



Document:

My Study In England

M.K. Gandhi

I have deferred saying anything up to now about the purpose for which I went to England, viz., being called to the bar. It is time to advert to it briefly. ...

The curriculum of study was easy, barristers being humorously known as 'dinner barristers'. Everyone knew that the examinations had practically no value. In my time there were two, one in Roman Law and the other in Common Law. There were regular text-books prescribed for these examinations which could be taken in compartments, but scarcely anyone read them. I have known many to pass the Roman Law examination by scrambling through notes on Roman Law in a couple of weeks, and the common Law examination by reading notes on the subject in two or three months. Question papers were easy and examiners were generous. The percentage of passes in the Roman Law examination used to be 95 to 99 and of those in the final examination 75 or even more. There was thus little fear of being plucked, and examinations were held not once but four times in the year. They could not be felt as a difficulty.

But I succeeded in turning them into one. I felt that I should read all the textbooks. It was a fraud, I thought, not to read these books. I invested much money in them. I decided to read Roman Law in

Latin. The Latin which I had acquired in the London Matriculation stood me in good stead. And all this reading was not without its value later on in South Africa where Roman Dutch is the common law. The reading of Justinian, therefore, helped me a great deal in understanding the South African law.

It took me nine months of fairly hard labour to read through the *Common Law* of England. For Broom's *Common Law*, a big but interesting volume, took up a good deal of time. Shell's *Equity* was full of interest but a bit hard to understand. White and Tudor's *Leading Cases*, from which certain cases were prescribed, was full of interest and instruction. I read also with interest Williams' and Edward's *Real Property* and Goodeve's *Personal Property*. Williams' book read like a novel. The one book I remember to have read, on my return to India, with the same unflagging interest, was Mayne's *Hindu Law*. But it is out of place to talk here of Indian law books.

I passed my examinations, was called to the bar on the 10th of June 1891, and enrolled in the High Court on the 11th. On the 12th I sailed for home.

(An autobiography or
The Story of My Experiments with Truth:
page 61-63)

Human Heart is the same Everywhere

Acharya Vinoba

At the very first meeting* in East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) I told the people how glad I was to be there. 'It's my own country,' I said. 'I don't feel that Hindustan and Pakistan are any different; they have the same air, the same soil, the same people, the same human hearts—there is no difference at all. The whole earth is ours, and we are all its servants. It is a mere accident that we are born and die in one country rather than another. I feel that I belong here, for all human society is my home, and wherever I go I say 'Jai Jagat'.

At my first two or three meetings people shouted *Pakistant Zindbad*, 'Long live Pakistan'. *Jai Jagat*, I responded, and gradually the phrase caught on. *Jai Jagat* brought everyone together in love and harmony.

By this time I have completed my selections from the Holy Koran, and they were about to be published in book form. Before the book appeared however the newspaper *Dawn* of Karachi attacked me. This infidel, it said, was taking liberties with the text of Holy Scripture. Muslim periodicals in India at once took up the cudgels on my behalf; it was wrong, they said, to criticize a book without reading it. Their support touched me very much.

In East Pakistan I followed the practice of silent common prayer, and thousands of Hindus, Muslims and Christians all came to take part. *Dawn* criticized this too, and accused me of introducing Hindu prayers, but the papers of East Pakistan made no such accusation. 'I am doing nothing', I replied, 'against the worship you practice in your own homes, whether you use an

image, or offer *namaz*, or follow any other form. But can there, or can there not, be a form of prayer in which all of us may unite? If the answer is No, God Himself will be cut to pieces.

On the very first day I asked for land, and a Muslim donor stood up to pledge his gift. This was a good beginning. It opened the door. It showed that the human heart is the same everywhere, and that in East Pakistan also the land problem could be solved by love and non-violence. I am much touched by the affectionate treatment I received among my Pakistani brothers. The government too deserves my thanks for all the arrangements it made to ease my pilgrimage. All the inhabitants gave me brotherly love, and I believe that even those journalists who at first were critical became my friends in the end, and were convinced of my good intentions.

Anushasana or Guidance

(From Vinoba's first talk after breaking silence on September 25, 1975) I would like to explain briefly what I mean by *anushasana parva*. The phrase is used in the *Mahabharata*, but it occurs earlier, in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. In those ancient times it was the custom for a student to live with his teacher for twelve years, pursuing his studies. When the studies had been completed, and the student was about to return home, the teacher used to give him his final advice. In the *Upanishad* this is called *anushasana*, and it is something to be followed throughout one's life. From the teacher comes *anushasana*, from those in power comes *shasana*, the authority of government. If the world were to be guided by *shasana* it would never be at peace; problems would be unraveled only to become tangled again.

This is the kind of show which is going on today ➡

*At the very 1st meeting during *Bhoodan-padyatra* in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) from September 5-20, 1962.

You can't Delete Gandhi's Truth

Rajmohan Gandhi

A few are still alive, and I am one of them, who remember the prayer meetings that Mahatma Gandhi held in New Delhi during the 1947-48 winter on the lawns of Birla House on what then was called Albuquerque Road and is now Tees January Marg.

Twelve at that time, I often took part in those prayer meetings, but a sports event in my school detained me on the afternoon of January 30, 1948, preventing me from being near my grandfather when he was assassinated while walking to the prayer spot.

Those 1947-48 days return to my mind as I try to absorb The Indian Express story of Wednesday April 5, 2023 on the latest deletions in NCERT textbooks. It seems that sentences that class 12 political science students across India read for the past 15 years or more but will no longer see include the following:

'He (Gandhi) was particularly disliked by those who wanted Hindus to take revenge or who wanted India to become a country for the Hindus, just as Pakistan was for Muslims...

'His steadfast pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity

provoked Hindu extremists so much that they made several attempts to assassinate Gandhiji...

'Gandhiji's death had an almost magical effect on the communal situation in the country... The Government of India cracked down on organisations that were spreading communal hatred.'

Also, history students in Class 12 will no longer be informed that Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse was "a Brahmin from Pune" or that as "the editor of an extremist Hindu newspaper" Godse had "denounced Gandhiji as 'an appeaser of Muslims'". These and other deletions will "reduce curriculum overload" and "rationalise content", it has been claimed.

I cannot accept such claims. I see the deletions as part of an ongoing process of piece-by-piece obliteration that aims, finally, to remove all evidence that Gandhi was killed because of his insistence that India belongs to all who live in it, including Muslims and Christians, and not just to Hindus.

However, this removal of evidence is an unattainable goal. Killing Gandhi was the easy part.

throughout the world. From A to Z, from Afghanistan to Zambia, there are more than three hundred governments, and they all have their alliances. Among those subject to their authority there is discontent everywhere, killing everywhere. If only the world would listen instead to the advice of its teachers, its *acharyas*, it would be at peace. An *acharya*, in the words of Guru Nanak, is one without fear or hatred; I would add to that, without political allegiance! Such teachers never become agitated or angered; they are able to think calmly

and come to a conclusion on which they are all agreed. They may then put their proposals before the public; those who follow their guidance will be benefited and the world will be at peace. This is what *anushasna* means, the dispassionate advice of the true teacher, the *acharya*. A government which acted against the advice of such fearless, impartial *acharyas* could rightly be challenged by *satyagraha*.

(Moved by Love:

Page 173-174, Page 245)

Killing the thought that India belongs to everyone, killing the historical truth that Gandhi underlined that thought, and killing the connected historical truth that Gandhi was murdered above all for that underlining — those are impossible exercises.

Physically, it would not be impossible — if we came to that pass — to close down Gandhi Smriti on Tees January Marg. Reducing “traffic overload” can be cited as a reason. However, destroying India’s or the world’s knowledge of what happened on Tees January is beyond the capacity of any governmental agency or, indeed, of any state, no matter how powerful.

Can censors or agencies eliminate the record, in sound and text, of what Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel said on All India Radio on that night of January 30, 1948? Will the records of the hundreds of newspapers that were printed across India on January 31 all disappear? Some of those pages are now on microfilm too and accessible across the world.

And since America is where millions of Indians now live, we can also look at what an American whom the world loves said about why Gandhi was killed. Speaking in his church in Montgomery, Alabama, this is what Martin Luther King Jr said on March 22, 1959, shortly after returning from his first and last visit to India:

“They killed him, this man who had galvanised 400 million [Indians] for independence... One of his own fellow Hindus felt that he was a little too favourable toward the Moslems... Here was a man of love falling at the hands of a man with hate... But the man who shot Gandhi only shot him into the hearts of humanity.” (*The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., University of California Press, vol. 5, p. 156.*)

To repeat, killing Gandhi the man was the easy part. But there’s also Gandhi the thought, or

Swadeshi ... means the creation of a most perfect organization in which every part work in perfect harmony with every other. If we succeed in bringing into being such an organization, not only is success of swadeshi assured, but real swaraj comes to us as a matter of course.
- M. K. Gandhi

Gandhi the idea. At its core, as we have noted, is the clarity that India belongs to all who live in it. This core displays two other messages. One is *Ishwar Allah TereNaam*. The other is that feeling the Other’s pain, knowing the *paraayi’s peeda*, is the mark of a good individual.

How easy will it be to censor, banish, or destroy these thoughts which were closer to Gandhi than his hands or feet, and which, moreover, are thoughts shared by crores of Indians? It is but natural, nonetheless, for the people of India to be deeply concerned at the textbook deletions, which suggest a lack of comfort with the truth.

One deletion that does not agitate me is about Godse being a Brahmin. Godse didn’t do what he did because he was a Brahmin. His dislike, not his Brahminhood, motivated him. Another Brahmin, also from Maharashtra, a remarkable man called Vinoba Bhave, was not only one of Gandhi’s closest friends and associates. Bhave inspired thousands across India to share their lands with the landless.

Two months after Gandhi was killed, Vinoba Bhave told a gathering of Gandhi’s associates in Sevagram that the group that had nurtured the Mahatma’s assassin was “fascist in character”.

The textbook deletions, 75 years later, are a sign of our times.

(Courtesy: rajmohangandhi.com 8 April, 2023)

‘Grammar of Anarchy’

Remembering Dr. Ambedkar’s Speech

Ajit Ranade

On April 14, 2023 we celebrated the birth anniversary of Dr Ambedkar, an occasion to discover and rediscover a giant of modern India. His incredible life itself was his message. With the passage of time his words ring true. One of his most prophetic speeches was the last one he delivered to the Constituent Assembly, when the final draft of the Constitution was adopted. He delivered that speech on 25 November 1949 exactly two months before India became a Republic. This is a speech which must be read by every school child. It is also commonly known as the “Grammar of Anarchy” speech. If India got freedom on 15 August 1947, then it can be said that we got “responsibility” on January 26, 1950. Freedom and responsibility are two sides of the same coin of nationhood.

As Dr. Ambedkar says in the concluding part of the speech, “let us not forget that this independence has thrown on us great responsibilities. By independence, we have lost the excuse of blaming the British for anything going wrong. If hereafter things go wrong, we will have nobody to blame. Except ourselves.” In the same speech he envisaged three potent dangers to India’s nascent democracy. The first is the tendency to hero worship or build personality cults in politics. He said, “in India, Bhakti or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in its politics unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country in the world. Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.”

The second danger he warned about, was the incompatibility of political equality with rising social and economic inequality. He advocated a social democracy, which “means a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as the (basic) principles”. The danger he warned was that if something wasn’t done to address rising inequality, then those very people who were deprived and oppressed would blow up the magnificent edifice (of democracy) which the founders had so painstakingly built. His warning came almost twenty years before the first instance of Naxal violence. It has taken another two decades for the State to recognise it as not merely a law-and-order problem, but one of lack of equitable socio-economic development as well. The third danger that Dr. Ambedkar spoke of was the need to protect the sanctity of constitutional methods. We must abandon the methods of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. This is nothing but the rejection of law and order. He might as well have added extra-constitutional methods like mob lynching and vigilante justice. These methods are nothing but the “*Grammar of Anarchy*”. If people adopt these methods, then it would be a failure of not just the Constitution, but the State as well. The working of the Constitution needs the working of the organs of the State, i.e. the judiciary, the legislature and the executive. But how those organs will work will in turn depend on the people and political parties.

Four years ago, on December 6, 2019, the death anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar, there was the extra judicial killing of four men accused in a horrific gang rape and murder of a 26-year-old

veterinarian in Hyderabad. The encounter killings earned the cheers of many people across the nation, including union ministers, leaders of the opposition, celebrities, and even sports stars. The police were showered with petals of gratitude for having done "justice" to the victim. They became instant heroes in the eyes of a grateful nation. Apparently, the police fired in self-defence. The public jubilation and thirst for instant justice points to a complete loss of faith in the process of law and judiciary. Three years later, a Commission appointed by the Supreme Court headed by Justice VS Sirpurkar found that the encounter was a fake one. The Commission held that the police claim of firing in self-defense was "bizarre" and "unbelievable". The Commission also found that two of those killed were juveniles at the time of their arrest and death, a fact that had been concealed by the police. This is surely not the first, or the last of the fake encounters in our country. Are people, including the police, losing faith in Constitutional methods so earnestly championed by DrAmbedkar? What would he have said, had he been alive today?

In April, 2023 too, around Ambedkar Jayanti, there were two killings in Uttar Pradesh, and here too the police said they fired in self-defence. Two days later the gangster-turned politician Atiq Ahmad and his brother Ashraf while in custody, and stepping handcuffed, out of a police vehicle, were killed by three assailants, thirsty for instant justice. The killers were among the reporters and people gathering around the vehicle. Since the killing was on live television in the presence of reporters it is a new benchmark in impunity and disdain for due process. Asking for constitutional methods would be chided as naïve, if not anti-national. After all a gangster was killed, what if handcuffed anyway. "*Murder of law and order*" said the editorial of a national daily. "*Art of elimination...*?" questioned another, Atiq Ahmad had recently petitioned the

To err is human. By confessing we convert our mistakes into stepping stones for advance. On the contrary, a person who tries to hide his mistake becomes a living fraud and sinks down. Man is neither brute nor God but a creature of God striving to realize his divinity. Repentance and self-purification are the means. The moment we repent and ask God for forgiveness for our lapse. We are purged of our sin and new life begins for us. True repentance is an essential prerequisite of prayer.
- M. K. Gandhi

Supreme Court fearing for his life in police custody. There were more than a hundred criminal cases pending against Ahmad, ranging from kidnapping, extortion, attempt to murder and murder. He was also elected to Parliament once and the State assembly five times. Having been an elected people's representative did not save him from vigilante justice.

In such times, one must turn to films for insight. In the movie *A Few Good Men*, a decorated army Colonel has ordered a violent extra-judicial punishment on a young cadet which leads to his death. When facing trial for his vigilante action, he justifies his actions saying they were in the interest of national security, and expects to be treated as a national hero. He spits out these words to the lawyer questioning him: "you may find me grotesque" but my methods are necessary for society to function. Finally, he is charged with murder, and the message is the supremacy of Constitutional methods. Surely DrAmbedkar would have approved of the ending of the movie. That is the kind of justice system we need to save us from sinking into the anarchy, one that heeds the prophetic warning of DrAmbedkar.

(Dr. Ajit Ranade is a noted economist)

(Courtesy: *The Free Press Journal*)

Gandhi: The Lawyer

An Exhibition by National Gandhi Museum

This Exhibition is the first of its kind and it depicts the unique story of the journey of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from a timid lawyer to a champion for Justice. He sailed to South Africa as an ordinary lawyer with a frustrated mind of 24 years old. When he returned to India, he was a powerful leader of the masses who were even ready to challenge the mighty British Empire. This coffee table book is the outcome of the exhibition first displayed at the premises of the Delhi High Court in association with the Bar Association of Delhi High Court and Madras High Court, Chennai and Madras High Court Branch at Madurai, and intends to highlight his involvement with the legal profession and how he combined ethics and conscience with jurisprudence. He has undergone turbulence, ups and downs but finally, his personality unfolded to the fullest possible for any human being and emerged as a pure guiding spirit for millions and for those who are working for Equality, Peace and Justice around the world.

We are highlighting through this exhibition, Gandhi's different periods in his life as a lawyer and as a committed civil disobedient.

With a lot of dreams in stock, as a young boy of 19, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi sailed to London to study Bar-at-law at the Inner Temple, London in 1888. His sincerity helped him to finish the study and his shyness shielded him from negative habits. True to his vows, Mohandas returned from London as a Barrister in 1891.

He started his career as a lawyer in the Bombay High Court and then in Rajkot, but it was not very encouraging. Fortunately for him or for India(!) an offer came from South Africa. He sailed

to South Africa to assist an English lawyer in Dada Abdulla's case for a one-year contract. But destiny retained him in South Africa for 21 years. In South Africa, he was put to the test of his mission and slowly he emerged as a leader of the suppressed Indian community. He enrolled as an Advocate in Transvaal and Durban courts. He demonstrated the power of Truth both as a Petitioner, as a Defendant, and as an accused in various courts in South Africa. As a successful lawyer, remember, Gandhi's earning was more than 5000 pounds annually in those days!

But this facet of Gandhi was not familiar and many people ignore it. Even some people thought he has not law degree at all!

We first exhibited this unique exhibition in the Delhi High Court premises for five days. We have seen at any point in time hundreds of lawyers going through the exhibition. All the judges including the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court visited the exhibition. At the request of the Bar Association of Delhi High Court, we organized this exhibition. It was extended to two more days because some Judges of the Supreme Court wanted to see the exhibition.

Then we planned to have this exhibition to Madras High Court. There was a positive response from the Madras High Court, but unfortunately Pandemic started. Therefore, without wasting time we organized this exhibition at Gandhi Memorial Museum, Madurai.

When the Madras High Court resumed normal functioning, we again approached the Madras High Court Branch at Madurai. We organized the exhibition inside the premises. After visiting the exhibition, the judges suggested that it should also ➡

The Gandhians' Conference

Ajmer Declaration- 2023

The Gandhians' Conference held at the historic city of Ajmer on 25-26 February 2023 expresses its deep concern on the deteriorating condition of India and the world and resolves to change it to the best of its capacity.

The Conference believes that the present sorry state of affairs is the outcome of the wrong leadership of existing rulers, leading to the deterioration of the society. This is a deterioration made by humans and has to be corrected by the collective efforts of humans only. This is what Gandhiji has taught us through his words and deeds. We, Gandhians, express our commitment to this cause.

We believe that the present planned atmosphere of communalism in country is self-destructive. There is an effort to stray this country to the exact opposite direction of the spirit of its own freedom movement. Communalism simply means misuse of religion and spread of *Adharma* (the evil). What can be worse than to vitiate young minds with narrow communal hysteria? Persons

scheming such deterioration are the same whom were instrumental in dividing this country and killing Gandhiji.

Those evil forces broke the nation and now, they are breaking its will to survive. The nation is being weakened in economic, social, educational and cultural spheres to such an extent that no voice of dissent should remain active. Constitutional institutions are being made spineless and redundant. These institutions are being run by such elements who are working for personal gains and not to protect democratic values. When judiciary also start following the same path, it becomes easier to erase democratic possibilities of the nation.

The country is in the grip of severe economic crisis. In last few years, there has been such coalition between those in the power and those holding the capital that all resources and opportunities are concentrated in the hands of a few corporates. Present government is just a collaborator to such nexus. Social justice and

⇒ be organized at the Madras High Court, Chennai. The Chief Justice of the Madras High Court readily agreed.

In the meantime, Law Academy at Madurai also wanted to have the same exhibition. Gandhi Memorial Museum organized the exhibition at Law Academy in Madurai.

When we organized the exhibition at Madras High Court, Chennai, Chief Justice suggested that this exhibition should go to all the law colleges and it can be brought out as a coffee table book. This Coffee Table book should be kept in every lawyer's house like the holy book for lawyers.

The Vice Chancellor of the National Law University wanted to organize at their campus for the students and Gandhi Museum, Madurai organized the same. A large number of students benefitted from the exhibition.

This exhibition is so popular and it should go to every High Court in India. The Coffee Table book will also be released soon. The 'Gandhi: The Lawyer' exhibition will soon go to the Supreme Court of Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

- A. Annamalai,
Director, National Gandhi Museum,
Rajghat, New Delhi

economic parity is not in the national agenda. Unemployment is on its peak and the forces of violence are in full swing. The PM talks about 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' (Development taking along everybody), but that is not visible anywhere. It appears that he is Prime Minister of some other country!

The battle is now in the open. One of the objectives of democracy is that if the regime is of untruth and becomes redundant, the people must become pro-active to remove such regime. Mahatma Gandhi had said that the power does not mean a few persons running the show. The yardstick of democracy is the capacity of the people to resist the wrong-doings of the government. His slogan of 'Do or Die' was not meant for 1942 alone. This should form our resolution to resist any regime which works against democracy. This is the Gandhi's salt which must flow in our veins.

In this battle for democracy, every front is a war front, every citizen is a soldier. In view of such situation, this Ajmer Conference resolves that right onwards, whenever and wherever an election takes place, we will use our full might to defeat communal forces and their coalitions. We also wish that the opposition must face the elections with a resolute democratic agenda. However, we also

declare in clear terms that it is not the current issue that who will remain in power, but the issue is who should not remain in power. It is neither auspicious nor desirable that such government should hold the power that does not have faith in this nation's constitution, the flag and the national anthem, constitutional institutions and in the Father of the Nation. Therefore, we have to give a fitting rebuttal to such forces so that, at the final front of 2024, we should bid adieu to such forces. This is the true meaning of 'Do or Die' in the present context.

This Conference also cautions those who strive to make themselves the political alternative of today's regime. You must remember that touchstone of our support to you would be your faith in India's Constitution and your adherence to democratic values. It is fundamental that you must not be and appear weak on this touchstone. This will be our sole criterion of support to your efforts.

We are passing this resolution with full hope that all Gandhian in this country will try their best to spread this message across the country and will commit themselves to work in this direction.

(This resolution was passed in the Gandhians' Conferences held at Ajmer, Rajasthan on 25-26 February 2023)

United Nations and the Future of Humanity

E.P. Menon

When the horrible global tragedy of WW-2 happened and the **Graveyard of Human Civilization** (Hiroshima and Nagasaki) was created, it was quite natural that the commonsense and conscience of three great wise leaders were so much disturbed that they decided to lay the foundation of such a competent organization which could prevent any such future eventuality in

the interest of total human welfare and world peace. Thus the quiet meeting of Roosevelt, Churchill & Stalin in a panoramic mansion at Yalta turned out to be the most inspiring fountain of human creativity, giving birth to the unique institution called the United Nations Organization.

When I got a chance to stand inside that mansion in 1963 during my global Peace March

my joy was unlimited and I hoped for enjoying a better world without wars and weapons of mass destruction, before my own life comes to an end. But what do I see today? A totally chaotic world in which more and more humans are getting involved in acts of self-destruction, societies and cultures are becoming breeding grounds of organized violence of the many and unlimited greed of the few. In this context the UN stands as a helpless witness, short of announcing a self-declaration of **Failure in its Mission**.

Why this is happening? Let the top leaders of the UN speak for themselves:

1. The President of the UNGA, Mr. Csaba Korosi, says: "Upon taking charge as President of the UNGA I had promised to kick-start the process of UN reforms. The permanent members are historically not enthusiastic about reform of the UN system. The system of veto in the SC is 77 years old and it has become a tool to block the work of the global body and not to encourage it."

2. The Secretary General **Mr. Antonio Guterres says:** 'The 'vicious' tactics of rich countries against the poor must be condemned. The wealthy nations should provide \$500 billion a year to help others trapped in vicious cycles that block their efforts to boost economies, improve health and education.'

3. India's dynamic representative Mr. Ruchira Kamboj says: "If not reformed, UN will be over taken by other organizations. It requires all the P-5 permanent members of UNCA to be on board. It requires that no P-5 should veto them after. The item of reform has remained on the agenda of the UNSC for nearly three decades without any substantive progress."

4. A former ambassador, Mr. T.S. Tirumurti,

says: "All the major players need to move beyond symbolism. It is clear that the UNCSC has long stopped reflecting current realities. Inevitably, it has become ineffective in maintaining international peace and security. The UNSC is a small club of five members without any representation from the entire countries of Africa and Latin America. In 15 years the international negotiations or reform have nothing to show by way of progress."

Under these circumstances mere platitudes and pontifications by political pundits will not work, especially in the present crisis in Europe, which could even escalate into a nuclear catastrophe. Somebody has to come forward to "Bell the Cat". As a **world citizen**, having been highly inspired by the efforts of international organizations like the world constitution and parliament association and the earth constitution, I have planned a 3 day-personal demonstration protest (May 1st, 2nd & 3rd, 2023) in front of the **UNITED NATIONS** in New York with three specific demands:

Abolish the veto power

Assimilate the earth constitution

Create a world government

This could be called as an individual, non-violent direct action program to demand appropriate proceedings by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, at the earliest convenience.

Anybody, a convinced social political activist, a serious writer, a scholar or researcher, an inquisitive student, a forward looking world citizen, a socially concerned professional—anyone is welcome to join on their personal responsibility and commitment.

E-mail: epmbanglore@yahoo.com.

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The Gimmicks Commission

Pratap Bhanu Mehta

The University Grants Commission is proposing new guidelines to allow the entry of foreign universities in India. Any good-faith effort to reform higher education ought to be welcomed. But before you applaud this latest pantomime on higher education and mistake it for a genuine revolution, ask a few probing questions. These so-called reforms, like so much that emanates from the UGC, are being carried out under false premises.

Let us begin with the grandest of aspirations: To get top universities like Princeton, Stanford, Yale and Oxford to set up campuses in India. Ask yourself this. Why do these universities not have any branch campuses anywhere in the world, including countries with liberal regulatory environments? Why would they set up in India? What is it about the economics and the structural form of a top research university that makes it difficult to reproduce them? There are about four hundred foreign campuses operating in the world. But just consult the comprehensive database of American universities operating abroad compiled by C-BERT. Just go through the list yourself to see what proportion of those institutions are top-tier institutions. Barely a handful, if one is being generous. Very few are like NYU Abu Dhabi, but almost all of them received massive subsidies from the home government. Several high-profile ones like Yale-NUS have been "reabsorbed." More than 30 per cent of foreign campuses receive some form of subsidy, and the better the institution, the more subsidy it requires. Can India justify subsidising top-tier foreign institutions with public money?

Let us go further. This reform will apparently allow for the repatriation of money to the home institution. Now here is the blunt truth about

universities. If you want to build a top-class university in India, it will have to integrate teaching and research. This is a financial black hole requiring continual support not derived from fees alone. Any private institution that is for profit that seeks to skim money off education can never build a world-class university since a top-class university requires continual reinvestment. Now, what kind of an institution looks to repatriate "surpluses?" The same kind that in India seeks profit.

The UGC boldly declares that it will ensure that the qualifications of the faculty assigned to India will be the same as those of the faculty in the parent institution. A lot turns on how you interpret the term "qualification". If it simply means formal equivalence of qualifications (PhD from a good institution, etc.) then most institutions are on par. But if it means faculty who are exceptional (which is what the top institutions claim they have), then there is no cost advantage to moving to India. Land and capital costs are not cheap. But if you are going to define equivalence as something close to those who have been through the tenure processes of the top-ranked universities, they have no economic or lifestyle incentives to spend a lot of time in India unless either their salaries are matched or exceeded. This makes running campuses in India with the same "standard" prohibitively expensive.

Let us think about regulatory trust. Would you invest millions of dollars in a regulatory system that is unreliable, to say the least? There are at least 30 to 40 entrepreneurs in India who could (financially, at least), single-handedly

create slightly lower-cost, world-class alternatives to Western institutions. But there has been only a trickle of institutions in India so far that are ambitious in this respect. The question to ask is why? If we are not investing enough, why would anyone else? Does anyone now remember the Institutions of Eminence revolution that was heralded a few years ago? How many of those high-profile greenfield projects have got off to a flying start, within two years, as was promised? How much net investment in higher-end research universities did that botched reform generate?

The mendacity of this reform will also be obvious to anyone who has looked at Indian higher education. The same UGC that wants to standardise the admissions process for all public universities gravely assaults their autonomy day in and day out and is now supposed to protect the autonomy and distinct identity of foreign universities. You would be foolish to take the UGC at face value. In any case, the UGC is engaging in a nauseating form of reverse discrimination against Indian, and especially public, institutions. You ought to be wary of such a regulator. Just imagine the oddity of saying in higher education: Freedom for foreign, chains for the Indian.

What is this reform supposed to achieve? The ostensible rationale is to make high-quality foreign education available in India at a somewhat lower cost so that students don't have to leave, and some of the billions we are using to consume foreign higher education can be spent in the country. If you look at the C-BERT list, what strikes you is that not only are there very few top-tier universities, most foreign campuses are very small, with an average size of

300-400 students. How much supply are you augmenting, especially in a context where you are diminishing the net supply of higher education by destroying established public universities? Perhaps Indian capital might be willing to subsidise a foreign brand. Perhaps some professional schools will show up since mostly they can generate a surplus.

The only thing good about this announcement is the UGC's perverse honesty. It thinks of universities and teaching like a McDonald's franchise that can easily be replicated without regard to agglomeration effects, or the effects of the larger ecosystem in which they are embedded. It seems to have little conception of what combination of capital, vision, and human resources it takes to get a high-end research university going. More depressing is its utter defeatism. The UGC has admitted that its cumulative failures, across governments and political parties, have brought us to this pass. India could have been a top-class, lower-cost higher education hub for the world. Indian universities, both public and private, can reach glorious heights of excellence; that both the top and the average quality can be improved. We gave up on that project with public institutions a while ago, then pinned hopes on a private revolution, which in quality terms is still a trickle, and now want to hang onto the coattails of foreign brands who will either be elusive or for the most part second rate. University Gimmicks Commission, indeed.

*(Courtesy: The Indian Express,
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