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গান্ধী সংবাদ

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জানুয়ারি-মার্চ, ২০২০

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Not *Rajaneeti*, But *Lokaneeti*

We, the people of India, have given to ourselves a democratic constitution. The experience of some Asian Nations shows that a democratic constitution is not enough. It is not enough to have a Parliament and other legislatures, known in our country as Vidhan Sabhas, Moreover, it is not enough to have political parties. From Cairo to Diyakarta, we have witnessed that political systems based on constitution and party system have collapsed. Dictators and military leaders have appeared on the stage with all the footlights turned on them. Search for grass roots of democracy is much more important than the ephemeral structure of formal institutions of democracy such as constitutions, legislatures and political parties.

Anyone who thinks and talks of democracy today in India are interested only in the role of political parties, the balance between the parties and the composition of the opposition party or parties. Democracy should not be reduced to narrow structure of party politics. Abraham Lincoln, John Stuart Mill and many others social scientists and political scientists have investigated into diverse dimensions of democracy.

Let us turn to the concept of 'Gram Swaraj' which was intensely dear to Mahatma Gandhi's heart. He used to say that the Government is the best which governs the least. Today the trend is in the opposite direction. Absolute power has been acquired by the state. The states may have different identities, such as

communist state, Democratic socialists state, welfare state or the liberal state. All kinds of state are armed with enormous powers leading to the emergece of totalitarianism. How a system of government which governs the least can be ensured? Jayaprakash Narayan describes the situation in India thus :

There must be ability amongst the people to come together in the cities, in towns, in villages, in Districts and in states in order to solve their problems without the help of authorities above them. It is in this regard that our country is very weak, and therefore, at the grass root our democracy is very weak. There is all over the country, more so in the rural than urban areas a state of inertia. The people are not active, they are not doing things which they should and could do and therefore there is over-dependence on the state (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, October 28, 1959).

The way political parties in India are functioning today are making the people helpless tools to serve their narrow and selfish political interests. They are making it more difficult for democracy to develop from the roots. The major political parties in India today display no interest in running elections that are fair and transparent. The cable news networks, sponsored by big corporate and banking firms employ scholars and pundits to manipulate elections in favour of the colossal rich. The emergence of grass root democracy is almost impossible in such a condition when it is poisoned by greed and corruption. Professor Harold Lasky stated in a group discussion that he would judge the value of a democracy by the amount of voluntary activity in that democracy. Jayaprakash Narayan firmly believed, ‘‘More voluntary activity there is, the more real democracy and true democracy it is. And more the people depend on the state, or the Government, the more there is denial or restriction of democracy’’. People’s Voluntary Activity is Foundation of Democracy. (*Amrita*

Bazar Patrika, October 28, 1959).

The Sarvodaya Movement puts emphasis on the initiative of the people—the *Lakashakti* as against the *Rajasakti* the power of the state. They believe in politics of the people *Lakaneeti*, as against *Rajaneeti*, the politics of the Government. Vinobaji coined these two beautiful words.

The world is now going through a phase of increasing social losses from natural disaster. Moreover, there are man-made factors such as corruption, intolerance, incompetence and lack of mutual trust. Andrew Shang in a recently published article ‘Trust in the 21st century’ (*The Sunday Statesman*, 01 March 2020, p. 07) argues, ‘Electoral democracy promises a lot, but has serious difficulties in delivering on the promises because the world itself has become much more complex.’ Andrew Sheng endorses the judgement of Edelman, who says in no uncertain terms, ‘Trust today is granted on two distinct attributes : competence (delivering on promises) and ethical behaviour (doing the right thing and working to improve society). It is no longer only a matter of what you do, it is also how you do it.’

Gandhij’s whole life in South Africa and India is an inspiring story of his experiments with voluntary actions. D. K. Oza, in his book *Voluntary Action and Gandhian Approach* (National Book Trust 1991) throws light on Chipko movement which started in 1968 under the leadership of Chandiprasad Bhatt and Sunderlal Bahuguna. The slogan of this women’s movement were : What do the forests bear? Soil, water and pure air. Soil, water and pure air, / Are the basis of life.

The second enterprise was Baba Amte’s Anandwan. In 1950 Baba Amte founded the Maharogi Sewa Samiti for the care of the leprosy patients. In Chandrapura forest he built bamboo huts, dug a well and started living here. This was the beginning of Anandawan, the forest of joy. Rabindranath and Mahatma

Gandhi exercised strong influence on Baba Amte's philosophy of life, which he himself has coined and pronounced :

I sought My Soul, My Soul I could not see;

I sought My God, My God clouded me.

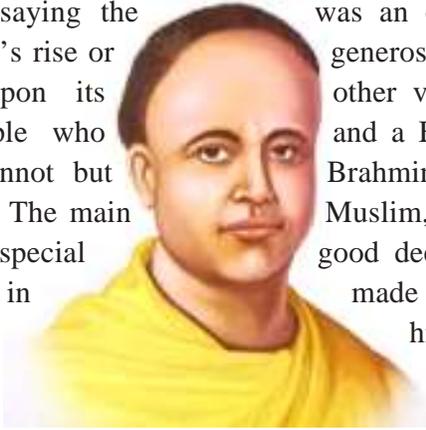
I sought My Brother, and I found all three.

The organisation, known as SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association) is a direct off-shoot of Gandhian labour movement. In 1922 Gandhi organized a strike of Textile labours demanding better wages. After successful completion of the strike he organised the *Majoor Mahajan* or the Textile Labour Association (TLA) Sm. Ela Bhatt popularly known as Elaben was in charge of women's wing of *Majoor Mahajan*. Under the most competent leadership of Elaben, some highly educated and dedicated young ladies of Ahmedabad established in 1969 the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

Gandhi explains the significance of voluntary action in no uncertain terms. He says, “*Swaraj means a continuous attempt to free ourselves from the governmental regulations. It does not matter whether the government is an alien government or our own. If, after the coming of Swaraj, the people of India will keep on looking to the government for every detail of their lives, then the Swaraj will be meaningless.*”

Gandhi's Tribute to Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar

There is no gainsaying the fact that a nation's rise or fall depends upon its great men. The people who produce good men cannot but be influenced by them. The main reason for the special distinction that we find in Bengal is that many great men were born there during the last century. Beginning with Rammohan Roy,¹ one heroic figure after another has raised Bengal to a position higher than that of the other provinces. It can be said that Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was the greatest among them. "Vidyasagar", which means an ocean of learning, was an honorific conferred on him by the pandits of Calcutta for his profound Sanskrit learning. But Ishwarchandra was not an ocean of learning only; he



was an ocean of compassion, of generosity, as well as of many other virtues. He was a Hindu, and a Brahmin too. But to him, Brahmin and Sudra, Hindu and Muslim, were all alike. In any good deed that he performed, he made no distinction between high and low. When his professor had an attack of cholera, he himself nursed him. As the professor was poor, Ishwarchandra called in the doctors at his own cost and himself attended to the patient's toilet.

He used to buy *luchi*² and curds and feed the poor Muslims at his own cost, in Chandranagar,³ and helped with money those who needed it. If he saw a cripple or anyone in distress by the roadside, he took him to his own house and nursed him personally. He felt grief at other people's sorrows and joy at their

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1. (1771-1833). A great social and religious reformer, founder of the Brahmo Samaj, supported abolition of *Sati* and worked hard for the spread of education.
 2. A kind of unwavering and fried bread made from flour.
 3. In West Bengal, then a French possession.

joys.

Himself he led a very simple life. His dress consisted of a coarse *dhoti*, a shawl of a similar kind to cover his body, and slippers. In that dress he used to call on Governors, and in the same dress he greeted the poor. He was really a *fakir*, a *sannyasi* or a *yogi*. It behaves us all to reflect on his life.

Ishwarchandra was born of poor parents in a small village in the Midnapar *taluka*.⁴ His mother was a very saintly woman, and many of her virtues were inherited by Ishwarchandra. Even in those days, his father knew some English, and decided to give his son a better education. Ishwarchandra began his schooling at the age of five. At the age of eight, he had to walk sixty miles to Calcutta to join a Sanskrit college. He had such a prodigious memory that he learnt the English numerals by looking at the figures on the milestones while walking along the road. At sixteen he became well versed in Sanskrit, and was appointed a Sanskrit teacher. Rising step by step, he at last became the Principal of the college where he had studied. The Government held him in great respect. But, being of an independent nature, he could not adjust himself to the Director of Public Instruction and resigned his post. Sir Frederick Hailiday, the

Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, sent for him and requested him to withdraw his resignation, but Ishwarchandra flatly declined.

His nobility and humanity had their true blossoming after he had given up his job. He saw that Bengali was a very good language, but appeared poor for want of fresh contributions. He therefore, began writing; books in Bengali. He produced very powerful books, and it is mainly due to Vidyasagar that the Bengali language is at present in full bloom and has spread throughout India.

But he also realised that merely writing books was not enough; and so he founded schools. It was Vidyasagar who founded the Metropolitan College in Calcutta. It is staffed entirely by Indians.

Considering that elementary education was quite as necessary as higher education, he started primary schools for the poor. This was a stupendous task in which he needed Government help. The Lieutenant-Governor assured him that the Government would bear the cost; but the Viceroy, Lord Ellenborough, was opposed to this and the bills preferred by Vidyasagar were not passed. The Lieutenant-Governor was very sorry and suggested that Ishwarchandra might file a suit against him. Brave Ishwarchandra

4. In West Bengal.

replied : “Sir, I have never gone to a court of law to get justice for myself. How, then, is it possible for me to proceed against you?” At that time other European gentlemen who used to help Ishwarchandra in his work rendered him good financial aid. Not being very rich himself, he often ran into debt by helping others out of their difficulties; nevertheless, when a proposal was made to raise a public subscription for him, he turned it down.

He did not rest satisfied with thus putting higher and elementary education on a sound footing. He saw that, without the education of girls, the education of boys alone would not be enough. He found out a verse from Manu which said that the education of women was a duty. Pressing it into service, he wrote a book on the subject and, in collaboration with Mr. Bethune, founded the Bethune College for imparting education to women. But it was more difficult to get women to go to college than to found it. As he lived a saintly life and was very learned, he was respected by all. So he met prominent people and persuaded them to send their womenfolk to the College; and thus, their daughters began to attend the College. Today there are in that College many well-known and talented women of sterling character, so much so that they can by themselves carry on its administration.

Still not satisfied, he started schools imparting elementary education to small girls. Here food, clothing and books were supplied free of charge. Consequently, one can see today thousands of educated women in Calcutta.

To meet the need for teachers he started a Teacher’s Training College.

Seeing the very pitiable condition of Hindu widows, he advocated the remarriage of widows; he wrote books and made speeches on the subject. The Brahmins of Bengal opposed him, but he did not care. People threatened to kill him, but he went on undaunted. He got the Government to pass a law legalising remarriage of widows. He persuaded many men and arranged the remarriage of daughters of prominent men widowed in childhood. He encouraged his own ton to marry a poor widow.

The *kulin* or high-born Brahmins were given to taking a number of wives. They were not ashamed of marrying as many as twenty of them. Ishwarchandra wept to see the sufferings of such women; and he carried on his efforts till the end of his life to eradicate this wicked custom..

When he saw thousands of poor people in Burdwan suffering from malaria, he maintained a doctor at his own cost and personally distributed medicines among them. He went to the

houses of the poor and gave them the necessary help. In this way he worked ceaselessly for two years, secured Government help and called for more doctors.

In the course of this work, he saw the necessity of a knowledge of medicine. So he studied homeopathy, attained proficiency in it, and began to prescribe medicines to the sick. He did not mind travelling long distances in order to help the poor.

He was equally a stalwart in helping big princes out of their difficulties. If any of them had injustice done to him or was reduced to poverty, Ishwarchandra used to help him with his influence, knowledge and money, and mitigate his distress.

While he was engaged in these activities, Vidyasagar passed away in 1890, at the age of seventy. There have been few in this world like him. It is said that, had Ishwarchandra been born among a European people an imposing column, like the one raised by the British for Nelson, would have been erected as a memorial to him. However, a column to honour Ishwarchandra already stands in the hearts of the great and the small, the rich and the poor of Bengal.

It will now be clear to us how Bengal provides an example for the other parts of India to follow.

(From Gujarati)

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905



The Sadness of JP

Bhola Chatterjee and Brahmanda

BHOLA CHATTERJI spent a few days in Patna recently watching Jayaprakash Narayan from close quarters. The Loknayak is physically a very weak person these days but he is more ill mentally : Was the sadness of disillusionment inevitable?

For ten days last month I was privileged to watch Jayaprakash Narayan closely; mornings, afternoons and evenings. He was often in a pensive mood, lost in thought, but it did not take him more than a split second to collect his thoughts when confronted with a challenging question. His alert, sensitive mind would miss nothing, however, small or unimportant it might seem.

Frequently, his finely chiselled face would show a trace of restlessness, of not being quite at peace with himself. Beneath his placid posture, it was not hard to detect, there was a struggle going on—he seemed to be straining every nerve to bear misfortune with equanimity, to maintain the equilibrium that was once his, almost by birth-right.

Not all, however, are agreed that things must not be made yet more

difficult for him. Take one instance out of many. On February 23 morning, he was ready as usual to receive visitors who would troop in, come rain or shine. He looked composed—he had had dialysis the day before. I had yet to tape Jayaprakash’s answers to my questions. So I watched somewhat impatiently as the fourth visitor started on a rather longish note. But his case was worthy of JP’s attention. An elderly wage-earner, this visitor told JP, he had, of his own accord, been regularly sending for some time almost his entire monthly income—anything between Rs. 200 and Rs. 300—to JP to be spent on a good cause. Unfortunately, neither his donations nor his many letters requesting an interview had so much as been acknowledged. JP called a secretary who confirmed what the visitor had said and muttered a weak explanation. JP asked, rhetorically “why?” a few times but did not press the point further. He swallowed his unease.

Jayaprakash is reconciled to the fact that he has not an aeon to live. Nevertheless, there is not the least weakening of the will to live. But live for what?—Well, for the accomplishment of his mission. No man understands better than JP does that “total revolution” is still a faraway dream, a nebulous concept, to realize which it is worth being reborn ten

times. To draw JP out I had only to remark that the realities of the promised “allembracing revolution” were a caricature of the abstract.

With an intent look JP turned round, weighed his words and conceded that this was beyond dispute. But, said he, “if I had not fallen ill immediately after the March 1977 parliamentary elections the scenario might have been entirely different. The political situation was explosive at that time; there had been a massive release of the people’s pent-up feelings; and they were determined not to lose the opportunity by default. It would not do to deny, I am not being immodest when I say this, that I could have helped canalize all this into what might have opened up a path eventually leading to the restructuring, mind you, basic restructuring, of society. That was not to be, for God had it ordained otherwise.” He let the matter rest there, incapable as he is of wearing his heart on his sleeve. Was this the man that had nearly a year ago raised the nation from the dead, so to speak. The mind wandered back to a fateful day some 11 months ago.

MARCH 30, 1977. A tall, handsome and frail 74-year-old man in Patna—called Pataliputra in the dim distant past where Dharma (goodness) had once triumphed over Adharma (evil)—was

relaxed after a long time. His gaunt face was relaxed, but he continued to sit there in deep contemplation. This was the man's finest hour. What he had prophesied much before the March parliamentary elections had come true. And Jayaprakash had said, "India will emerge from the grave, no matter how long it might take.We find today the dark clouds of counter-revolution encircling us ... however dark the night might be, the dawn is bound to follow."

The outcome of the sixth parliamentary elections astounded the country as nothing else had done since

August 15, 1947. The nameless, faceless people, who had never known what it was like to have a square meal at least once every day, gave Prime Minister Indira Gandhi a rebuff she had not even remotely bargained for. A "silent revolution through the ballot box" freed the people of the shroud into which the Congress had held them for 30 dreary years. But then, did the post-election scene also reflect the completion of the mission of the man who had caused the tidal wave? Far from it, if Jayaprakash is any guide. As he put it sometime after the Janata Party had been catapulted into the



This is JP during the 1975 movement; now he is alone and isolated

corridors of power : “After all, the objective of the movement was not merely to topple the Congress and install a Janata Party government, but to bring about socio-economic changes. The Janata Party may be one instrument, but most of the work has to be done by activists among the people themselves, mostly young people. Therefore, I should say that a small part has been done. The greatest part still remains, because mere change of government has not brought socio-economic resolution in the country and, after all, that was the objective”. This might have been blasphemy to the Party faithfuls, but Jayaprakash knew better than to make a judgment on the basis of the Janata Party’s success at the polls. To him it was not even the beginning of the end; it only marked the end of the beginning.

Twelve months have passed since Indira Gandhi’s acts of malfeasance and misfeasance, and Jayaprakash earned for the Janata Party the right to assume the reins of government. But what about the promise that was to take precedence over other matters—the promise of bread and clothes to the hungry and the naked. In his own right, Jayaprakash can ask the Janata Government to render an account of what it has done so far to justify the trust the people had put in it. More, how

much longer must he wait for his dream to be translated into reality—the dream of an India “in which all have work ... each individual has enough to develop his creative potential to the maximum ... everyone who toils with his hands has a share in owning and a say in managing the factory or farm in which he toils ... in which all have equal opportunities?”

Here is the rub. He might raise these issues as often as not; he might shout himself hoarse emphasizing that there is a limit to the time the people would grant the Government to deliver the goods, that the gap must not keep widening between promise and fulfillment. But who is so innocent as to heed an ailing person’s warning that the people must not be mocked with false hopes? Surely none of the men that rule the roast in Delhi today. They seem to hold him and his ideas to mockery. At any rate, that is what their life-style, their attitude to men and events and, above all, the last 12 months’ balance-sheet would apparently confirm.

Of this, Jayaprakash is well aware. He is not ignorant of the fact that he is a thorn in the flesh of the clever and crafty politicians determined to make hay while the sun shines. Also, he is not unaware that most of those that have used him to enter the citadel of power would be more

than glad to see him consigned to limbo. And this, doubtless, makes him sad; in all probability he is the saddest Indian today. Does that sound surprising? No reason why it should, if you take a close look at the man, all the circumstances and the drudgery of his daily routine, the men he is obliged to meet mornings, afternoons and evenings, dialysis or not, and the fools he must suffer and that, too, gladly.

He is sad because he has perforce to be an onlooker at all the wrong things that are currently happening. What makes it poignant is that he must put up with this, handicapped as he is by extremely weak health. Much to his chagrin, he is in no shape to alter the course of events that runs counter to most things he has cherished and everything he has struggled for. His emphasis has been on reorienting the philosophy of planned development, keeping in view the fact that no unbridgeable hiatus should occur between the immediate and the distant goals. All along he has pleaded for the creation of a climate wherein the people might get back their sense of belonging, of purpose, of direction. Time and again he has stressed the point that liberty, political and economic, must inhere in certain concrete objects, one of the most

important of which is freedom from starvation. Did he not assure the people as late as on March 13, 1977 that “nothing will benefit the poor ... as much as the Janata Partys pledge to make the right to work a fundamental right”.

And he is a lonely person, how lonely only he knows. There is no doubt a concourse of people, who appear to have no end of demands on his time, but not a single human personality to whom he might build a bridge. At times one has the feeling that he is not his own master, that there are gaps in the channels of communication between him and the people. Others decide for him what correspondence and reports he should see and who should or should not meet him. This fact came out clearly recently when Mr. Karpoori Thakur, Chief Minister of Bihar, declared that JP had issued a statement without full knowledge of the case after February 24. “He was misinformed by certain interested persons.”

All this and much more, including, sadly enough, an amount of cynical exploitation, he bears without complaining. Indeed it is amazing to watch his patient endurance of suffering, physical as well as mental. Incapable of rancour, or bitterness, he seems to take refuge in stoicism. And “God” is no

longer a word that has no place in his vocabulary. Who would have thought, say, half a decade ago, that his message while giving his autograph could be “God bless you”. This is precisely what he wrote in my daughter’s autograph book a few days ago.

As I took leave of him on the morning of February 28 I was comforted by one fact. In one way, JP is still as strong as a rock; he is the still small voice

of our conscience. Here is a person whose thoughts and ideas, good or bad, had been on a continental scale; whose faith in the innate goodness of man nothing has shed. And he still believes firmly that the indomitable spirit of man must triumph if this imperfect world were to become a little less imperfect, somewhat more tolerant of those who refuse to conform to what an arrogant ruler might dictate.

‘I tried to be as true as possible to myself’

BHOLA CHATTERJI met JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN at the latter’s Patna residence and, taking advantage of their long association, asked him questions of a personal nature, about his life and faith.

Q : Much has happened since I met you last in early 1974. The country’s so-called elite, which once found the nation’s deliverer in Indira Gandhi, has now equated you with Mahatma Gandhi. I would rather say that history will remember you for the courage of your convictions, your refusal to swim with the tide, your determination not to practise the art of tactical participation while preaching total revolution and, above all, for your non-conformism.

What do you think about this assessment, JP?

A : Well, my reaction is that you have lifted me up to the sky—I don’t deserve all that. I have tried to serve the country as well as humanity to the best of my ability and capacity. Gandhiji? Well, one like him it takes history centuries to produce. There cannot be any comparison between me and Mahatmaji. As for the rest of the question, what comments can I make, Bhola? I think it

is your friendship, affection and love for me which makes you say such things. I have considered myself to be an ordinary citizen, an ordinary human being, an ordinary Indian and I have just tried to do what I thought was my duty to do. I don't find anything noteworthy, anything spectacular, anything which is memorable in my life. I don't know if I will be remembered at all after my death. But anyhow it is for history to judge people and history has its own way. All that I can say is that I feel I have tried to put into action my own beliefs, my own convictions and I tried to be true, as true as possible, to myself, to the country and to the nation. That is all that I would like to say on this.

Q : JP, all are agreed that Indian society needs purposive change in every sphere of life but there are differences on the nature and quantum of change required and on the methods to be adopted to bring about the change. One view apparently is that this can be effected within the present framework of democratic institutions. The other school is certain that the existing framework has to be totally demolished if any worthwhile change is to be initiated. For them, it is an either or issue with nothing in between. What is

your opinion?

A : I am quite clear in my mind that there is so much of filth in our society, so much of injustice, inequality, so much of selfishness that all this must totally change. I think there cannot be two opinions about the need for comprehensive, all-round change in Indian society—political, economic, moral, spiritual and the rest of it. The question is : how is this to be brought about? In fact, the students' movement—which I joined and tried to give a direction to—I had considered to be a possible instrument for an all-round revolution. That's why I uttered those words in the public meeting at the maidan that it is not for a few demands that you are fighting but for *Sampurna Kranti*, for Total Revolution. Everything



has to change. Man has to change, first of all. Which is the most difficult part of the task. Our teachers, our gurus, our seers, from Sri Aurobinda to those who are alive today, including Vinoba—they are all in the same tradition and they all tried that. But I do not think that there has been that amount of or that kind of change in man which would lead to the creation of a new and better society. So, beginning with the individual man and his education or re-education, his remodelling, remaking, beginning with him we go on to social, economic, political, educational and other institutions. Most of our institutions have been borrowed from the British or European models. There are quite intelligent people in this country, who are well-organized, who want to follow Russia or China. But they forget that Russia and China are different kinds of societies and we are different from them.

One thing which I have felt all along and which I have emphasized is that the caste system, whatever its virtues might have been at one time, whatever needs it fulfilled at one time, it has now

become a heavy weight tied to our feet and it prevents the growth of this country. And therefore I would have liked to see more I emphasis placed on the reconstitution of Indian society on egalitarian lines. I mean there may be exploitation, there may be the rich and the poor, the landless and the landlords, so on and so forth. But this distinction conferred by birth—somebody is high and somebody is low—this I think is one of the great obstacles in the path of our growth and development. This must go. Otherwise we won't have the participation of millions of people. What the result ultimately would be I don't know but it might lead to violence. Already here and there caste quarrels and disputes, and violence are taking place. People are killed and injured. I would like to emphasize for what I am worth that the caste system is one great obstacle in the path of our progress.

As far as the other institutions are concerned, well, our economy is a mixed economy—we have the public sector and the private sector. I personally am not so much concerned

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I don't know if I'll be remembered at all after my death... All that I can say is that I tried to be as true as possible to myself.
”

about the question of ownership. Whether a company or an establishment is owned by private people or by the Government hardly makes any difference. In fact, if all sources of production and distribution were controlled by the Government we would land ourselves in a dictatorship, and it will be out of the frying pan into the fire. I believe in retaining private ownership but at the same time in controlling it, restraining it, training it, making it conscious of its responsibilities to society—and personally I think this is the essence of Gandhiji's economics. He didn't want the machine, he didn't want the organization to control man, but man to control the organization and the machinery. This we don't have today.

Every problem that we have has two solutions : one based on dictatorship and the other on democratic principles. If we follow the democratic principles, then all these changes have to be brought about. More power has to be given to the people; they have to be trained on how to exercise these powers. The way our panchayats are running their institutions of self-

government, well, they are just instruments in the hands of the officials and the Government. They use the panchayats for their purposes or the political Parties use them for election and other purposes. All that has to change before we lay the foundations of a real democratic society.

Q : *JP, this is a rather delicate question, but I am confident that you would not take it amiss if I put it to you. It is said that at your age some people, particularly those who have been in the limelight all their life, suddenly start having an intense lust for life and avoid facing up to the fact that all men must die. What do you feel?*

A : No, I have no fear of death at all. I think I have developed this lack of fear of death in the course of my life, in facing dangers and always keeping myself ready to go the next movement. If I suddenly die as I am talking to you, I won't mind. That doesn't mean that I am inviting death, but if death comes I won't fear it. This is something which I value because man has feared death throughout history and I don't blame man for that. Because if men welcome death there will be no human society. But I personally am

“ **It is just natural to me, I just don't fear death.** ”

quite indifferent to whether I live the next moment or not. How I acquired this attitude I don't know, but it has come out of my life. It is not a put-up thing; it is not a philosophical decision I have arrived at. I have not got it from the *Bhagavat Geeta*, for instance. It is just natural to me, I don't fear death. When I am ill I call doctors because it seems reasonable to do so in this age of science. Also, if you are able to keep alive you may be able to give some more service to the people. But I can say this quite truthfully that I have no fear of death in the sense in which people have it. It's a blessing, it's a great blessing. I have returned twice from death's door—that also may be one reason—during the last three years. At Chandigarh it was a release from death; then I fell ill and nobody expected me to survive; my doctors told me that “we didn't expect you to live and we have not saved you. You have saved yourself by your strong will.” I said I don't think my will has much to do with this. It's God's will—that's all.

Q : *Do you have any regrets about the past, about anything that you have done*

in the course of your long and intensely-lived political life? Do you think you have been able to live up to your principles?

A : All that I can say is that I have tried to live up to my principles, but I can't claim that I have actually succeeded. I don't know whether if I were to start life afresh I might be able to avoid certain mistakes—or wrongs, misdeeds—whatever you call them—

but as of today I feel that I have on many occasions and in many fields' failed myself. It would take a long effort and self-analysis and self-understanding to answer you fully. Somehow I have not

been ever attracted by Jayaprakash Narayan, that is, I have never felt that I should write about myself, my experiences. People have asked me why I don't write my autobiography, but the idea has never appealed to me. I have always thought it will be a waste of time. Anyhow, that's how I am—does that answer your question?

Q : *What is your message to your age? What would you like the people to remember you for when you are no longer around?*

“**Somehow, I have never felt attracted by Jayaprakash Narayan... I have never felt that I should write about myself, my experiences.**”

A : Well, Bhola, I think the best answer to this is the famous poem by an American poet : ‘I am for sleeping and forgetting all that has gone before I am for lying still and letting

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I believe in retaining private ownership but at the same time in controlling it, in making it conscious of its responsibilities to society.
”

your thoughts and ideas. This is just wonderful.

A : What can I say ?

Q : Just say a word.

A : said in Calcutta while coming from my hospital in Bombay

who will knock at my door. I would my life’s sun were setting for me to rise no more’.

Q : JP, pardon my impertinence; may I tell you just this one simple thing—your mind remains unimpaired despite all that you have suffered and all that you have gone through. There is no gap anywhere in the logical association of

something about myself which made many people anxious and sad. Whatever may be my physical condition the mind is also part of the body. The mind is whole, it still remains active, sensitive and I am thankful to God for that. I don’t know how long this will last but hitherto it has been like this. As of today it is so.

“I don’t know how to restart the movement”

A four-volume collection of the speeches and writings of Jayaprakash Narayan, “Towards Total Revolution”, has been brought out recently by Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd, Bombay. We publish here portions of the latest interview of JP by Brahmanand, who compiled and edited the collection.

Q : There has been some confusion about the concept of “Total Revolution”. What exactly do you mean by it?

A : I have used the word ‘Total’ to mean a comprehensive revolution

affecting all aspects of social life, including individual life. If there were a Total Revolution of any concept the individual man would also undergo a revolutionary change. The specific nature of a total revolution at any

particular time would be governed by the needs of the time, the situation that obtained in the country and the forces that were contending for power. So at different times a total revolution might take different forms, even different meanings in the sense that its content might also be different. In the present context a total revolution in India should mean a revolution from the village upwards to the largest urban concentration. There must be a total change in civic life, civic relationships, civic institutions, civic relations.

One of the most difficult spheres which has resisted change is administration and bureaucracy. It needs a very strong political leadership and a very well-knit, organised political Party with a mass base and also a following among the intelligentsia to bring about a total revolution in view of the vested interests in our bureaucracy. Even strong personalities like Morarji Desai or Charan Singh do not seem to have made much of a dent in the administration system. Both of them seem to have fallen into the same administrative rut as previous administrators. The Party has changed, but the administration has not changed in its character and in its relationship to the people in terms of responsibility and



Where is the Total Revolution? Can we feel the people's pulse any longer?

this, I think, is a great pity.

A great deal of fundamental change is required to bring the administration near to the people. I had given the programmes of “peoples’ committees”, but in many places these seem to have been captured by political Parties. I had had great hope in the students’ movement, that had really brought about revolutionary change in the country. But the students of today are not the students tomorrow. The new ones do not have the same kind of

spirit, enthusiasm or attitude. The student movement may not be a dead force nor is it a very effective force at the present. I am pinning my hopes on the committees of the people. I have taken the idea from the Russians or the Chinese, though in these countries such committees were merely projections of the ruling Communist Party. I still have not given up hope : I think the movement can be revived as a people's movement.

I have been trying to find out who could be the initiator of the revolution, and have come to the conclusion that it should be “the radical Sarvodaya group”, which believes in *Kranti* (Revolution) rather than merely doing good work serving the people, doing constructive work, such as khadi village industries, basic education and things like that. To all that must be added a revolutionary change.

Q : *What do you mean by social, economic and cultural revolution?*

A : Well, I don't think it needs much explanation in the word “total” I included all these. There may also be other aspects of individual and social life, which I have forgotten to mention, that would also be affected by a total revolutionary movement. One has noticed in history that if there is a

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While they (The minorities) perform their duties towards society they should claim rights.

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revolutionary upsurge, whatever be its mainsprings—political, economic, class struggle or anything close—once the revolutionary forever spreads, it affects everything; and if it succeeds, nothing is left in its old farm.

Q : *What would be the role of the weaker section in the community in the total revolution?*

A : Well, as you know, the Sarvodaya attitude has been that the stronger sections should change their attitude and take a more benevolent view of their responsibilities and obligations to the weaker sections. But I found it had little effect on the situation, and therefore decided I should advise the weaker sections to organize themselves and become strong enough, not necessarily to fight against the stronger sections but certainly to claim their rights, enjoy the privileges which the law has given them in regard to the land reform, the housing and similar other benefits bestowed upon them by law.

Q : *What would be the role of the*

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**The initiator of the
revolution should be the
radical Sarvodaya group.**
”

religious minorities?

A : There again I feel the same way as I feel about the weaker sections. The minorities also are part of the weaker sections, not because they are educationally or socially backward but because numerically they are a minority. Therefore, I have been advising them to organize themselves in order that they may play a proper part in the national life. As long as they perform their duties towards society, they should claim rights. Gandhiji emphasized that rights grew out of duties. There is a widespread tendency to claim rights without performing duties, which weakens the movement for acquisition of their proper rights by the people. So whatever may be the duties they should be performed honestly. Take the question of the landless labourers. The law has given them a system of wages depending on areas and so on. I do not know of any area where the wages prescribed by law are paid by the landowners. But I think that is a fault of the State also because

I don't think an ordinary farmer can really pay wages at the level prescribed and therefore he relies on machines. But if the machines displace labour and create more unemployment it is a bad thing, certainly. As my friend the late Schumacher used to say, no better machines have been made than the two hands of man and if these machines are not given enough work, what is the need of inventing mechanical machines when natural machines are idle? I don't think it is a question of machines; it is a question of devising a programme of economic and social development which would require greater participation of human beings.

Q : *If people's power is the objective of your total revolution, what changes do you expect in the existing social setup of the country?*

A : Well, I do not know what you mean by social setup. The caste system in Hindu society is the main characteristic of our social set-up and the castes are

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**A total revolution in
India should mean a
revolution from the village
upwards to the largest
urban concentration.**
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distinguished by a hierarchy of the high, low, middle, lowest untouchables, outcasts and so on. A total revolution in the social spheres, particularly Hindu social sphere, would mean eradication of caste. But it is easier said than done, for there is something in it which holds it together. I have advocated intercaste marriage as the only method by which the system could be broken down, but this by itself is not a solution. It must be an accompanying part of a larger revolution; a larger social revolution within the sphere of which the, caste system would also undergo a change. I have therefore called upon backward castes to get themselves organised, for today, particularly in UP and Bihar, it is not the Brahmins and the Khatriyas who are responsible for suppression of the “so-called” lower castes, but the middle castes,—particularly the Ahirs, the Jats and the Gujars—who are becoming more, and more dominant in the countryside.

Q : *How does your concept of total revolution differ from Mao’s cultural revolution in China?*

A : Well, I do not have a complete picture of the cultural revolution of Mao. I am not sure if it encompassed political, economic, social, cultural and religious spheres, revolution in customs

and manners, revolution in the individual’s life as well as in the life of the group and in the life of society. Mahatma Gandhi and others have said that India lives in her villages—which I think is true. The cultural revolution in India will be judged by the changes it brings about in the rural society where the most obstinate obstacle is the caste system. It was very much on the decline after Independence and after every citizen was given the right to vote. But the system of election is such that it made caste its main basis. Paradoxically enough, a political change has brought about a reaction in the social structure and strengthened the reactionary social structure, by which I mean the caste



There was a time when Janata Party leaders, like the Prime Minister, came to visit Jayaprakash frequently but those days are over, it seems.

structure—for all political canvassers appeal to caste feelings to get their votes, and no Party is free from it, not even the most revolutionary Party. This is what worries me a great deal. I had thought that if the momentum created by the people's movement two years ago had not suddenly been checked by Mrs. Gandhi, it was possible there would have been a lasting effect on the class and on the caste structure. But all that process suddenly stopped and I do not know how to restart the movement and regain the momentum that was lost.

Q : *As you know class struggle provides the dynamics of social change, what do you think is the motivation of your total revolution?*

A : The Marxist concept of class struggle is applicable essentially to the industrial society, where there was or is an owning class, who own the means of production, and the other class which more or less provide the tools of production. Now in our society we don't have that kind of a classification. We are an agrarian society. In the countryside in which 80 per cent of the people live, there are larger numbers—may be they form the majority—of very small peasant proprietors. But the land they hold or own is not sufficient for their livelihood. So they have also to

work as labourers and there you have the class distinction breaking down. As landowner he belongs to the possessing class and as a labourer he belongs to the dispossessed labouring class. But he is the same person.

In the case of bigger landlords who do not work with their own hands in their fields a division like that can be made, but how many big landlords are there in this country, particularly after the operation of the Ceiling Acts, etc.? The countryside is not what it was, say, ten or fifteen years ago. The caste hierarchy is there but that also, I think, is breaking down. There is both levelling up and levelling down. The depressed castes are still depressed, but the middle castes, such as the Ahirs in Bihar or the Jats, the Gujars in U.P. and Haryana who form the peasant proprietary class are labourers as well as owners, and no class analysis applies to them. This, I think, is a picture that will probably last and I don't think the Marxists' hope that Indian agriculture will also in time become a capitalist industry is going to be fulfilled. It will more or less remain a peasant proprietary form of class.

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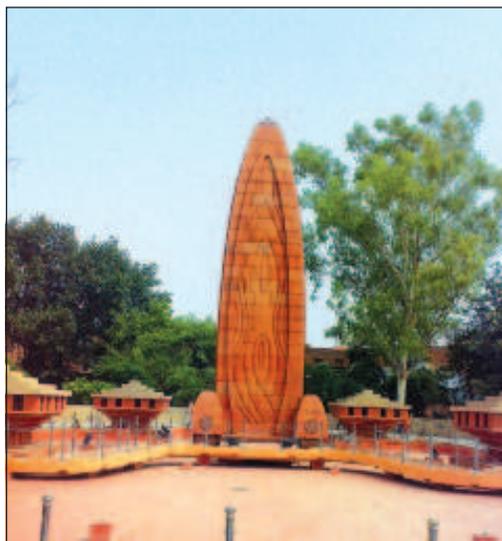
Looking Back : Contextualisation of Jallianwalla Bagh in Historical Perspective

Dr. Nirban Basu

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On the occasion of centenary of Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, the country is remembering the martyrs of Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy of hundred years ago. But Jallianwalla Bagh was not an isolated horrible event. It is to be understood in the overall historical context of the Post—World War I political scenario in India.

As for the primary sources of information on Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, one must consult the Punjab Disorders Commission commonly called Hunter Commission and the Congress Punjab Enquiry Committee Reports. As for the secondary sources, apart from the well-researched textbooks on national movement such as Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India* (1983), Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to partition: A History of Modern India* (2004), Ishita Banerjee – Dubey, *A History of Modern India* (2015) one must mention the valuable collection of research papers edited by Ravinder Kumar ‘*Essays in Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919*’ (1971) and the two very recently published books “*Jallianwalla Bagh : An Empire of Fear and the Making of the Amritsar Massacre* (Penguin, 2019) by Kym A Wager and *Jallianwalla Bagh, 1919 : The Real Story* by Kishwar Desai (Westland Publications, 2019).



■ Background :

In 1919, the Government of India passed a set of new coercive measures which sought to perpetuate the extraordinary repressive powers conferred on the

Government during the war for doing away with ordinary legal procedures and for authorizing imprisonment without trial. The Act came to take its name for Justice S. A. T. Rowlatt, the President of the Sedition Committee, following whose recommendations, the Government of India drafted these two bills that were presented to the Imperial Legislative Council on 18th January, 1919. The first bill sought to amend the Indian Penal Code in a way so as to enable the government to check activities prejudicial to the security of the state effectively. The second one was designed to invest the government with power to shortcircuit the process of law in dealing with revolutionary crimes.¹ It permitted detention without trial for upto 2 years and arbitration in special courts. The bills were rushed through the Imperial Legislative Council on 18 March 1919 and became an Act despite opposition almost unanimous from non-official Indian members.

The Act was to directly affect active politicians. At the same time, any move to retain arbitrary powers of government and to grant additional powers to the police was bound to produce alarm and outrage the government's claim on arbitration negated its declared promise of a democratic polity and the police for their part was notorious as petty oppressors.² The Act was possibly a bid to conciliate conservative white opinion incensed by the promises held out to Indians by Montagu premises held out to Indians Chemsford Reports (April, 1918). The Rowlatt Act was accompanied by assurances on the part of the Viceroy that British commerce and the civil services would not be affected by the forthcoming reforms.

■ Role of Gandhi

The Rowlatt Act aroused bitter resentment among all political activists but it was only Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who with his South African experiences came on the Indian scene only after the World War I and won fame from Champaran Kheda and Ahmedabad Satyagrahas came forward with the suggestion of an all-India protest that was to be non-violent.

Ever since the content of the Rowlatt Bill was published, Gandhi proposed to resist it with Satyagraha. He was opposed to the spirit of the bill which he described as the distrust for the common men. It signified the reluctance of the government to part with arbitrary powers and thus made a mockery of the democratic

1. Kumar Ravinder, 'The Rowlatt Satyagraha in Lahore' in *Essays in the Social History of Modern India*, ed. by Ravinder Kumer, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1983

2. Sarkar Sumit, *Modern India, 1885-1945*, Pearson, Noida, 2014, p. 162

constitutional reforms.

Gandhi's initial programme was, however, modest: along with a few close associates he signed a Satyagraha pledge on 24 February 1919 to disobey this and similar other unjust laws. On 26 February, he issued an open letter to all the Indians urging them to join the Satyagraha. He decided to launch a nationwide movement starting with a general strike or *hartal* on March 30 which was later shifted to 6 April. The *hartal* was deliberately fixed on a Sunday and Gandhi instructed all employees who were required to work on Sundays to suspend work only if they got permission from their employers.

Even with such limitations, the call for *hartal* energized distinct groups of political activists. Members of the Home Rule League, dismayed somewhat by Annie Besant's support for the Mont-Ford Reforms and by Tilak's departure for England in 1918 decided to accept Gandhi's call; certain Pan-Islamic groups, whose cause Gandhi had supported by demanding the release of Ali brothers Shaukat Ali and Md. Ali, the upcoming Radical Muslim leaders also joined him. Finally, there were the members of the Satyagraha Sabha which Gandhi had set up in Bombay in February, 1919.

The organization for the Satyagraha began in right earnest. Gandhi travelled to Bombay, Delhi, Allahabad, Lucknow and several South Indian cities between March and early April, 1919. There was a wide circulation of literature, publicizing the Satyagraha and a campaign to collect signatures of people willing to take Satyagraha pledge. And yet, the preparation was grossly disproportionate to the movement that resulted in April, 1919 in the words of Prof. Sumit Sarkar : "the biggest and most violent anti-British upsurge which India had seen since 1857".

■ Jallianwalla Bagh Incident :

Gandhi had called for a passive resistance, protest movement and a mighty wave of mass demonstrations. But the movement soon lapsed into violence, particularly after Gandhi's arrest on 9 April. The government had no prior experience of handling such widespread mass agitation. To avoid trouble, they arrested Gandhi, but that precipitated a crisis provoking unprecedented mob fury in areas like Delhi, Bombay, Ahmedabad or Amritsar. Gandhi's trusted volunteers could not control this mass violence and were themselves swayed away. The government response was varied, as in the event of a complete breakdown of communications, provincial governments reacted according to their own pre-conceived notions. In Bombay, the response was

restrained, while in Bengal the Lieutenant Governor Sir Michael O' Dyer unleashed a reign of terror.

The people of the Punjab had been excited over war loans and Lt. Governor O'Dyer's harsh method of recruitment to the army even after the end of the World War I. The Muslims were deeply affected by Khilafat propaganda. O'Dyer was an Irishman who, according to Ravinder Kumar³ possessed the single eyed vision of a fanatic. He firmly believed that the British Government was a powerful and benevolent authority that enforced peace among the warring castes and communities in India. He also felt a special responsibility to defend the simple but sturdy peasants against the oppression of wily moneylenders and sagacious lawyers. Consequently O'Dyer had certain degree of popularity among the peasants but was thoroughly disliked by urban middle classes. These were the groups that gave full support to Gandhi's call for Satyagraha. In fact, the provincial leaders of Lahore had voiced their opposition to the Rowlatt Bills even before Gandhi proposed the Satyagraha and Gandhi's open letter had evoked a very favourable response in Punjab including some section of Muslims.

Understandably, O'Dyer's administration took strong exception to public meetings held in support of Rowlatt Satyagraha; in particular, the call for hartal, which it felt was a direct challenge to British rule. It tried to quell support for the hartal by means of coercion and negotiations with local leaders which turned out to be utterly ineffective. The remarkable success of the hartal of 6 April emboldened the Lahore leaders⁴ who further articulated their strength in organizing a massive anti-British demonstration on the occasion of Ram Navami on 9 April that involved active participation of Muslims. The united front presented by the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in Punjab enraged and unnerved O'Dyer's administration. It decided to make full use of the wartime restrictions that the Rowlatt Act had sanctioned to deal with sedition.

The government unnecessarily panicked and ordered the arrest of the principal leaders Dr. Satyagopal (Hindu) and Dr.Saifuddin Kichlu(Muslim). The result was mob fury at Amritsar. Firing on a peaceful demonstration near Hall Bridge in Amritsar on 10 April was followed by attacks on the symbols of British Authority. Martial law was clamped down on the town on 11 April with General O' Dyer in command. Some British officials were killed and two British women were seriously

3. Ibid, p. 194

4. Nehru Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography*, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1962, p. 43

injured by mob fury on 12 April.

On 13 April, a peaceful unarmed crowd consisting in large part of villagers who had come for a fair in connection with Baisakhi festival and had not been told about ban on meetings was attacked without the slightest warning by General Dyer in an enclosed ground called Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar. Troops under Gen. Dyer fired 1600 rounds of ammunitions into the unarmed crowd who had no means to exit. According to official estimates 379 persons were killed and 1200 wounded were left unattended. According to unofficial sources at least 1,000 were killed and several thousand wounded. The Jallianwalla Bagh massacre was the blackest stain on the record of the British colonial rule. Dyer's only regret before the Hunter Commission were that his ammunitions ran out and that the narrow lanes had prevented his bringing in an armoured car for it was no longer a question of dispersing the crowd, but one of "producing a moral effect". During the following weeks, Dyer with the full backing of the Lt. Governor went on with his job of 'producing a moral effect'. Even Montagu the Secretary of State for India admitted that it was a 'preventive murder'. Farneaux in his seminal work 'Massacre at Amritsar' (London 1963) has shown that at least one thousand unarmed and peaceful people had been butchered by the inhuman orders of Gen. Dyer.

Jawaharlal Nehru has written in his Autobiography,⁵ "A suggestion has been made by Mr. Edward Thompson that Gen. Dyer was under the impression that there were other exits from the Bagh and it was because of this that he continued his firing so long. Even if that was Dyer's impression that would hardly lessen his responsibility. But it seems very strange that he should have such an impression. Any person, standing on the raised ground where he stood, could have a good view of the entire space and could see how shut it was on all sides by several storeyed houses. Only on one side, there was no house but a low wall about five feet high. With a murderous fire mowing them down and unable to find a way out, thousands of people rushed to this wall and tried to climb over it. The fire was then directed... towards this wall to prevent people from escaping over it. And when all was over, some of the biggest heaps of dead and wounded lay on either side of this wall."

The following reminiscences of Nehru are more interesting:⁶

"Towards the end of the year 1919, I travelled from Amritsar to Delhi by night

5. Ibid, pp. 43-44

6. Quoted in Tripathi Amale, *Swadhinata Sangrame Bharater Jatiya Congress, 1885-1947*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, BS 1397, p. 89

train. The compartment I entered was almost full and all the berths, except one upper one were occupied by sleeping passengers. I took the vacant upper berth. In the morning I discovered that my fellow passengers were military officers. They conversed with each other in loud voices which I could not help overhearing. One of them was holding forth in an aggressive and triumphant tone and soon I discovered that he was Dyer, the hero of Jallianwalla Bagh and he was describing his Amritsar experiences. He pointed out how he had the whole town at his mercy and he had felt like reducing the rebellious city to a heap of ashes, but he took pity and refrained. He was evidently coming back from Lahore after giving his evidence before the Hunter commission of Inquiry. I was greatly shocked to hear his conservation and to observe his callous manner.”

The massacre of Amritsar, was followed by a series of humiliating orders. Curfew was imposed for weeks. People were flogged in public and were made to crawl where the two British women had been assaulted. Students had to walk sixteen miles a day for roll calls. Arrested persons were confined in cages. Hostages were taken, property was confiscated or destroyed; and Hindus and Muslims were handcuffed in pairs to demonstrate the consequences of unity. Martial law was proclaimed all over Punjab. A graphic picture of gruesome torture and oppression is vividly available in Alfred Draper’s Amritsar: The Massacre that ended the Raj.⁷

The Rowlatt Satyagraha movement began to lose momentum after Jallianwalla Bagh, but there were further instances of violence against European community in Amritsar and Lahore that came in the wake of Jallianwalla Bagh and the wild rumours it generated. The use of violence became too flagrant to be overlooked. Gandhi admitted to have committed a Himalayan blunder by offering the weapon of non-violent Satyagraha to a people insufficiently trained in the discipline of non-violence. Gandhi was forced to call off the Satyagraha (April 19, 1919) even though the struggle failed to achieve its only object of securing a repeal of the Rowlatt Act.

The unprecedented scale of British repression seems to have frightened most Indian politicians for some time. At Calcutta for instance, it proved impossible to organize a public protest meeting. Governor of Bengal, Ronaldsay, in his “My Bengal Diary” mentioned that C.R Das was not bothered at all about the Rowlatt Satyagraha.⁸ It was left to Tagore to voice the agony and anger of a nation through

7. Ibid, p. 89

8. Ibid

9. Tuteja, K. L, *The Punjab Hindu Sabha and Communal Politics 1905-1923*, Frontline, March 14, 2003

a famous letter to the Viceroy renouncing his Knighthood (May,1919). In the Punjab itself, the Punjab Hindu Sabha even after the Jallianwalla Bagh genocide criticized the lawlessness created by the masses in the name of no-violent Satyagraha and expressed allegiance to the British rule.⁹

About the post Jallianwalla Bagh days Jawaharlal Nehru in his Autobiography rightly points out:¹⁰ “The Punjab was isolated, cut off from the rest of India, a thick veil seemed to cover it and hide it from outside eyes. There was hardly any news, and people could not go there or come out from there. Odd individuals, who managed to escape from the inferno, were so terror-struck that they could give no clear account. Helplessly and impotently, we who were outside, waited for scraps of news and bitterness filled our hearts. Some of us wanted to go openly to the affected parts of the Bengal and defy the martial law regulations. But we were kept back.”

■ সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু তাঁর আত্মজীবনীতে লিখেছেন :¹¹

“১৯১১ সালের ১৫ই সেপ্টেম্বর যখন কেম্ব্রিজের উদ্দেশ্যে ভারতবর্ষ ছাড়ি, তার কিছুদিন আগেই জালিয়ানওয়ালাবাগের যত কাণ্ড অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। কিন্তু পাঞ্জাবের বাইরে তার খবর প্রায় পৌঁছয়নি, কারণ গোটা পাঞ্জাব তখন সামরিক আইনের কবলে, খবরাখবরের ব্যাপারে প্রবল কড়াকড়ি। সুতরাং লাহোর ও অমৃতসরে নানা ভয়াবহ ঘটনার ভাষাভাষা গুজবমাত্র আমাদের কানে এসেছিল। আমার এক সিমলাবাসী ভায়ের মুখে শুনেছিলাম পাঞ্জাবের ঘটনার ও ইংরেজ-আফগান যুদ্ধে ইংরেজের পরাজয়ের কথা। কিন্তু এসমস্তই ছিল গুজব, মোটের উপর উত্তর-পশ্চিম ভারত সম্বন্ধে সাধারণ মানুষ ছিল অজ্ঞ। সম্পূর্ণ নিশ্চিত মন নিয়ে ইয়োরুপ যাত্রা করলাম।”

So, we must recognize the limitations of the Rowlatt Satyagraha – the first Pan-Indian Gandhian mass movement.¹² Firstly, the whole of India literally was not affected. It was more or less limited to Punjab, Delhi, United Provinces, Gujarat and some parts of Maharastra. Bengal, Madras and Central Provinces were not at all affected.

Secondly, the movement in general was more effective in the cities than in the rural areas.

Thirdly, also in the areas where the movement took place, the strength of the movement was due more to economic issues on local grievances like price rise or

10. Nehru Jawaharlal, op.cit, p. 42

11. Bose, Subhas Chandra, *Bharat Pathik* (an autobiography in Bengali), Signet Press, Calcutta, BS 1355, p. 121

12. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar, *From Plassey o Partition : A History of Modern India* , Orient Longman, 2004, pp. 296-97

scarcity of basic commodities than to protest against Rowlatt Bills, about which there was very little popular awareness. The effectiveness of the movement depended on the capability of the local leaders to relate local grievances to the national issue of the Rowlatt Act.

In the absence of any central organization and an overarching popular consciousness, the importance of the regional specifications and salience of local issues and leadership remained too obvious in a movement that is often claimed in the national historiography as the first mass agitation at a national level. Gandhi as yet had no control over the Congress, hence for organizing the movement he set up a Satyagraha Sabha in Bombay and was helped by the Home Rule League. Apart from this, in course of his extensive tours in many parts of India in Feb-March, 1919, he had made personal contacts, through whom he now sought to disseminate his message. But the capability and popularity of these leaders, as well as their control over local society varied as also varied their commitment to Gandhian ideology, while mediation was an important factor at the initial stage of mobilization, the leaders often failed to control mass emotions once these were aroused. It became apparent soon that such face to face leadership was inadequate for organizing a nationwide agitation in a vast country like India.¹³

Henceforward, Gandhi would be extremely wary about starting movements without adequate organizational and ideological preparations and control. During the Rowlatt Satyagraha, the Congress, as such was not in the picture at all. It had no machinery as yet for real agitational politics in most parts of the country; where something of that sort did exist, as with the Extremist networks in Bengal and Maharastra, resistance to Gandhi would infact be the strongest. The failure of the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation made Gandhi realize the need for an impersonal organization such as the Congress. His next step was to takeover the Congress leadership. But still all the three important Pan-Indian movements under Gandhi followed almost the same fate of anti-Rowlatt Agitation – Incident of Chauri Chaura led to the sudden calling off of the Non Co-operation Movement (1922 Feb) the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34) gradually fizzled out; and the Quit India Movement of 1942, the last of the Gandhian movements ultimately became a leaderless movement and went the un-Gandhian way.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his autobiography : ¹⁴"As soon as martial law was

13. Owen, H. E, Organizing for the Rowlatt Satyagraha, 1919 in R. Kumar (ed), op.cit

14. Nehru Jawaharlal, op.cit, pp. 42-43

withdrawn from the principal areas and outsiders were allowed to come in, prominent Congressmen and others poured into Punjab offering their services for relief or enquiry work. The relief work was largely directed by Pt. Madan Mohan Mahaviya and Swami Shraddhananda, the enquiry part was mainly under the direction of Motilal Nehru and C.R Das with Gandhiji taking a great deal of interest in and often consulted by others. Das openly took the Amritsar area under his charge and I was deputed to accompany him and assist him in any way he liked. Most of the evidence relating to Jallianwalla Bagh and that terrible lane where human beings were mad to crawl on their bellies that subsequently appeared in the Congress Enquiry Report was taken down in our presence.”

The Congress boycotted the official Committee of Enquiry headed by Lord Hunter which the Government of India had appointed. Reports of both the Hunter Committee and the Enquiry Committee were published almost at the same time(1920). Remedy of the Punjab wrongs done by the British along with the vindication of the prestige of the Caliphate and the fulfillment of the demand for Swaraj were the three clear objectives of the Non Cooperation Movement (1920). None of the demands were achieved for the time being.

Nevertheless, Jallianwalla Bagh massacre was significant for marking the beginning of a transformation of Indian nationalist politics from being the politics of some restricted classes to becoming the politics of the masses. For the time being Jallianwalla Bagh was completely censored from newspapers, but this genocide again and again was remembered by the countrymen during the subsequent decades of the freedom struggle.

The Indians never forgot Jallianwalla Bagh. During her visit to Jallianwalla Bagh in 1997, the British Queen Elizabeth II described it as the most painful event in the British Indian history. On the occasion of the centenary of the incident the British Prime Minister Teresa May in a statement in the British Parliament in unequivocal language admitted this as black stain and expressed sorrow on behalf of the British Government though still in spite of demand from a significant section of the British Parliamentarians refrained from apologizing for it.¹⁵

15. Anandabazar Patrika, 10 April, 2019

বেলা বসু (সেনগুপ্ত)

জিতেশ বসু

১৫০ সালে বেলা আর আমার বিয়ে হয়। তার আগে ছেচল্লিশ থেকে ওর সঙ্গে আমার পরিচয়। আমরা দুজনেই কংগ্রেস করতাম। আমাদের প্রথম পরিচয়ের সময়ে বেলা তখন বলরামপুরে। আমি অভয় আশ্রমের কাজে বলরামপুরের কেন্দ্রে মাঝে মাঝেই যেতাম। গান্ধীজির নোয়াখালি যাওয়ার প্রাক্কালে আমাদের ছ'জন



চমৎকার ইংরাজি জানতেন। নিজে ছিলেন বিদেশি ডিগ্রি পাওয়া ইঞ্জিনিয়ার। কিন্তু চাকরি না করে স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনের কাজে যোগ দেন।

এছাড়া, হাইমচর পত্রিকা বলে একটা হাতে লেখা পত্রিকা বার করা হত—যাতে ত্রাণ শিবির সংক্রান্ত এবং স্বেচ্ছাসেবীদের আসা-যাওয়া সংক্রান্ত সমস্ত তথ্যাদি দেওয়া

মহিলা স্বেচ্ছাসেবী নোয়াখালি চলে যায়। তার মধ্যে বেলা এবং বকুলদি (বকুল গাঙ্গুলী) ছিলেন। আমিও নোয়াখালি চলে যাই। আর বকুলদি তো এখনও অত্যন্ত সক্রিয়। বেলা বেশিদিন বাঁচতে পারেনি। ১৯৫৩ সালের ১১ই অগস্ট ও মারা যায়।

ছেচল্লিশের দাঙ্গার সময় নোয়াখালিতে যে সব শরণার্থী শিবিরগুলো তৈরি করা হয়েছিল, তার মূল কেন্দ্র ছিল কাজিরখিলে। এর অধ্যক্ষ ছিলেন শ্রদ্ধেয় সতীশ দাশগুপ্ত। শিবিরগুলো ছিলো শ্রীরামপুর, রামগঞ্জ, দত্তপাড়া, খিলপাড়া, করপাড়া ইত্যাদি স্থানে।

এই সমস্ত শিবিরগুলোতেই গান্ধীজি গিয়েছিলেন। আমার আর বেলার কাজ ছিল হাইমচর হেডকোয়ার্টার ভিত্তিক। ত্রাণ শিবিরের বিভিন্ন কাজকর্ম ছাড়াও আমাদের আরও কিছু কাজ ছিলো। প্রথমত, আমাকে রোজ সকালে ঠককরজিকে প্রধান প্রধান বাংলা সংবাদগুলো ইংরাজি করে দিতে হত। ঠককরজি খুব

থাকত। আমি সেটার সম্পাদনা করতাম। আমাদের সহায়তা করত বেলা—এছাড়া বকুলদি এবং মনিকা বসু। পত্রিকাটা বার করতে আমাদের প্রচুর পরিশ্রম করতে হত। পরে এই পত্রিকা দেখেই সে সময়ের দৈনিক 'কৃষক' পত্রিকার বার্তা সম্পাদক ক্ষেমেন্দ্রমোহন সেন (স্বর্গীয় ক্ষিত্তিমোহন সেনের পুত্র এবং শ্রী অমর্ত্য সেনের মামা) আমাদের দুজনকে ওই পত্রিকায় সাব-এডিটর হিসেবে নিয়ে আসেন। আমার অনুমান বেলাই ভারতের প্রথম পেশাদার মহিলা সাংবাদিক।

আর বেলা খুব সুন্দর গান করত। ও গান শিখেছিল জর্জ বিশ্বাসের কাছে। সে কারণে, আমাদের গানের স্কোয়াডে বেলার একটা উল্লেখযোগ্য ভূমিকা থাকত। আমাদের গানের দল পরিচালনা করতেন শ্রদ্ধেয়া মালতী চৌধুরী— ওড়িশার প্রথম মুখ্যমন্ত্রী স্বর্গীয় নবকৃষ্ণ চৌধুরীর স্ত্রী। গান্ধীজি প্রথম নোয়াখালিতে পদার্পণ করলে বেদগান গেয়ে তাঁকে

স্বাগত জানানো হয়েছিলো। সেই দলে মালতী দেবীর পরিচালনায় আমি ছিলাম, বেলা ছিল, বকুলদি ছিলেন। সেই ছবিটা আমার কাছে ছিল। দুর্ভাগ্যবশত সেটা হারিয়ে গেছে। সংবাদপত্রে ছবিটা প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল। আমার কাছে নেহরুর সঙ্গে, সুচেতা কৃপালনীর সঙ্গে বেলায় ছবি ছিল—যেগুলো এখন আর নেই। আমার দুর্ভাগ্য যে সে ছবিগুলি আমি যথাযথভাবে সংরক্ষিত করতে পারিনি। তবে গান্ধীজির সঙ্গে বেলায় দুটো ছবি এখনও আমার ছেলে ধ্রুবর কাছে আছে। বসন্ত বেলা ছিল গান্ধীজির খুবই কাছের মানুষ।

নোয়াখালি, হাইমচরে গান্ধীজির সঙ্গে দেখা করতে এসেছিলেন নেহরু, ফজলুল হক প্রমুখ বড় বড় রাষ্ট্রনেতারা। ফজলুল হক কোট-প্যান্ট পরে গলায় একটা লাল জবা ফুলের মালা ঝুলিয়ে এসেছিলেন। কেন যে সেই মালাটা ঝুলিয়ে এসেছিলেন, তা আজও আমি বুঝতে পারিনি। তবে দৃশ্যটা ভাবলে এখনও আমার হাসি পায়। ফজলুল হক কিন্তু একজন বড় মাপের মানুষ ছিলেন। কলকাতায় একবার আমার সামনে তাঁর সারা দিনের ওকালতির উপার্জন কয়েক হাজার টাকা এক দরিদ্র ব্রাহ্মণের মেয়ের বিয়ের জন্য ওই দিন কোর্ট থেকে ফিরে এসেই দান করে দিয়েছিলেন। একটু বেশি আবেগপ্রবণ ছিলেন। তাই গান্ধীজি নোয়াখালি যাবার আগে কোনও এক জনসভায় আবেগে হক সাহেব বলে ফেলেছিলেন, “গান্ধীজি এখানে আইলে ওনারে খালে ছুঁইড়া ফালামু।” সাক্ষাতের সময় গান্ধীজি তাই তাঁকে বললেন “তোমাকে দেখলে যে আমার ভয় লাগে। আমাকে খালে ছুঁড়ে ফেলে দেবে না তো?” ফজলুল হক লজ্জিত হয়েছিলেন ও বলেছিলেন, “কি যে বলেন বাপুজি আপনাকে তো আমি মাথায় করে

রাখি।” সুচেতনা কৃপালনীজিকে একবার মৌলবাদী দুর্বৃত্তরা তাড়া করেছিলো। তিনি কোনোরকমে পালিয়ে বেঁচে গিয়েছিলেন। নোয়াখালিতে বহু বিখ্যাত ব্যক্তি ও রাষ্ট্রনেতারা ছাড়া অনেক বিদেশিরাও বাপুজীর সঙ্গে দেখা করতে আসতেন, যার মধ্যে ফরাসীরাই ছিল বেশি। তাঁদের সাক্ষাৎকারের ফলে বুঝতে পারলাম বাপুজী সামান্য ফরাসীও জানতেন।

তুলে নিয়ে যাওয়া হিন্দু মেয়েদের উদ্ধার করা এবং তাদের পুনর্বাসিত করাও আমাদের অন্যতম কাজ ছিল। এ ব্যাপারে আমরা ছাড়াও শ্রদ্ধেয় শচীন মিত্র, শ্রদ্ধেয়া অশোকা গুপ্ত, সুচেতা কৃপালনী প্রমুখেরাও বিশেষভাবে উদ্যোগী ছিলেন। তবে অবিবাহিতা হিন্দু মেয়েরা একবার মৌলবাদীদের হাতে চলে গেলে, আর ফিরে আসতে চাইত না— দু-একটি ব্যতিক্রম ছাড়া। কারণ হিন্দু সমাজ তাদের নিতে ইচ্ছুক ছিল না। তারাও আসতে সাহস পেত না। অশোকা গুপ্ত ছিলেন বরিশালের তদানীন্তন ডি এম বিখ্যাত আই সি এস শৈবাল গুপ্তের স্ত্রী। তিনি তাঁর স্বামীর বাংলা ছেড়ে দু-বছরের মেয়েকে কোলে নিয়ে বাপুর চালাঘর শরণার্থী শিবিরে থাকতেন এবং ত্রাণ-সংক্রান্ত কাজ করতেন। বাপু একবার বকুলদিকে কোনও একটা কাজে মাইল দুয়েক দূরের একটা গ্রামে পাঠান। বকুলদি যাবার সময় একটা শিশিতে বিষ ভরে নিয়ে ব্লাউসের ভিতর লুকিয়ে যাওয়ার তোড়জোড় করছিলেন। তাঁকে সঙ্গে একজন মাত্র পুরুষ সহকারী দেওয়া হয়েছিল। বাপু সেই শিশির ব্যাপারটা জানতে পারেন এবং জিজ্ঞেস করেন, কেন তিনি বিষের শিশি সঙ্গে নিয়ে যাচ্ছেন। বকুলদি বলেন, “যদি আমি দাঙ্গাকারীদের হাতে আক্রান্ত হই সেই ভেবে।” বাপু তাঁকে বলেন, “যে সাহসিকতার সঙ্গে

তুমি ওই শিশি সঙ্গে নিয়ে যাচ্ছ, সেই সাহস যদি তুমি তোমার অভিব্যক্তিতে (body language) ফুলিয়ে তুলতে পার, তাইলে কোনও বিপদই তোমাকে ছুঁতে পারবে না। যাও শিশিটা ফেলে দাও।” বকুলদি শিশিটা ফেলে দিয়েছিলেন এবং কাজটা সেরে সন্ধ্যা নাগাদ ফিরে এসেছিলেন। হাইমচরে বিরাট একটা সুপুরি আর শুকনো লক্ষার আন্তর্জাতিক বাজার ছিল। ঠিক এর পাশেই বসেছিলো আমাদের হাইমচর হেডকোয়ার্টার। হেডকোয়ার্টারের অধ্যক্ষ সতীশ দাশগুপ্তর গান্ধী-ভক্তি ছিল দেখবার মত। শিবিরের লঠনগুলোয় পর্যন্ত তিনি ‘বাবা’ চিহ্ন দিয়ে রাখতেন। লঠনগুলোর নাম করা থাকত— বাবা-১, বাবা-২, বাবা-৩ এইভাবে। ‘বাবা’ অর্থাৎ গান্ধীজি।

বেলা ছিল তেজস্বিনী, প্রতিভাময়ী এবং ওর

ভিতর ছিল প্রবল অনুপ্রেরণা। বেঁচে থাকলে ও আজ জাতীয় পর্যায়ের নেত্রী হয়ে উঠত—এটা আমি মনেপ্রাণে উপলব্ধি করি। ১৯৪৭ সালে সুরেশচন্দ্র ব্যানার্জির সভাপতিত্বে মুম্বাইতে আই এন টি ইউ সি-র প্রতিষ্ঠা হলে বেলা তার অন্যতম ন্যাশনাল কাউন্সিল সদস্য মনোনীত হয়। ওর মৃত্যু সংবাদ তখনকার সমস্ত সংবাদপত্রে প্রকাশিত হয়েছিলো। ওর অকালমৃত্যু তাই বিরাট একটা ক্ষতি আর শূন্যতার সৃষ্টি করে গেছে—শুধু আমাদের পরিবারের মধ্যেই নয়, পরিবারের বাইরেও।

অনুলেখক : গ্রুব বসু
(বেলা বসু ও জিতেশ বসুর পুত্র)

DIRECTOR-SECRETARY'S REPORT

on
the Programmes and Activities at
Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore
from January, 2020 to March, 2020

■ IN-HOUSE ACTIVITIES :

1. Celebration of Republic Day, 2020 (26.01.2020) :

Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore organized a Special Programme for Underprivileged Children to celebrate the 71st Republic Day on January 26, 2020.

The Sangrahalaya invited 50 Underprivileged Children of local and adjacent areas as Special Guests for



day-long programme on the Republic Day, 2020. At first the Children were visited the galleries of the museum and the staff members of the museum explained the stories of all exhibits of the



galleries and the children were also demonstrated the history of Republic Day. Some of the children also shared their knowledge regarding the Republic Day and Indian Freedom Movement to the Staff Members of the museum during their visit of the Museum.





After visiting the galleries they were shown a documentary film show on 'Role of Barrackpore in Indian Freedom Movement'.

The museum authority also arranged some special activities for the children through which they had learnt a lot of important things regarding the history of our national symbols, eminent personalities of our country, etc. and all children actively participated in all these activities.

The children presented their various talents through their pleasant performances in the cultural function events of the programme. At the end of the programme The Sangrahalaya selected the three winners for participating in several activities and provided prizes to all the participants of the programme.



2. Seminar on Significance of the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre (24.02.2020) :

Several Higher Educational Institutions, namely, Amdanga Jugal Kishore Mahavidyalaya, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Vivekananda Vidyabhavan, Rishi Bankim Chandra Evening College and Sarojini Naidu College for Women in association with Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore organized a Seminar on the Significance of the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre as a Tribute to the Martyrs of Jalianwala Bagh on its Centenary Year on February 24,





2020 at the auditorium of the Sangrahalaya. More than 100 students along with their teachers of these colleges were participated in the seminar.

The seminar was started by an opening song, performed by a student. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Pratik Ghosh, Director-Secretary of

the Sangrahalaya and he also delivered a visual presentation to the participants. The Key-note address was delivered by Professor Nirban Basu, Mahatma Gandhi Chair Professor, University of Calcutta. Professor Basu spoke on 'Looking Back: Contextualization of Jallianwalla Bagh in Historical Perspective'. Dr. Sunetra Mitra, Associate Professor of Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Vivekananda Vidyabhavan



was present as the Special Speaker and she delivered her lecture on 'State Power and Vengeance: Jalianwalla Bagh and the Present Time'.

In the second session of the seminar, the students from each of the participated institutions delivered their presentation on the topic of the seminar and the session was presided over by Professor Nirban



Basu. At the end of the seminar the Vote of Thanks was given by one of the Teacher of Amdanga Jugalkishore Mahavidyalaya.

The overall Seminar was conducted by Dr. Sukanya Sarkar, Associate Professor of Sarojini Naidu College for Women. On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the Seminar all the participants were provided the participation certificates.



3. National Seminar on Remembering of Mahatma Gandhi (03.03.2020) :



on March 3, 2020 at the premises of the Sangrahalaya. The Seminar was inaugurated by lighting the lamp by the delegates. Shri Narayan Basu,

Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore in collaboration with The Times Group, Kolkata organized a National Seminar on ‘Remembering Mahatma Gandhi: Ideology & Relevance in the Contemporary World’



Chairman of the Sangrahalaya presided over the Seminar and he delivered the presidential address. Dr. Pratik Ghosh, Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya delivered the Welcome Address. Smt.

Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee, Grand Daughter of Mahatma Gandhi and Chairperson of National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi delivered the



‘Key-note’ Address. Professor Saikat Maitra, Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology, Professor Nirban Basu, Mahatma Gandhi Chair Professor of University of Calcutta and Smt. Gouri Basu, Director, Eastern Zonal Cultural



Center, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India were present in the Seminar as the main Speakers. Dr. Aniruddha Majumdar, Director of The Sunday Times Group, Kolkata delivered the Vote of Thanks at the end of the Seminar.



■ Outreach Activities :

1. Programme at Gandhiji's Last Visited Place at Barrackpore (16.01.2020) :

On January 16, 2020, the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore reached at a historical place, named 'Debiprasad High School' of Barrackpore, where Mahatma Gandhi came to conduct a public meeting from Beliaghata 'Hydari Manjil'



during the communal frenzy of Bengal on August 19, 1947 and this was the last visit of Gandhiji at Barrackpore.

The Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya conducted an audio-visual spot quiz on life and activities of Mahatma



Gandhi for the students of that school and the mementos were provided to the winners of the quiz programme by the Sangrahalaya.

2. Participation in the Programme to Celebrate the 158th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda (17.01.2020) :

Sri Ramakrishna Samiti Barrackpore organized a programme on January 17, 2020 to celebrate the 158th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda and they invited Dr. Pratik Ghosh, Director-Secretary of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya as Chief Guest.



The Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya delivered his speech on 'Relevance of Swami Vivekananda for Today and Tomorrow' in this occasion.



3. Participation in the International Kolkata Book Fair 2020 (29.01.2020-09.02.2020) :

Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore held a Stall (Stall No. F-12) in International Kolkata Book Fair 2020 from January 29 to February 9, 2020 at Central Park, Saltlake, Kolkata.

In the stall of the Sangrahalaya at International Kolkata Book Fair, 2020, a short glimpse of Mahatma Gandhi's Last Peace Mission was presented to



bring before the present generation that eventful episode. The last 2 years of Mahatma Gandhi's epic life has been aptly described by Louis Fischer, his



American Biographer, as "Pilgrim's Progress". The period between October, 1946 and 30 January, 1948 portrays an unprecedented, unique saga of one man's effort to rouse the



conscience of a section of erring people engaged in internecine fighting. The Sangrahalaya organized such special exhibition through various rare photographs and write-ups related to Gandhiji's Noakhali Peace Mission, Communal frenzy in Bihar and Kolkata during 1946-47. It was a humble tribute of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore to the lasting memory of the Great Soul.

A Special Photo Album composed of 100 photographs on life and activities of Mahatma Gandhi was also displayed in the stall. Gandhiji's Bengali hand writing and letters written by Gandhiji with left and right hands and some Replicas of originally used articles of Gandhiji were also exhibited in the stall.



The various important books on Gandhiji and the books written by Gandhiji and some memorable mementos, model of Charkha, Dvds, etc were also available in the stall.

Many Eminent Personalities such as, Mr. Chowna Mein, Honourable Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Shri

Purnendu Basu, Honourable Minister in Charge, Department of Technical Training and Skill Development, Govt. of West Bengal, Professor Saikat Moitra, Honourable Vice-Chancellor of Maulana Abul Kakam Azad University of Technology, Professor Uday



Bandhopadhyay, Director of Bose Institute, and many more Academic Personalities had come to visit the Stall.

The general visitors were also thrilled to visit the stall and viewed the exhibition and purchased the various publications related to Mahatma Gandhi.



4. Participation in the Programme, organized by Garulia Shiv Shishu Vikash Kendra, North 24 Parganas (09.03.2020) :

Garulia Shiv Shishu Vikash Kendra, a children welfare organisation in North 24 Parganas district honoured the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Barrackpore on March 9, 2020 by providing the Swami



Vivekananda Award 2020 under the award category of Best Historical Awareness for Sangrahalaya's outstanding contribution to the society.



■ GROUP VISIT :

1. On January 31, 2020 112 NCC Cadets from 7/1 GR, 56 APO, Barrackpore came to visit the Sangrahalaya and they were provided with a guided tour to explain the exhibits of the gallery of the Sangrahalaya.
2. A group of 99 NCC Cadets of 6 Assam Dept. of Barrackpore came to visit the Sangrahalaya on February 2, 2020. They were provided with a guided tour of the galleries and shown the documentary titled "Muktir Banhisikha" – Role of Barrackpore in Indian Freedom Movement.
3. On February 13, 2020, 130 students of Kankinara Himayatul Ghurba High School along with 15 teachers visited the Sangrahalaya for their educational excursion



purpose. They were provided a guided tour of Sangrahalaya and after visiting all the galleries a documentary film show was also shown to them. One of their teacher commented in visitors' book 'Memorable visit at the place'.

4. A group of 120 students with their teachers of NCP Umasashi High School of Barrackpore visited the Sangrahalaya on February 13, 2020. The students were visited the galleries of the Sangrahalaya with proper guide service. They had



enjoyed a lot to see the documentary film show on Indian Freedom Movement. After visiting the Sangrahalaya one of their teacher of the Institution remarked 'Memorable'.

5. A group of 54 students of Dept. of Bengali of Bhangar Mahavidyalaya along with their teachers from South 24 Parganas district visited the Sangrahalaya on February 14, 2020.



6. About 130 students of Shyamnagar Kani Chandra High School of North 24 Parganas Districts visited the Sangrahalaya for their educational excursion



purpose on February 14, 2020. They were provided the guide service to explain the exhibits of the museum and a documentary film show was also shown to them. One of their teacher commented in the visitors' book 'Very Good'.



7. A group of 66 students along with 21 teachers of Shri Ram Krishna Sikshalaya of Howrah district came to visit the Sangrahalaya on February 28, 2020. They were provided with a guided tour of the galleries. After visiting the Sangrahalaya one of the teachers remarked '*Museum is well maintained & equipped. Had a memorable visit*'.

8. A group of 31 students along with their teachers from Nawabgunj Balika Vidyalaya, Ichhapur visited the Sangrahalaya on March 5, 2020. After visiting the galleries a documentary film show on Indian Freedom Movement was shown to them.

support, it has brought alive the life and times of Gandhiji and his connection with Bengal. The audio-visual room will provide great learning to students and scholars. The attach library is a treasure trove with so much materials. The model of Sabarmati Ashram with Gandhiji spinning is most realistic. A must visit for all”.

3. Shri Laxmi Ratan Shukla, Honorable Minister of State, Department of Youth Services & Sports, Govt. of West Bengal and former Indian Cricketer and former Captain of Bengal Cricket Team,



visited the Sangrahalaya on March 5, 2020. He had provided the guided tour at the Sangrahalaya and the Director Secretary of the Sangrahalaya

explained the detail information about all the exhibits to him. A short documentary on Roll of Barrackpore in Indian Freedom



Movement was also shown to him. At the end of the visit he delivered his opinion about the Museum through a video message to all kind of people, which was uploaded in Sangrahalaya's Face Book account.

4. Smt. Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee, Granddaughter of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Chairperson of National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi came to the Sangrahalaya to deliver the Key-note address in



National Seminar on ‘Remembering Mahatma Gandhi: Ideology & Relevance in the Contemporary World’ on March 3, 2020. She visited the Sangrahalaya on March 5, 2020. She was provided with a



guided tour by the Director-Secretary of the Sangrahalaya and after visiting the Museum she commented on visitors’ book “*The visit has been very spiritually moving experience. I am*



full of admiration to gratitude as a citizen of the country. It has been privilege to be received by Respected Shri Narayan Basu on the bank of river Ganga at the Gandhi



Smarak Sangrahalaya. I am grateful to all the hospitality arranged by Dr. Pratik and his friends – I will come back”.

VISITORS' BOOK			
Sl. No.	Name	Address	Remarks
01	Dr. Pratik
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Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Kolkata on 13th August, 1947. There he stayed in Hyderi Manzil, Beliaghata for 25 days, leaving on 6th September 1947. Known as Gandhi Bhawan now, this house in Beliaghata stands a silent witness to a tumultuous chapter of our history.

Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya

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