ultra-nationalism) is also fundamentally against constitutionalism which is based on the inalienable human individual rights.

This global crisis is not only political, economic or social but also philosophical. We, all progressive global forces, have come together now to create a new world order based on values that have gradually evolved from the struggle to sustain life based on human-centered secular values. Our efforts are to free humanity from all its past bonds and inhibitions. We are inspired to discuss how we want to create a new world order.

The conference had seven panels and a closing session lasting two days. The first panel discussion was on 'Gender Justice and A Feminist Future', which highlighted the challenges faced by women around the world. The focus was on women's empowerment and the panelists discussed how cultural nationalism (ultra-nationalism) is hindering it. There was a proposal for a feminist foreign policy. In the open discussion, the delegates raised a very interesting question on its roots in patriarchy and religious fundamentalism, which has led to the connections between patriarchy and conservatism. On top of that, cultural nationalism (ultra-right) has built up a very tall pyramid.

Panel two was on 'Fact vs Fiction: Countering Disinformation', which started a heated debate on how facts are being fictionalized and how disinformation is being spread by right-wing forces. All the panelists highlighted how right-wing politics is built on propaganda in countries and stressed the importance of stopping such propaganda politics to create progressive politics.

The panel on the topic 'Youth and Tomorrow's Politics' emphasized the participation of youth in politics and said that only youth can change the current world order. Today, all the nations of the world have been

reborn on the basis of large-scale citizen migration within the 21st century. There was also a long discussion in the panel on how to shape 'New Multilateralism' migration. The modern world and modern nations were reborn on the basis of the globalization wind that blew after the end of the Second World War, through the Infotech-Revolution. Therefore, the borders of the nation have now become irrelevant. Then, all the right-wing governments based on this cultural nationalism have started taking extreme measures against citizen migration in their countries. They want to hinder the natural transition of people on a large scale. They want to create a stumbling block with their might against the creation of a multi-faceted and multicultural modern society. They are using their political power inhumanly and ruthlessly by giving lollipops to their local people behind the concept of a highly imaginary grand past like 'Vishvaguru'.

The panelists have expressed concern about the weakening of world organizations like the UN in recent times. Withdrawal from multilateral treaties also has a devastating impact on the global climate and environment. The panelists said that the recent withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement has shocked the world. There was a panel on accelerating climate justice at the conference, and all the panelists and delegates expressed disappointment at the changing attitude of developed countries towards climate change. They linked this to the growing far-right politics. They have the least concerned for the moral public good of the world. This is despite the fact that developed countries have been responsible for the majority of carbon emissions for the last few decades.

The conference panel on 'Pluralism, Diversity and De-Polarization with Respect and De-Pollution' highlighted the threat posed by the far-right to ethno-nationalism and cultural polarization through a comprehensive discussion on plurality and diversity. The conference also laid emphasis on respecting diverse cultural and

religious identities. The panels on 'Economic Justice in Uncertain Times' and 'Peace and Justice in a Multipolar World' deepened the discussion on the challenges posed by the world's diversity and the far-right.

On 26 April, the presence of Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi added a special touch to the concluding session. The session highlighted the themes of the conference, where political leaders from the main participating countries spoke on how the rise of far-right movements is leading their countries towards authoritarianism. Rahul Gandhi spoke about how he undertook the Bharat Jodo Yatra to protest against the situation created by the Bharatiya Janata Party rule, which is spreading divisive politics and hatred on Indian soil. He said that he went to the people and told them that his journey was only to open a "SHOP OF LOVE IN THE MARKET OF HATE", and the people of India welcomed him with open arms.

Similarities can be seen in the speeches of all the delegates. All spoke about the threat of far-right elements in their respective countries and how they are creating hatred against other communities. The session emphasized that hatred is only the capital of the far-right worldwide, and it must be confronted.

The conference ended with a declaration called 'Hyderabad Resolution: Delivering Global Justice', which listed 44 points to be achieved. The last point of the declaration said, "Together we will confront injustice, usher in a new era of transformation, build a world that respects the rights and aspirations of working people and ensures the fullness of life for all." In this way, the conference attempted to imagine a new world order on the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity, which is consistent with Nehruvian socialism. Overall, it created hope for a new society by creating a progressive alliance of countries, a society free from hatred.

(Compiled and translated by **Bipin Shroff**, Atlanta, US, 5 May 2025.) 

The Humanist Frame

The Human Programme

H. J. Blackham

(Summarized by : **Vinod Jain**)

The Way Things Are

Before deciding how to live, one wants to know how things are; at any rate, this is a question that comes first logically. It is not a question that is simply answered by taking thought. A fully reliable answer is the delayed outcome of persistently trying to find out, and learning thereby how to find out. Meanwhile, life goes on, generations come and go, on the basis of traditional assumptions.

In the European tradition, for some dozen centuries after the fall of Rome [AD 476] thought was dominated by Christian theology, (which was) an amalgam of Platonic and Aristotelian ways of thinking with Judaistic concepts and Christian claims. Three component ideas in this are relevant to Humanist thinking.

- (1) The universe is purposive throughout; purpose is built into the structure of everything.
- (2) Men are free to conform to or defy this purpose, but not to alter it; and they doom themselves to futility and nullity, or worse, by failing to conform.
- (3) The temporal [transitory] order of nature is in some sense inferior and illusory, secondary to an eternal order that is ultimate reality.

The relevance to Humanist thinking of these three ideas of the way things are is that Humanists hold their contraries to be true:

- (i) Humanists believe that the order discovered in nature is not properly teleological; that men are free to introduce valid purposes of their own, and to multiply the possibilities of

purpose by exploring the uses of things;

- (ii) That there is no reason for thinking that the temporal order of nature is not, first and last, the condition of all human experience and achievement. How are these affirmations and the consequent rejection of the traditional ideas justified? The answer is, first, that tradition can be matched with tradition, and, secondly, that the Humanist affirmations stand or fall with reliance on the rational methods of learning from experience (as well as from science).

On the first point, although Christian theology, taking up the main strand of Greek philosophical thought, was dominant in the European tradition for so many centuries, there was an alternative and contrary tradition derived from the Greeks. This began to come into its own in the seventeenth century when its renaissance assisted the scientific movement by helping the pioneers of science to find their way. This alternative tradition was based on the materialism of Democritus, the most learned man of his time and the great rival of Plato. His philosophy made popular by the Epicureans who rivalled the Stoics for nearly six centuries as guides to thinking and living in the Roman world. Democritus, 'the greatest investigator of nature in antiquity', was free from the preoccupation with purpose of Socrates, 'the greatest investigator of human opinion in antiquity'. Democritus posited [put forward as fact or as a basis for argument] self-subsistent, self-moving atoms, whose union and separation by mechanical necessity was the ground for the explanation of all

phenomena. This 'natural' causal model for thinking, in place of the human 'purposive' model, was the neglected clue to learning from nature.

Two major developments in European thought have served to confirm and extend the type of explanation explored by this eclipsed line of Greek thinking:

- (i) 'reason' has ceased to be thought of as an inborn faculty of the mind ;
- (ii) the theory of biological evolution has shown how to make sense of the idea of an order in nature which is not teleological [purposive].

The Golden Frame

If Humanists are fully justified in holding that there is no evidence of a divine purpose which is revealed in history or at work in nature, then, how does this view affect the way of living? Having rejected the traditional theistic basis and framework, are Humanists thrown into chaos? No, not merely because they know that they are human only because they are social (and society requires rules as thinking requires rules). But also because, as Humanists, they stand upon the continent of history; their ethical thinking has historical completeness and historical direction towards definite achievements.

What does this mean? Mainly two things: (i) the ethical thinking of Humanists is empirically at grips with the great social alternatives of better and worse possibilities which history poses in every age and to every generation; whether or not there is a constant called 'human nature', there is a variable called 'human behaviour', and Humanists have learned from history that human behaviour is a response to social conditions. They have seen that institutions, situations, education, devices, and techniques have made it better or worse.

These statements raise severe questions. How does one distinguish between 'better' and 'worse' possibilities? If human behaviour is

socially determined, what becomes of personal responsibility? If one sets about controlling and 'improving' human behaviour, why not employ the most efficient totalitarian methods, up to and including 'brain-washing'?

That human thought and behaviour are socially conditioned is a fact. If one decides to have nothing to do with this fact, there is that much less chance of providing the necessary conditions of individual dignity and personal responsibility. It works both ways: free institutions are as deliberate an attempt at social conditioning as totalitarian methods. Free institutions are necessary, though not sufficient, conditions for maximizing spontaneity and diversity in society. The human person, as the maker of value by his creative activities, and as the maker of standards by his enjoyments and his critical activities, is given the greatest practicable scope, stimulus, and protection in a developed political democracy. Thus, just because Humanists cherish human values, including of course the human personality which is their source, seat, and seal, they want and uphold a society based on agreed rules and agreed rules for changing the rules.

The idea of a world development project is not utopian, because the need, the incentives, and the means are present. The moral unity and responsibility of mankind are the results of advances in knowledge and technology. Ethical thinking today gets its universality not merely from abstract principles but mainly from the pressure of a universal concrete situation which constrains mankind to decide its own fate.

The Distribution of Moral Responsibility

Three overriding problems about which all thinking people are worried define the responsibility more closely: the prevention of war, the control of population, the conservation of resources. These are problems that can be resolved only on a global scale, and the

beginnings of a definite solution of them would be foundation of a universal civilization and human providence. The clear recognition of this situation constitutes the awakening of mankind to its collective responsibility and necessary solidarity, the condition of a universal ethics.

How is this general responsibility of mankind for human fate at the present time divided? Three related points are relevant to this stubborn difficulty, and they are of the first importance.

- (1) Human thought and behaviour are largely socially determined. This has nowhere been seen more conspicuously than in the case of war. Nations of course have been aggressive, and have sought and gained aggrandizement. The situation calls for an institutional solution.
- (2) An institutional solution requires the agreement in the first place of the main parties, the nuclear powers. How can those on one side make the other side agree? The side which, whilst continuing to make itself efficient in defence, ceases to rely on its own armed power as a solution of the security problem, and therefore genuinely seeks controlled general disarmament and an institutional solution as necessary to its defense, is likely to succeed if it persists.
- (3) Although the responsibility rests finally on those who have the power to act decisively, their responsibility is brought home to them by those to whom they are accountable, those whose interests are affected by their decisions. In democratic states this accountability is formally organized, and democratic peoples therefore have a heavy share of responsibility; but all peoples in some measure, and by whatever means are

available to them, are responsible for the responsibility of their leaders.

In sum, the general responsibility of mankind for these global matters cannot be neatly divided. It is shared and shaded, and levies specific demands on everybody. As moral demands, these are demands of an enlightened conscience, and that requires organized enlightenment and organized pressures. The history of all social achievement exemplifies this, and history calls now to those who have ears to hear.

Progress within the Affluent Society

The big world problems of organizing security, controlling population, conserving resources, developing backward regions, intrude into national affairs and private lives, and demand a concerted world project with due priorities and an institutional organization of power and responsibility for dealing with them.

The vision of human progress which the eighteenth century Humanists had was comprehensive and not fundamentally mistaken. They relied on four main agencies. (1) Progressive knowledge by scientific enquiry was the key that opened every door. Bacon had written the great manifesto of human advance in the treatise (*Novum Organum*, 1620) which pleaded for empirical enquiry as the source of human confidence, freedom, and power. The practical arts were linked with the sciences because they promoted the sciences and were in turn promoted by them. (2) The organization of mass production by the accumulation and investment of capital and the division of labour was seen to be the means of progressive wealth. (3) If anarchy was the worst of social evils, tyrannical government was hardly less bad and worse than natural calamities, but the remedy was in the hands of the governed, who could adopt devices by which capable and trustworthy rulers were selected and kept under control. If the social

rules were agreed rules they would be upheld by all and could be equally enforced on each, and there were rules by which rules could be agreed, and changed to keep them agreed. (4) Education was a primary public interest, not only because it furnished the trained ability which promoted the arts and sciences and industrial enterprise and supplied the public service, but also because it made men self-dependent and responsible. Therefore it should be available to all and not merely to the gifted.

We live and move and have our being in a material organized world which is dependable and improvable because it is material and organized. This is the foundation of the Humanist's faith in man. The affluent society is one that can afford to invest in society continuously knowledge, capital, and service. The faith in man that has confidence in this kind of argument is a faith inspired by history. It is not daunted by two world wars, by Nazi enormities, by the crime rate, nor by the extent of juvenile delinquency, not because these are not serious and shocking matters, but because they have causes that can be understood and because reasonable human behaviour also has causes and can be achieved.

Secular Faith

It is reasonable, then, to think that it is not beyond the wit of man to bring about situations and conditions everywhere in which it will be reasonable for men to behave reasonably. Irrational behaviour is not a wanton manifestation of an original evil; it is understandable, and its drives and goals are the common drives and goals of men. If the social situation between nations and within nations can be made conducive to reasonable and reliable behaviour, so also can the situation within the human person and within the family, the root sources of attention and of destructive passions. Deliberate decisions and policies and programmes will be necessary at all levels, and most urgently at the international level; but the

need for them is evident and the means are at hand.

The high Baconian confidence of the eighteenth century Humanists has flagged; it can be renewed at the source, for Bacon rallied his contemporaries to the standard of method, a method at that time undeveloped and imperfectly understood....Faith in progress on the road to a universal high civilization can be it can be shown to be a reasonable faith.....The Humanist is reconciled to reality and makes his home there, and has a horror of the black-and-white fantasy of heaven and hell.

All the same, a new Humanist ethic is needed, to create in the climate of modern ideals and in the context of new possibilities an ethos of personal excellence and public spirit worthy of the human vocation, the ethos of an enlightened universal civilization.

Such an ethic is not likely to be in the language either of abstract principles or of moral codes. On the private side, it is likely to be evocative rather than repressive, exemplary rather than prohibitive. On the public side, it is likely to be more definite, pointing to particular practical imperatives which govern the preventive and constructive work required on behalf of mankind.

Humanists have been conspicuously forward in reinforcing moral responsibility, because of their concern for human welfare and their eagerness for the advancement of knowledge and the use and enjoyment of its fruits.

Humanists, by their acceptance of human responsibility for establishing the conditions of human fulfilment, are committed to efforts to raise the standard of behaviour in this way. Theirs is the dedication of an order. They ought to be the unacknowledged legislators of the world. They are a cadre of activists who insistently and persistently make high expectations the measure of man.

(To be continued....) 



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Printed and Published by **Sheoraj Singh**, on behalf of the Indian Renaissance Institute at
A-1/103, Satyam Apartments, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi- 110096. (M.) 9891928222

printed at **Subhashini Offset Printers, F-10, Jagdish Nagar, Patel Nagar III, Ghaziabad-201001 (UP)**

Editor: **Mahi Pal Singh**, Raghav Vihar, Phase- 3, Prem Nagar, Dehradun- 248007. (Uttarakhand)