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Revolution and Violence

Jayaprakash Narayan

The country has expressed a good deal of concern... over the growth of politically motivated rural violence. A part of this violence is no doubt artificially created in pursuance of a political ideology, but it would never have taken root had not the ground been prepared for it by the persistence of poverty, unemployment, and myriad socio-economic injustices. If my remark about the implementation of existing reform laws producing a mini social revolution in the country-side is true, its converse is equally true. The failure to implement those laws for such a protracted period of time has inevitably led to the growth of the rural violence that we are now witnessing. It is not the so-called Naxalites who have fathered this violence, but those who have persistently defied and defeated the reform laws for the past so many years -- be they politicians, administrators, landowners, or money-lenders. The big farmers who cheated the ceiling law through *benami* and fictitious settlement; the gentlemen who grabbed Government lands and village commons; the landowners who persistently denied the legal rights of their share-croppers and evicted them from their holdings or those who underpaid their labourers and threw them out from their homestead; the men who by fraud or force

took the lands away from the weaker sections; the so-called upper-castes men who looked down upon their *harijan* brethren and ill-treated and socially discriminated against them; the money-lenders who charged usurious interest rates and seized the lands of the poor and the weak; the politicians, the administrators and all the others who aided and abetted these wrongs -- it is they who are responsible for the accumulated sense of injustice, grievance and hurt among the poor and downtrodden that is now seeking its outlet in violence. Also responsible are the courts of law where the procedures and costs of justice have conspired to deny

'June 5'
Total Revolution Day

a fair deal to the weaker sections of our society. Responsible again is the system of education and the kind of planning that is producing an ever-expanding army of ill-educated, frustrated, and unemployed youth, and which accentuates economic disparities and leads to further polarization of classes. Responsible yet again are the politicians, whose self-seeking has reduced democracy, the party system and the ideologies to a farce.

When such happens to be the situation, and when the institutions and processes of democracy

are found to be so woefully lacking, is there any wonder that discontentment, frustration, anger, and want should turn the minds of some towards violence as the only possible savior?

But while all this is understandable, it is relevant to ask if violence will prove to be the savior it is promised to be? It is not as if we were at the dawn of the first violent revolution in history that is to usher in the first day of deliverance for the “wretched of the earth”. There have been quite a number of such revolutions already that have rubbed off a good deal of their shine and brought disenchantment in their train. This is not the place to go into a detailed examination of this issue, but a few points may be noted to put the matter in perspective.

First, it must be noted that political violence can be both revolutionary and reactionary. There is no certainty that a violent revolutionary movement will always lead to a social revolution. It might very well produce a reaction and end up in a fascist dictatorship. ... Or it might just end up in chaos, mass misery, and disintegration and enslavement of the nation. Those who preach violence must reckon with these possibilities.

Second, revolutions do not just happen at the will of revolutionaries. Social and historical conditions have to be ripe before a revolution can succeed. That may well take a century, as history has often shown. In India the advocates of violence have been at it since the Telengana days. But how far have they progressed in these ... years? Nothing can be more untrue that the facile belief that a violent revolution takes little time to engineer.

Third, even when a revolution, after a long period of incubation, does ultimately succeed, what does its “success” mean? It means no more than that the old social order has been torn up and destroyed. But, for no revolution is destruction an end in itself. The end is always a new social order. But, how long does it take the revolutionaries

whose first occupation after success is invariably to plunge into a bloody fight for power among themselves—to establish the social order of their dreams, or of such of their dreams as have not been washed away in the fraternal blood-bathing? Was there a single social revolution in history which succeeded in realizing the ideals for which it was made? Think of the French Revolution and the ideals of Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity. Think of the Russian Revolution and of Lenin’s slogan of “all power to the soviets”—workers’ soviets, soldiers’ soviets, peasants’ soviets. It is ... years since the Russian Revolution and there still happens to be a party dictatorship tightly clamped down upon the Russian people. No one can tell how long that dictatorship will last before the soviets really come to power after all.

Fourth, though the central issue in all revolutions is that of power, and though they are all made in the name of the people’s power, power comes invariably to be usurped by a handful of the most ruthless among the erstwhile revolutionaries. Nor can it be otherwise when power comes out of the barrel of a gun and the gun is not in the hands of the common people but in the hands of those of the organized instruments of violence that a successful revolution always throws up—the “revolutionary” army and its auxiliaries. Whoever controls those instruments controls power. That is why a violent revolution has always brought forth a dictatorship of some kind or the other. And that is also why after a revolution a new privileged class of rulers and exploiters grows up in course of time to which the people at large is once again subject.

No, violence has not proved to be the savior that the oppressed and exploited are led to believe it is. To alter slightly Tolstoy’s famous remark, the revolutionaries have done everything for the people but get off their backs.

(Courtesy : Face to Face, Page 14-17)

The Alchemy of Love

Satish Kumar

"I have decided to stick to love; hatred is too great a burden to bear."

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Love is all very well, but can we love Vladimir Putin?

I am often asked this question, and I always give the same response, which is to say we must love Putin in order to transform him and save millions of innocent lives. Only love, I tell people, has the power to transform Putin.

The Sufi poet Rumi wrote:

By over the bitter becomes sweet,

By love copper become gold.

By love pain becomes healing.

And to this, I would add:

By love enemies become friends.

This, then, is the true potential in the alchemy of love and in adopting love as a verb.

Wars and weapons can kill, but they cannot transform. And, of course, before one can kill some 'undesirable' person, one might kill thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of innocent people. In wars, millions are made homeless and become refugees. Schools, hospitals and homes are destroyed. Roads, railways and historic buildings are decimated. The price of food and fuel goes up. And it is those living in poverty who will suffer the most. In modern military operations, it is impossible to avoid civilian casualties.

Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were killed, but before they died how many ordinary men, women and children lost their homes or their lives? How many soldiers on both sides were killed, wounded or forever traumatized? And after all the deaths and destruction, what was achieved? Nothing! Afghanistan is still ruled by the Taliban,

and Iraq is still in chaos. If the greatest military power in the world, the United States, could not win a war after 20 years of fighting in Afghanistan, what hope is there for either side to win the current war in Ukraine?

If there is a lesson to be learned from the experience of recent wars such as those in Vietnam, Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan, then the lesson is simple and clear: wars are not only futile, but they are also obsolete; they neither transform tyrants nor accomplish peace.

Nations have waged wars and practiced hatred for hundreds of years and have failed miserably in their stated goals. The UK tried to conquer Afghanistan but failed, Russia tried to rule Afghanistan but failed, America tried to establish friendly government in Afghanistan by military means but it too failed.

So now let them all try love.

It is easy to love someone who is reasonable and agreeable, who is good and gracious. But to love someone who behaves in a narrow minded, arrogant and selfish way requires real courage and strength. Making peace with Putin would be a sign of strength, not of weakness.

We need to understand that those who behave badly do so because they have not themselves been loved. The poet W.H. Auden wrote, "Those to whom evil is done do evil in return."

The path of love is taken by the brave and not by the faint-hearted. The real test of love is to love your enemy. Love conquers all. *Amor vincit omnia.*

War prolongs conflict, but love resolves conflict. Love is as logical as it is magical. Love makes miracles.

History is full of violent systems, slavery,

apartheid, sexism. Nazism, colonialism, casteism and many more unpleasant 'isms'. Some people think that communism is evil. Others think that capitalism is evil. And if we always take that path of confrontation and opposition in order to overcome these undesirable systems and to defeat our opponents by war, we are simply pouring fuel on the fire and then hoping to extinguish it.

Wise leaders have often proclaimed that the ends cannot justify the means. Noble ends must be pursued and accomplished by noble means – which include love and nonviolent resistance. There is no way to peace: peace is the way.

Mahatma Gandhi is believed to have said, "There are many causes I would die for. There is not a single cause I would kill for."

We have witnessed the success of nonviolent resistance. Gandhi and the Indian struggle for independence, Martin Luther King and the peaceful campaign against racism in America, Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. These are some utterly inspiring examples of nonviolent action founded on love. These movements brought about a change of heart leading to a change of regime. These movements were founded on the humility of hearts, on generosity of spirit and on an unconditional love for humanity.

Love is letting go of ego and arrogance. To love is to accept the multiplicity of systems and the diversity of truths. Love is to live and let live. Love and selfishness do not go together. Love celebrates unity, ego imposes uniformity. Love embraces diversity. Ego causes division. Love lets a thousand flowers bloom, ego wants a monoculture. Ego is driven by self-interest, love looks for common interest. Ego seeks separation, love likes relationship. Ego engages in self-seeking,

love seeks mutuality and reciprocity. Ego leads to war, love leads to peace. Ego creates contradiction, love creates conciliation.

If we want peace, prosperity and happiness, then love should be a way of life for all of us. It is through love that we find meaning in our lives. The art of love needs to be learned and practiced every day. As we nourish our bodies with food every day, so we can nourish our souls with love every day. Love is food for the soul. Love is the essence of life: love of ourselves, love of each other, love of people and love of Nature. No one, not even Putin, is our enemy. I would say the same thing to Putin: Ukrainians are not your enemies, Europeans and Americans are not your enemies. Only through friendship can the whole of humanity protect its common interest.

Wars cause climate catastrophe. The production of weapons, the constant flying of military planes and the use of other military vehicles, including tanks, require huge amounts of fossil fuel. After the war is over, further fossil fuels are needed to rebuild destroyed buildings and damaged infrastructure. In war people suffer and Nature suffers. In war no one wins and everyone loses.

War leaders sit comfortably in the Kremlin or in the White House. Soldiers suffer, society suffers. War is pointless. War is unnecessary. War is uncivilized. War is hell. War is out of date. There is no other act as bitter, as traumatic and as stupid as war. War is immoral and irrational, whoever initiates it.

Ukrainians blame Putin, Putin blames Ukrainians. But love takes us beyond this blame game. It takes two to fight a war and it takes two to make peace. But politicians of all persuasions seem to have lost the art of making peace. They seem to have forgotten the statesmanship, the statecraft and the craft of true diplomacy that are always rooted in deep love.

Nations know how to conquer the moon. They know how to destroy our precious planet Earth with nuclear weapons, not once but a hundred times over. But the presidents and prime ministers of Europe, the US and Ukraine don't seem to know how to talk with Putin and help him see the futility of war and inspire him to seek peace! Nor does Putin seem to know how to befriend his neighbours like the Ukrainians and make them feel safe. What is the point of all this progress, what is the benefit of all this education and all the scientific achievements if the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, Harvard and Yale, Moscow and Beijing don't know how to establish harmony among nations and peace among people?

Politics without wisdom is a very dangerous thing, and sadly, politicians do not know how to be true statesmen, ambassadors do not know how to be true diplomats, and religious leaders do not know how to practice love as a verb. Governments of all colours spend billions and trillions of dollars, rubles and euros in preparation for war while many of their citizens are homeless, jobless and hungry, living on food provided by food banks.

I am a pacifist and a peacemaker. I do not excuse Putin for attacking Ukraine. But I want Ukraine and the supporters of Ukraine, as well as the Russians and their supporters, to rise above their narrow national interests and seek the common interest of the whole of humanity.

Love safeguards the interests of everyone.

The consequences of wars are so tragic that we need to avoid them in all circumstances. Like the medical profession, politicians need to take an oath to do no harm. No harm to self, no harm to other human beings and no harm to Nature. If such an oath were to become an integral part of international law, Putin could not attack Ukraine. The USA could not attack Iraq.

Hugely militarized nations live in constant fear and insecurity, forgetting that true security resides in trust, not tanks. Only the power of love can free them from fear of the other.

When wars become unpopular, leaders are compelled to negotiate and compromise. Neither side gets their way. Both sides are forced to find a mutually acceptable solution. Why could they not do this in the first place? Why not find a negotiated agreement instead of all the deaths and destruction? Peace is commonsense, but conflicts and common sense don't go together. Unfortunately, commonsense is no longer so common!

If we harbor hatred for Putin in our hearts, we are victims of our own hatred. Therefore let us choose love in place of hatred. Hatred is not good for us. Our true self-interest and our true security are both embedded in love, not in hatred. This is tough love. I call it Radical Love. I know I am being an idealist, but the way of the pragmatists is causing chaos. So why not give idealism a chance?

So yes, we need to love Putin and we can love Putin. If we loved Putin, he would have no excuse to go to war. Love is unconditional, unlimited and abundant. Love is for all. Let us bring a monsoon of love to Moscow and soften the dry soul of Putin. My message to Putin is the same: stop war and try love. And message to Europeans and Americans is the same: stop adding fuel to fire. It is time to bring the rain of love, forgiveness and peace to the fire of war in Ukraine – a war that should never have been started.

*(Satish Kumar is the recipient of the Goi Peace Award 2022. His new book, **Radical Love**, is published by Parallax Press and is available now from www.resurgence.org/shop)*

*(Courtesy: Resurgence & Ecologist,
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Meaningless Mini-Demonetisation

Arun Kumar

None of the arguments that the RBI has given to justify the move are valid.

In a sudden though not unexpected move, **currency notes of denomination Rs. 2,000 are being withdrawn from circulation.** This is announced via a notification released by the Reserve Bank of India and not the government (as at the time of demonetisation). These notes are not being withdrawn from circulation, but actually, they will stop circulating right away given that they will have to be deposited in a bank or exchanged for lower denomination notes.

So, no one will accept these notes in transactions which is as good as being withdrawn from circulation. This will create confusion in the public for a while.

Further, as transactions face problems, especially for small businesses – producers and traders – the economy will be impacted.

Arguments given

The RBI press release gives the logic of the move.

First, the objective of introducing these notes at the time of demonetisation was met as smaller denomination notes became available in larger numbers. It is argued that the availability of these smaller notes is adequate.

Second, this denomination is not commonly used for transactions.

Third, it is estimated that the life-span of notes is four to five years. So these notes issued between 2016 and 2018 have reached their end. It is stated to be a part of the “clean note policy” – whatever that may mean.

None of these arguments are valid. These notes were not introduced in November 2016

to take care of the shortage of notes due to demonetisation of the other high denomination currency notes. The planning for these notes started months in advance. Demonetisation was done in November 2016 since these notes were just about to be introduced for circulation. So, the logic is the reverse of what the RBI is implying. It is not even that these notes are not needed anymore.

High denomination notes are introduced for ease of transactions as the economy expands and there is inflation. More and more of money is required. Especially in India where a large number of transactions are in cash. There are over 6 crore micro and small business entities and about 11 crore farmers who use cash for working capital. Further, the well-off households keep cash for precautionary reasons for some emergency, etc.

So, a large part of the hoard of Rs 2,000 notes would be held for legitimate reasons.

Who holds cash?

If it is assumed that those with substantial amount of black wealth in cash, hold an average of Rs 10 crore, then if the entire amount of Rs 3.6 lakh crore is used to hold black wealth then only 36,000 people will have these notes. However, as argued above, such notes are also held by other economic agents so the numbers holding the Rs 2,000 currency notes as black wealth may not be more than a few thousand.

The implication is that to curb the black holdings of these few, the whole population of 140 crore would be impacted and most of whom have nothing to do with black incomes or wealth since they earn way below the taxable limit.

Further, automatically the availability of the,

Rs 2000 currency notes had declined from Rs 6.73 lakh crore on March 31, 2018 to the present amount of Rs 3.62 lakh crore. If the banks just stop issuing these notes, the numbers would decline further. So, there was no urgency to take these notes out of circulation and create uncertainty in the economy.

The Rs 2,000 notes were introduced to make transactions easier. But if they were being slowly reduced in quantity, naturally their use would decline. It is then a flawed argument that since they were not much in use they can be completely withdrawn. The need for them continues to exist in the economy.

The argument that the life-span of notes is X years so all the notes need to be withdrawn from circulation is also flawed.

The soiled notes are removed in a routine way when they come to the banks. One does not need to withdraw even those notes that may not be soiled and which could be used. Further, since it has been said that these notes have had reduced circulation, they are unlikely to have got soiled and could have lasted much longer.

Why the step?

Perhaps the ruling party has been influenced by the flak it faced during the recently concluded Karnataka elections. The slogan '40% ki sarkara' had dented the image of the ruling party. So, just like demonetisation was used to create a perception that government is pro-active against black money, same is sought to be done now. It worked in 2016 when the poor accepted that the ruling dispensation was acting against the black money holders.

The issue is will it again work? Most unlikely, since after demonetisation also most realised that it did not impact black income generation.

What is required is not tinkering with money in circulation which impacts the small and micro sector units that transact in cash. It will also impact

**... More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let
they voice**

**Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or
goats**

**That nourish a blind life within the brain.
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer**

**Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?**

**For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of
God.**

- Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

farm trade. All these people number in crores. The larger units will not face issues since they will continue to use formal banking channels and electronic transfers. But, if the impact on the unorganised sectors slows down the economy further then unemployment will increase and poverty would get more entrenched.

The common person will not face the problem of cash shortage as during demonetisation since very few of them hold Rs 2,000 currency notes. But, they will be impacted indirectly via rising unemployment and loss of incomes. They continue to be impacted by day to day corruption which is what '40% sarkara' refers to; and this is increasing and not decreasing.

To tackle black income generation what is needed is accountability and transparency at all levels and not demonetisation or its mini version even if that is partial.

Arun Kumar is a retired professor of economics.

(Courtesy: The Wire)

Rabindranath Tagore: A Universal Teacher

Siby K. Joseph

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861 in Calcutta. However his birth anniversary is celebrated according to the Bengali calendar and it falls on the 25th day of Bengali month Boishakh. In the year 2023 we celebrate his birth anniversary accordingly on May 9. He was the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his classic work *Gitanjali*. Tagore returned his Knighthood for Services to Literature which was awarded to him in 1915 in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919. He was the only one who wrote the national anthem of two countries viz. India and Bangladesh. He was a great poet, writer, philosopher, social reformer and teacher for whole humanity.

Tagore and Gandhi maintained a unique relationship throughout their life. Gandhi returned to India in 1915 and Tagore welcomed his Phoenix party at Shantiniketan. Tagore gave a free hand to Gandhi to undertake experiments in education at Shantiniketan, and he described it as key to *swaraj*. This reveals Tagore's acceptance of Gandhi's ideas and ideals. It continued throughout their lives while expressing their difference on certain issues publicly. It was Dr. Pranjivan Mehta who hinted first about Gandhi's evolution to the status of a Mahatma in a letter addressed to G. K. Gokhale in 1909. However, the credit goes to Rabindranath Tagore for giving the name Mahatma to M. K. Gandhi, Gandhi on the other hand called Tagore as 'Gurudev'.

A. Raghuramaraju, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati, said in a

webinar on Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi jointly organized by Sevagram Ashram Pratishtan Wardha, Maharashtra; Centre for Gandhian Studies, Central University of Kerala and Probhodha Trust, Kochi in May 2021, "Gandhi by calling Tagore as 'Gurudev' seems to have sought the guidance of Tagore to move from his present state of self to a liberated self. In this process, he placed before the poet an onerous task and Tagore nurtured Gandhi in the process of achieving the same in an ingenious and interesting manner."

In his nuanced interpretation of Gandhi-Tagore debates both philosophically and ideologically

Raghuramaraju narrated an extraordinary teacher-disciple relationship between them embedded with love, respect and reverence. He further explained "Through their public debates the Gurudev gave new assignments to his beloved disciple, the Mahatma. The rigorous assignment that the teacher gives enable the student to grow to a level surpassing the teacher. Good teachers do not give rigorous assignments in order to confirm the failure of his/her student. The Guru was watching over his disciple at every stage of his growth and he was diligent to give them new and tough assignments for his growth. The constant ideological debates between them enabled them to understand each other in a better manner."

It was Tagore who said "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Where knowledge is free; Where the world has not been

broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls; Where words come out from the depth of truth" Only a person like Tagore can say like that. These words have an eternal relevance. Both Tagore and Gandhi were ardent seekers of truth with a universal vision and they understood truth differently. The result was in-depth debates between them on key questions of national importance. Such in-depth debates enriched the great democratic traditions of our country. What India is lacking today is the absence of such in-depth debates and dialogues. When Gandhi called for a boycott of foreign clothing, Tagore opposed it. Tagore asked Gandhi how he could give the call for burning of foreign clothes when millions of Indians were living without clothes and 'shivering'. Gandhi replied to Tagore that in 'burning my foreign clothes I burn my shame, I must refuse to insult the naked by giving them clothes they do not need instead of giving them work which they sorely need'

Tagore met Albert Einstein a number of times and they signed together an anti-war 'Declaration of the Independence of Spirit' as early as in 1919. Tagore added his signature to the Declaration of the Independence of Spirit and he replied to Romain Rolland's request dated July 9, 1919, in an open letter : "*When my mind was steeped in the gloom of the thought, that the lesson of the war had been lost, and that people were trying to perpetuate their hatred and anger into the same organised menace for the world which threatened themselves with disaster, your letter came and cheered me with its message of hope. The truths that save us have always been uttered by the few and rejected by the many and have triumphed through their failures. It is enough for me to know that the higher conscience of Europe has been able to assert itself in one of her*

You may never know what results come of your actions, but if you do nothing, there will be no results.

- Mahatma Gandhi

choicest spirits through the ugly clamours of passionate politics; and I gladly hasten to accept your invitation to join the ranks of those freed souls, who in Europe have conceived the project of a Declaration of Independence of the Spirit." Albert Einstein contributed an article to Festschrift on Tagore's seventieth birthday, The Golden Book of Tagore (1931). It is said that Tagore declined an offer of an honorary doctorate from Berlin University in protest against the Nazi treatment of Einstein. Einstein even addressed Tagore as *Rabbi* (the Hebrew word for teacher). Yes he was a universal teacher.

Tagore passed away on August 7, 1941. On learning Tagore's death Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who then incarcerated in prison, wrote in his jail diary, "*Gandhi and Tagore, two types entirely different from each other and yet both of them typical of India, both in the long line of India's great men..., I have felt for long that they were the outstanding examples in the world today. There are many of course who may be abler than them or greater geniuses in their own line. It is not so much because of any single virtue but because of the tout ensemble, that I felt that among the world's great men today Gandhi and Tagore were supreme as human beings. What good fortune for me to have come into close contact with them*".

(Dr. Siby K. Joseph is Director, Sri Jannalal Bajaj Memorial Library and Research Centre for Gandhian Studies, Sevagram Ashram Pratishthan, Sevagram, Wardha- 442102, Maharashtra. Email: directorjbmlrc@gmail.com)

Secretary's Diary

Gandhi Memorial

Leprosy Foundation, Wardha

This institution, established by Gandhi Smarak Nidhi in 1952, has been involved in the treatment of leprosy since 1952. Some dilapidated buildings at the headquarters required maintenance and reconstruction. Recently, a new building for surgery of leprosy patients was constructed which was inaugurated by Shri Dhirubhai Mehta, chairman of the institution. Efforts are being mobilised to arrange surgical instruments and logistics. Number of leprosy patients have since reduced and treatment is also available in government hospitals. Hence, proper use of these buildings is being discussed and deliberated.

Sevagram Medical College

I attended the meeting of medical college holding trustees. In view of the ever changing use of modern medical techniques, it is always a challenge for the institute to upgrade itself. The college is maintaining high standards. The functioning and future plans of the institute were discussed in the meeting.

Assam Gandhi Smarak Nidhi

The main centre of the Trust is at Titliya. On 7th May 2023, the centre was badly devastated by wild elephants, badly damaging the garden, silk unit, *Khadi Kuteer* and other buildings. This has resulted in heavy economic loss. Generally, government does not compensate such losses and even if it is done, it is nominal and takes years. The situation requires help and support from all quarters.

South Zone Workers Conference

The dates for the Conference, covering the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala has been fixed on 24-25 June, 2023, in Kerala.

M.P. Gandhi Smarak Nidhi

Some illegal construction was made by the local municipality at the main centre of the Trust at Chhatarpur(M.P.). Efforts were continuously made to undo such illegal construction. As directed by the court, I remained present on the date of limitation of this site. In the limitation process, it was confirmed that the land belonged to the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. Office-bearers and the workers of the Trust remained steadfast during this struggle and all of them deserved our appreciation.

Satyabhamapur, Cuttack (Odisha)

Gandhi Smarak Nidhi had purchased the house of Late Madhusudan Das, the eminent freedom-fighter and pioneer of Odisha movement, for Rs. 10,000/- to cherish his memory. An exhibition was also organised at that place. Gandhiji had spent a night on the rooftop of this house. This building is being preserved and maintained since last 70 years. Kasturba Memorial Trust has been maintain a girls hostel here and also organising various activities. All of a sudden, Odisha state government has intended to make a memorial at this place last month, without discussing the matter with Gandhi Memorial Trust. They intend to take over this place and also intent to stop the activities of Kasurba Memorial Trust. These developments have greatly annoyed the Gandhian community of the state. Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Kasturba Memorial Trust have asked the state government to stop their activities immediately. Local colleagues of both organisations are continuously keeping vigil in this matter.

- Sanjoy Singha
(Translated from Hindi by
Rajendra Bhatt)

Homage:

**Arun Manilal Gandhi is
No More**

Mahatma Gandhi's grandson and author Arun Manilal Gandhi passed away at the age of 89 on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, after a brief illness, in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India.

Arun Manilal Gandhi was born on April 14, 1934 to Manilal Gandhi and Sushila Mashruwala in South Africa's Durban. Gandhi was married to a nurse, Sunanda, in 1957 until her demise in 2007. Both of them have two children—Tushar Gandhi and Archana. Sunanda and Arun came to USA in 1987 and started the **MK Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence** in 1991 at the Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee.

The couple began the **Gandhi Legacy Tour of India** in 1997. Arun developed two more tour itineraries—the **Gandhi Lifescapes Tour of India** and **Gandhi Satyagraha Tour of India**. Arun Gandhi was also elected to the Board of Trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World Religions in 2013.

While Mahatma Gandhi's fifth grandson considered himself to be a Hindu, he expressed universalist views. He worked closely with Christian priests and his philosophy had Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic and Christian influences. Much like his freedom fighter grandfather, he also believed in the principle of non-violence or ahimsa.

Arun penned several books—**A Patch of White and Legacy of Love**: My education in the path of non-violence apart from two books on poverty and politics in India and a compilation of Mahatma Gandhi's Wit and Wisdom. He also co-wrote the book **The Forgotten Woman: The Untold Story of Kastur, the Wife of Mahatma Gandhi** with his wife Sunanda. In 2014, Gandhi

co-wrote a picture book on Mahatma Gandhi titled **Grandfather Gandhi** with Bethany Hegedus.

**Nishakar Das
Departed**

Nishakar Das, a veteran Sarvodaya worker, took last breath in the morning on May 2, 2023 in Koraput, Odisha. He was 102 years old.

Nishakar Das's life was fully dedicated to Bhoodan-Gramdan-Sarvodaya-Movement in Koraput District, where extensive experiment of Gram Swaraj, based on village reconstruction, was running under the great leadership of (late) Anna Saheb Sahasrabudhe, and Nishakar Bhai was an active participant in that experiment. He was very humble in nature and hence was very close to extended Sarvodaya family. His departure is an irreparable loss to the Gandhian Family.

**Krishna Mangal Singh
Died**

Patriarch of Bharatiya Janapith Sansthan, Krishna Mangal Singh Kulshreshtha, who worked 6 decades in Ujjain for education and social upliftment died in the evening on May 9, 2023. He was 85 years old.

Krishna Mangal Singh's whole life was dedicated to women empowerment, education and social upliftment. He imbibed Gandhian ideology in his teenage as a Sarvodaya worker.

Our heartfelt tribute to departed souls and we pray God to give strength to bereaved families to bear the losses.

Press Clipping

Rabindranath was far Ahead of his Time

Gargi Chakravartty

Rabindranath's birthday on the 25th of Boishakh of the Bengali calendar (May 8 or 9) is a day of celebration, mainly in Bengal where it is a public holiday and among Bengali communities across the country. It has become an annual ritual to remember him with recitals of his poems, renditions of his songs, the enactment of plays and so on. Yet, we have failed to communicate his message of a universal religion, internationalism, culture and civilisation to the people at large. His religiosity was not confined to narrow, secluded and ritualistic performances.

Today, there is an atmosphere of majoritarian appeasement through the medium of belligerent religiosity. A narrow religious jingoistic nationalism is being whipped up through the politicisation of and sloganeering around religious icons. Is it worth remembering Rabindranath, especially just as a ritualistic formality, on his birth anniversary? Have we not failed him for not even trying to understand his notion of exchange of knowledge, his vision of setting up the first international university, Visva-Bharati, his role as an educationist and his perception of rural reconstruction (Sriniketan)?

Here was a man who agreed to disagree with Gandhi on contentious issues, yet addressed him as "Mahatma". He believed in the unity of human society, regardless of race, colour and creed. He had his own view on nationalism. He once told Gandhi: "The whole world is suffering from a cult of selfish and short-sighted nationalism."

Here was a man, who actively participated in the Swadeshi movement of 1905 and composed a number of patriotic songs, yet withdrew from the

movement, being shocked when it broke into communal violence. He resigned from all the committees in a single day. Here was a man whose numerous essays and letters are not even disseminated to the people. Today, when there is so much religious divide in the country, his writings do give us a new perspective. In 1911, he wrote: "The Muslims have to strive to become equals. In order to salvage this inequality, the Muslims have started demanding more than the Hindus. We should genuinely be in agreement with their demands. It will be beneficial for the Hindus if the Muslims become their equals in status, dignity and education."

Rabindranath was far ahead of his time. His warning against the fascist onslaught of Europe, his famous booklet titled 'Crisis in Civilisation', his message to the World Peace Congress organised by Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse at Brussels in September 1936, his appeal to help the People's Front in Spain against Nazis in 1937 — all clearly bring out Rabindranath as the greatest visionary of modern India. He could stand up, protest and raise his voice against regressive forces and ideas across the country and the world.

Today, in an atmosphere of animosity, hatred and revenge, when our minds are filled with fear to express a different narrative from that of the majoritarian political and religious dispensation, is it relevant to recite repeatedly the lines of Tagore: "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high...?"

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