

A Restless Crusader for Human Freedoms

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Vithal Mahadeo Tarkunde (VMT) was born on July 3, 1909 at Saswad in Pune District. His father Mahadeo Rajaram Tarkunde was a popular lawyer practicing at Saswad, the headquarters of Purandar Taluka adjoining Pune. He was an idealist and a social reformer. Having come from the poorest of poor families he secured the appointment of a judgeship because he stood first in the Pleaders Examination, but gave up the Sub-Judge's job in order to be free to do social service. He organised the Malis (peasant-gardeners) of the Taluka for bettering their mode of cultivation. He did not observe untouchability. The Tarkunde family, which belonged to a small sub-caste of Brahmins, was therefore ostracised by the orthodox Brahmins. Mahadeo Tarkunde had four sons and one daughter, the youngest. He enabled his children to have the best of education. VMT was the second son. The eldest son Appasaheb was a B.A. (Oxford) and practiced as a leading lawyer at Pune. Appasaheb's wife was one of the earliest

lady lawyers in India. If Appasaheb was an active Congressman his wife was a Hindu Mahasabhaite. The third and fourth sons qualified themselves as an Engineer and Doctor respectively and settled at Nagpur. The daughter became a Radiologist and is settled in London.

For nearly eight decades since his days in school at Pune, VMT acted as a consistent and persistent crusader for protection and promotion of human freedoms in various fields of his life, whether as a student, in India and England, a freedom fighting Congressman a Congress Socialist, a Royist, a prominent Member of the Radical Democratic Party, a lawyer, Judge, Jurist, Constitutional Lawyer, a human rights activist, a social reformer, an intellectual, a grassroot worker and so on.

In 1920 VMT migrated from Saswad to Pune for High School education. He joined the famous New English School founded by Tilak and Agarkar with the object of inculcating spirit of patriotism and social service among the youth. VMT had S.

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M. Joshi, R. K. Khadilkar and D. P. Shikhare as his classmates in the school. N. G. Gore was also his schoolmate. All these students were brilliant and except Shikhare all entered politics. They were all inspired by the national movement for independence. Gandhiji was their hero. Shikhare was required to join judicial service because he had to look after the education of his younger brother; he was finally elevated as Judge of the Bombay High Court. He remained a close and intimate friend of VMT, till he passed away as a sitting Judge of the High Court. Even at the tender age VMT had critical intelligence. He addressed a long letter to Gandhiji questioning the efficacy of prayers. Gandhiji replied to him on a postcard as usual. VMT was not satisfied with Gandhiji's explanation. He sent a polite rejoinder to him. But there was no response.

In the Matriculation examination of 1925 held by the Bombay University for the erstwhile Bombay Presidency VMT stood first. He also secured the prestigious Jagannath Shankershetth Scholarship for Sanskrit, which was divided between him and his friend D. P. Shikhare. VMT still recites passages from Kalidasa. Such a brilliant student was expected in those days to pursue academic studies and ultimately to compete for the ICS. But young VMT made it clear to his father that he will not accept Government service, but will serve the people. A former English Principal of the Agricultural College of Pune, the only one in the Presidency, took a fancy for the young boy. As nearly 80 percent of the Indian People lived in villages on agriculture, VMT decided to join the Agricultural College for the B.Ag Course. He stood first class in all the examinations of B.Ag.

After completing B.Ag. in 1929, VMT was keen to visit England for qualifying himself as a Barrister-at-law, so that on return he would not be required to take up a service but could practice as a lawyer and also serve the people. He was also keen to study the life in England. He could not fulfil his dream unless he secured a refundable loan-Scholarship on condition he studied for ICS. He

had to accept the condition willy-nilly. But in London he studied for ICS, attended the Lincoln's Inn and qualified as a Barrister. He was also keen to join the London School of Economics (LSE), but could not for a technical reason, as he did not have the time to undertake the study of another European language. Therefore he enrolled himself as an external student in the L.S.E. and attended lectures in economics, political science and social anthropology. But he was not entitled to get a degree from L.S.E.

On completion of his studies in England Tarkunde returned to India in December 1932. By then he had ceased to be a Gandhian and had become a convinced Marxist on studying the same in England. On his return he found all his school friends S. M. Joshi, Khadilkar and Gore were in jail as they participated in the Non-Co-operation Movement. After their release they joined the newly formed Congress Socialist Party (CSP) which was a party within the Indian National Congress. In or about the end of 1934 Tarkunde joined the Congress as well as the C. S. P. on the same day.

As a Barrister Tarkunde commenced his legal practice in Pune. As a leftist Congressman he devoted 15 days in a month by working among the peasants in adjoining rural areas of Purandar Taluka. In view of his such intensive work he was elected a member of the AICC from that area, by defeating a veteran Congressman like Shankarrao Deo who was then a Congress Working Committee member. During his work in the area he found the local Congressman were connected with local moneylenders and traders. His study of agriculture as a graduate of Agriculture and of Economics in London, he was able to explain to the poor agriculturists, labourers and artisans that their poverty could not be alleviated because of British imperialism and Indian vested interests.

In the meantime Tarkunde was introduced by a Royist D. B. Karnik to the writings of M. N. Roy that were smuggled out of jail as M. N. Roy was undergoing imprisonment for six years on

conviction in the Cawnpore Conspiracy case, Roy was pleading for radicalising the Congress, to free it from Gandhian obscurantism and to open congress committees in every village that would ultimately overthrow the imperialist Government by forming "a State within the State".

M. N. Roy was released from jail on November 20, 1936 whereupon he joined the Congress. A number of young men and women who were impressed by the ideas and plan of action of Roy were working inside the Congress and were known as Royists. Tarkunde was finally disillusioned with the CSP as they voted against Subhash Chandra Bose at the Tripura Congress in January 1939 and in favour of the candidate put up by Gandhian leadership. Tarkunde therefore parted the company of the CSP and formally joined the Roy group. In April 1939 the Royists formed inside the Congress a group called the League of Radical Congressmen (LRC) (vide "Why I left the Congress" in "Through Humanist Eyes" by VMT).

The growing and promising work of the members of the LRC as Congressmen among the peasantry, middle and working classes was disrupted by the outbreak of world War 2 on September 1, 1939. Contrary to official Congress stand of opposition to India supporting the British in the War, Roy and his colleagues were of the view that if the Fascist forces won the war there would be no hope for any people of the world including the colonies of becoming free, whereas if the Allies won British Imperialism would emerge as economically bankrupt and as the Allies fought the war against the Fascists for freedom, the colonial powers will be under political and economic pressure to confer independence to the people of the colonies. Consistent with this war theses called "India and War" propounded by Roy, members of the LRC exhorted the Indian people to support the Allies in the war efforts. Some of the members of the LRC were therefore expelled from the Congress. The Central Executive Committee of the LRC resolved at a meeting held at Meerut on October 26-27, 1940 to function as an independent party.

They formed the Radical Democratic Party (RDP) which was inaugurated in Bombay at the end of December 1940. Tarkunde left the Congress and joined the RDP. In 1940 he married Chitra (nee Dwarka Valimbe of Ahmednagar) who had joined the group while studying for M. A. in Pune. Since then both husband and wife did not look back, but devoted themselves wholly to the Royist Movement.

Roy's writings, ideas and plan of action of a revolution in India were so appealing, he gathered a large number of intelligent persons as his colleagues all over India, more particularly in Bombay, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and Madras. Tarkunde was one of them. He rose to heights in the Royist movement due to his clear thinking and work at the grassroots. In 1944 he was called upon to become the General secretary of the RDP. Earlier in 1942 he had left his legal practice and become a whole time worker of the RDP on a nominal honorarium of Rs.150 per month for himself and his wife. He shifted to Delhi with his wife to function effectively as General secretary of the RDP and held that office till the RDP voluntarily dissolved itself at a conference held at Calcutta in December 1948, and decided to function as a movement. By 1948 Roy and his colleagues had come to the conclusion that political parties were harmful to the development of democracy, that communism had degenerated into totalitarianism and therefore evolved the philosophy of New Humanism, which later came to be known as Radical Humanism.

Wartime was one of the most trying times for Roy and his colleagues. They had to swim against the strong current of Indian Nationalism that could not see beyond its nose. Congress nationalists did not consider what would be conditions of the Indian people, if the Japanese who were already in Burma walked over the Indian subcontinent and Romel, the Nazi Desert Fox pushed to the East beyond North Africa. The record of the Japanese in Asian Countries, which they conquered, was most heinous and cruel. Under

them or the Fascists, Indians would never be free. Roy and his colleagues had to fight with their backs to the wall in trying to convince the Indian people that if the Allies won the war there was every possibility of their securing independence from the colonial power, through speeches, study classes, writings and all possible means. *The Independent India Weekly* founded by Roy in April 1937 was a powerful means of spreading this message. Tarkunde, like other Radicals, wrote in the Weekly regularly.

As by the end of 1942 Roy was certain that the tide of the war had turned against the Axis powers, he urged upon the Indian people to be prepared for transfer of power by the British and think in advance of an Economic Plan for development and of a Constitution of free India guaranteeing freedoms and development of the Indian people as a whole. The Indian Capitalists had already come out with an Economic Plan called the Tata-Birla Plan for development in which the Swadeshi capitalists were to predominate more. Therefore, the Indian Federation of Labour, which was a labour wing founded by the Royists during the war appointed a Committee of which Tarkunde was the convenor and Prof. G. D. Parikh and B. N. Banerjee were members for formulating an economic Plan as an alternative to the Tata-Birla Plan. The Committee came out with an Economic Plan, described as People's Plan, which was largely prepared by Prof. Parikh under Roy's guidance, and which placed emphasis on development and modernisation of agriculture and abolition of landlordism with a view to place more purchasing power in the hands of more than 70 percent of the people engaged in agriculture, thereby increasing gainful employment and giving an impetus to industrial growth. It also placed emphasis on small scale industry and primary needs of the people like elementary education, food, clothing, health care etc., which is being advocated by Nobel Laureate Prof. Amartya Sen. The said objectives are still not achieved for 50 years after independence. Roy also prepared a Draft Constitution of Free India providing for a pyramidal state based on a foundation

of network of local people's committees having wide powers of initiating legislation, of referendum and recall of elected representatives among others. Tarkunde was in the forefront in advocating among the people the basic human freedoms embodied in the People's Plan and Draft constitution and is still engaged in the same.

By 1946 Roy had come to the conclusion that Communism had failed in achieving the avowed objectives of freeing the people and it was necessary to go beyond communism. He was also of the view that parliamentary democracy based on atomised and unorganised individuals and political parties indulging in unscrupulous scramble for power had also failed. He therefore evolved an alternative in the form of 22 Theses explaining the same in a book entitled *New Humanism- A Manifesto*. In evolving this new philosophy, Roy deliberated with his colleagues including Tarkunde. In 1946 Roy founded a research Institute called Indian Renaissance Institute (IRI) with the principal objective of rescuing and popularising the positive contributions of India's past and bringing about a renaissance in modern India similar to the one that took place after medieval period in Europe. Tarkunde is now the only surviving founder trustee among the Trustees of IRI.

Consistent with the philosophy of New Humanism and its postulates that political parties were not appropriate instruments for promoting human freedoms and a real democracy, Roy in consultation with his colleagues decided to dissolve the RDP founded on his initiative. Accordingly at an All India Conference held at Calcutta in December 1948, the RDP was dissolved voluntarily. The Radicals were free to function on their own as friends, philosophers and guides of the people, to educate the people to be self-reliant and build a rational, secular and democratic society.

In anticipation of the ensuing dissolution of the RDP, Tarkunde recommenced his legal practice, this time in the Bombay High Court by settling in Bombay, in June 1948. As his contacts were

mostly in the mofussils, he could start his practice on the Appellate Side of the High Court only, through an advocate. I had just passed LL.B in 1948 and I was already an active member of the RDP since 1945, when I was studying in the Elphinstone college. One D. V. Chittal Radical friend suggested to me that Tarkunde was in need of a junior Advocate and I should join him as his Assistant. I enrolled as an Advocate in March 1949 and started legal practice in the High Court on the Appellate side as Tarkunde's junior. It was a great fulfillment to work with Tarkunde as his junior. His approach to any case was very original and he would go to the root of the case. Soon after joining him he literally pushed me in the Court of Chief Justice Chagla and encouraged me to argue on my own with the help of notes prepared by him. In January 1950 the Constitution of India came into force under which we could file Writ Petitions in the High Court. It gave me a great opportunity to draft Writ Petitions under the guidance of Tarkunde. By about 1953 another Radical Humanist, C. R. Dalvi, joined him as junior. Both of us settled as Advocates in the High Court, Appellate Side, under the guidance of Tarkunde.

When Tarkunde commenced his practice in the Bombay High Court it was presided over by a great Chief Justice Mr. M. C. Chagla. The High Court had also other eminent Judges like Bavdekar, Gajendragadkar, Rajadhyakshya, Tendolker and J. C. Shah. Within a couple of years Tarkunde made his mark as an Advocate on account of his brilliance, originality and hard work. Once while arguing an original side matter before Justice Tendolker, Tarkunde appearing for the Respondent answered every query put by the Judge. Counsel for the Appellant supposed to know all facts of the case asked in surprise with generosity "How is it my learned Friend knows facts which I do not know"? Justice Tendolker replied "Mr. So and so Mr. Tarkunde reads his briefs".

Within nine years of his regular practice in the High Court, Chief Justice Chagla decided to elevate him to the Bench and extended him the

invitation in 1957. In those days it was a convention to accept the call from the Chief Justice, unless the Advocate had any political ambitions. Financially it was a great sacrifice, as the salary of a High Court Judge was then pegged down to a miserable amount of Rs.3500/- only under the Constitution without any perks except a bungalow. Tarkunde accepted the offer and was elevated to the Bench. I am not going to record his contribution as a Judge, as it is referred to by the Advocates who practiced before him, in their articles in this book. I would only say that he brought to bear on his decisions and judgments his commitment to human freedoms particularly in cases relating to violation of fundamental rights embodied in our Constitution and in cases in which interests of women, minors and weaker sections of the society were involved. He was an ideal Judge in Habeas Corpus cases. The Bench of Tarkunde and Madon released Bal Thackeray detained under the Preventive Detention Act in or about 1969, after perhaps the first and one of the worst riots by Shiv Sainiks in Bombay. On the suggestion of the Court Thackeray offered to tender apology in exchange for release, but the Government did not accept the offer. I represented the state as Assistant Government Pleader. Advocates loved to appear before him in writ Petitions involving Constitutional issues that required original approach and in service cases that required patience to wade through labyrinth of service circulars and orders.

As Advocate, Tarkunde settled with his wife in a small apartment in Ratilal Mansion Parekh Street, Bombay 4 as a neighbour of V. B. Karnik a veteran Radical Humanist and a renowned Trade Unionist, a premises well known as office of the Indian Federation of Labour (IFL). The Ratilal Mansion premises still attracted a number of Radicals. At Ratilal Mansion Tarkunde got the gift of a sweet daughter named Manik. She is now an Advocate practicing in the Supreme Court along with her husband Raian Karanjawala.

In Maharashtra and Bombay there were leading Radical Humanists like Laxman Shastri Joshi, V. B. Karnik, Maniben Kara, D. B. Karnik, J. B. H.

Wadia, Prof. G. D. Parikh, H. R. Mahajani, Prof. A. B. Shah, Dr. Indumati Parikh, Prof. G. R. Dalvi, Pimpalkhare, W. S. Kane and a few youngsters. For sometime Prof. Sibnarayan Ray of Calcutta took a professorship in a Bombay College of which Prof. A. B. Shah was the Principal. After dissolution of the RDP Radicals were free to work as Radical Humanists in any field they chose. They excelled themselves in the fields they chose. Laxman Shastri as a man of Renaissance carried on his work of research in our heritage, V. B. Karnik, Maniben, Pimpalkhare S. R. Kulkarni and several others concentrated on trade union activities. Mahajani and D. B. Karnik were the founder editors of the two leading Marathi dailies of Bombay. Prof. G. D. Parikh, G. R. Dalvi A. B. Shah and Sibnarayan Ray excelled themselves in the academic field. A. B. Shah founded new institutions like Indian Secular Society. J. B. H. Wadia was already an accredited film maker. Dr. Indumati Parikh founded a prestigious women's organisation known as Streechitakarini for working women of the poor classes which is still flourishing Tarkunde and Kane concentrated on legal practice. They founded Bombay Renaissance Club Along with his legal practice, Tarkunde, like other Radicals, was engaged in propagating and practicing the principles of Radical Humanism.

Similarly Radical Humanists were working on their own all over India. C. T. Daru and Dashratlal Thakkar continued their trade Union activities with other Radicals in Gujarat. Daru became a leading labour lawyer in Gujarat. He used to entrust his legal work in the Bombay High Court to Tarkunde and his juniors. Daru was so brilliant and original in the labour litigation that Tarkunde prevailed upon him to enroll as Advocate of the High Court and argue the cases himself. In fact when Gujarat was formed as a separate State in 1960, Daru enrolled as Advocate and argued his cases in the Gujarat High Court. Within a few years he excelled not only as a leading lawyer but as a Constitutional lawyer arguing important cases in the High Court and the Supreme Court. He was also a leading light of the R. H. Movement.

The Radical Humanists spread in different parts of India, with greater concentration in Maharashtra, Gujrat, Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi U. P. and Bihar, kept in touch with each other. All India Study Camps, which was one of the distinguishing features of the Royist Movement since the inception, now organised under the auspices of the IRI founded by Roy in 1946, was one of the platforms where the Radical Humanists met, exchanged their experiences and planned future course of actions. As long as Tarkunde was an advocate, he freely took leading part in the study camps. The Independent India Weekly founded by Roy in April 1937 (the name of which altered to Radical Humanist (RH) after independence) was another link between the Radical Humanists. Roy edited the journal till he passed away on January 25, 1954. There after his wife Ellen Roy edited it, till she met a tragic end in 1960. The weekly had a journey from place to place. Started in Bombay in April 1937, it was shifted to Delhi during the war, brought back to Bombay in 1948 with V. B. Karnik as its Managing Editor and was then conducted from Calcutta by the Bengal Radical Humanists from 1950 to 1969 with Anath Mitra as Manager inspite of heavy odds.

Being a Judge of the High Court there were constraints on Tarkunde from functioning as a Radical Humanist. The judicial discipline required that he did not participate in any movements or express views on controversial issues. Though the R. H. Movement was not a political platform, it had views on political issues. After functioning as a Judge for twelve years Tarkunde prematurely retired on September 15, 1969 and shifted his residence to Delhi with his wife and daughter and started literally from scratch practice in the Supreme Court.

On freeing himself from the self-imposed restraints of Judgeship he took upon himself the task of organising and reactivating the Radical Humanists spread all over India. In his discussion with some of the leading Radical Humanists, it transpired that there was a necessity of forming some

kind of a loose organisation for co-ordinating the activities of the Radical Humanists working as individuals. They therefore convened an All India Conference at Delhi of Radical Humanists on October 30, and November 1, 1969. The Conference attended by about 80 delegates resolved to form an All India organisation then known as Radical Humanist Association (RHA). The RHA was not another political party. The main task of Radical Humanists was to bring about a cultural renaissance in the country so as to create the conditions for the success of democratic institutions, as embodied in the statement presented by Tarkunde to the Conference. The Conference framed rules and regulations of the RHA. It elected an Executive Council of 15 members comprising Prem Nath Bazaz, C. T. Daru, Dr. Niranjana Das, V. B. Karnik, Suyash Malik, Prof. R. L. Nigam, Prof. G. D. Parikh, S. N. Puri, M. V. Rammurthi, Ram Singh, Prof. A. B. Shah, V. M. Tarkunde, and a few others. The Executive Council elected Tarkunde as President and C. T. Daru and Suyash Malik as Secretaries of RHA. They also co-opted Maniben Kara and M. L. Sen as Members of the Executive Council. Thus Tarkunde had the cooperation of leading members of the R. H. Movement for carrying on the activities of the RHA.

The Conference also placed on record its appreciation of the efforts and personal sacrifices of those who were concerned with the production of the Radical Humanist Weekly at Calcutta, resolved to shift it to Delhi, to convert it into a monthly with Tarkunde as its Editor and Premnath Bazaz as its Managing Editor. In the first issue of the monthly brought out in April 1970 Tarkunde wrote the editorial under the title "A Great Tradition" with the opening paragraph as follows:

"This journal has inherited a great tradition, established by its founder, M. N. Roy. The tradition consists of a passionate pursuit of the ideals of freedom and justice. It also consists of rational and scientific thinking, and the intellectual integrity which is required for swimming against the current and arriving at conclusions contrary to pre-

vailing opinion. The tradition is further characterised by fearless exposure of those time-honoured ideas, and established doctrines which hinder the path of social progress. In the relative cultural backwardness of our people, it is inevitable that popular sentiment often conflicts with public good. It is, therefore, an essential feature of this journal's tradition that it should be always ready to champion causes which are opposed to current sentiment but which require to be popularised in the public interest".

Just as Tarkunde started his legal practice in the Supreme Court from a scratch, he also started the RH monthly from a scratch. In the initial stages he financed the publication from his personal earnings as a lawyer. After sometime the office of the RH was transferred to his residence in Delhi, where his wife Chitratai looked after its actual management. In running the monthly Tarkunde had the able assistance of veteran Radical Humanists of Delhi, like Prem Nath Bazaz, Ram Singh a journalist, Prof. Nigam, Dr. G. R. Dalvi an Economist who had settled in Delhi as Executive Director All India Management Association, Vimal Prasad Jain, C. R. M. Rao, Suyash Malik, and Vinod Jain. Some more joined later like Gauri Bazaz Malik and Sunil Bhattacharya, who joined the RHA after reading Roy's literature independently. N. D. Pancholi, was the Associate Editor for a number of years. They met at the residence of Tarkunde on a Sunday in a month, when Chitratai played a kind host, They planned the next issue of the RH on current issues or on ideological problems. He encouraged a band of regular writers for the RH. Different features were introduced in the journal from time to time. After some years two special issues of the RH were brought out in a year in the months of April and October on specific subjects of public importance. The special issues could secure advertisements from friends and sympathisers of the journal since it could not attract regular advertisements. Life Subscribers were enrolled so as to have a regular list of subscribers. Life subscriptions were set apart and invested in bonds and fixed deposits. The journal collected a permanent fund in the form of life

subscriptions and donations in the neighbourhood of Rs.10 lacs. Thus the RH became self-sufficient. From January 1998 publication of the RH was transferred to Mumbai with Justice R. A. Jahagirdar, former Judge of the Bombay High Court, as its Associate Editor and C. R. Dalvi as its publisher. After functioning as Editor of The Radical Humanist for nearly 29 years and improving its quality, Tarkunde has now expressed an intention to step down as its editor and requested the Trustees of the IRI which owns the journal, to relieve him so that an able editor may take it over as its editor, during his lifetime. He will not cease writing for the journal during his lifetime. Today the RH is in the 62nd year of its uninterrupted publication and one of the prestigious periodicals of the country in view of the quality of articles published therein.

Tarkunde was the President of the IRHA since its foundation in 1970 to 1984. He was also the Chairman of the IRI from 1970 to 1993. Under the auspices of both the institutions several projects for strengthening democracy in India were taken and a number of books and booklets were published. To coincide with the birth centenary of M. N. Roy in 1987, a project for publishing Selected Works of M. N. Roy was taken up with Prof. Sibnarayan Ray as its editor. So far four volumes of the Selected Works have been published by the Oxford University Press. At least three more volumes are still to be published.

Under the auspices of the IRI and IRHA a number of books have been published. In 1977 an Expert Committee set up by the IRI prepared and published a plan of economic development called People's Plan 2, in the light of experience gathered after the publication of the People's Plan published in 1944. Tarkunde was the Convenor of the expert committee comprising renowned economists like Dr. G. R. Dalvi and others.

Tarkunde has written profusely. They are mostly in the form of articles, speeches, contributions to seminars, or newspapers, most of which are published in the RH. His schedule as a prac-

ticing Advocate and in public activities was so heavy, he had no time to write any book. In 1983, he was persuaded by W. S. Kane to write a definitive book on Radical Humanism, as much time had passed since M. N. Roy brought out his works. During the summer of 1983, Tarkunde wrote a book entitled "*Radical Humanism- The Philosophy of Freedom and Democracy*". He revised it in 1991 and both the editions were published by Ajanta Publications Delhi.

Regular biennial conferences of RHA were held and fresh programme of activities were planned. Now Dr. Indumati Parikh is the President of the Indian Radical Humanist Association (IRHA) and Dr. Gauri Bazaz Malik is the Chairperson of the IRI. Both the institutions along with a few more Rationalist and Humanist organisations of India have sponsored in India the 14th World Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) on Humanism for Human Development and Happiness. It was held for the first time in Asia since its foundation in 1952 with M. N. Roy as one of its founders. IRHA is affiliated to IHEU. The Congress was held in Mumbai from January 10 to 14, 1999 at the newly constructed M. N. Roy Human Development Campus, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East) Mumbai. 400050. The Congress was attended by about 650 Delegates from different parts of the world. Tarkunde was the chairman of the National Consultative Committee for the Congress. Even during his 90th year Tarkunde took active part in the deliberations of the world Congress of the IHEU. Mr. Levy Fragell President of the IHEU declared that this was "by far the best world Congress" of the International body. Indumati Parikh President of the IRHA was profusely thanked for the success of the Congress.

The role of Tarkunde as a restless crusader for human freedoms cannot be complete without recording his role in founding nonparty organisations for eradication of corruption, for strengthening democratic values and institutions and protecting human freedoms including civil liberties, his brave resistance to the Emergency rule

and his functioning in the Supreme Court and society as a senior advocate and jurist.

When Tarkunde migrated to New Delhi by the end of 1969, Indira Gandhi was chosen as Prime Minister after the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri by the Congress Syndicate by sidetracking Morarji Desai. During the 1967 General Elections to Parliament and in most of the States, the political supremacy of the Congress had eroded. Ultimately in 1969 Indira succeeded in bringing about a split in the Congress, in isolating the Syndicate and forming her own Congress (Indira) outfit. She came out with the slogan '*Garibi Hatao*' and got the support of the left. She secured a thumping majority for Congress (I) in the elections to Parliament of 1971. The success in the 1971 War against Pakistan and getting Bangladesh carved out as an independent State, catapulted her to the zenith of popularity.

With such popularity, Mrs. Gandhi could have successfully taken up people oriented programmes of eradication of poverty, of providing basic education, health care, and other basic needs of the people and of creating increasing opportunity of gainful employment to the people. Instead, being paranoid of her rivals, she was obsessed with the object of concentrating all power in her hands and of her lumpen son Sanjay Gandhi, who became an extra-constitutional authority. She began to destroy one by one all democratic institutions such as the Congress Party, the Parliament, the cabinet and even the Judiciary. She engineered denigration of the judiciary and in particular the Supreme Court for the decision in Golaknath case. She created an unreal controversy as to whether the Parliament or the Judiciary was supreme. The Judiciary was condemned as being property minded and supporter of vested interests. She and her son resorted to corrupt practices in collecting huge amounts of black money for contesting elections whether at the centre or in the States. During the tenure of Justice Sikri as Chief Justice of India (CJI) Mrs. Gandhi through her Law Minister succeeded in taking the initiative of suggesting

names for appointment of convenient Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, contrary to the convention followed since enforcement of the Constitution that the Government invariably accepted the recommendations of the CJI. Mrs. Gandhi's Government began to function in contravention of the convention. The last stroke by Mrs. Gandhi in undermining the independence of the Judiciary was to supersede three seniormost Judges of the Supreme Court on the day CJI Sikri retired on April 24, 1973 after pronouncing the judgment of the 13 Judge Bench in the Keshavanand Bharati case which overruled Golaknath case but held by a majority that Parliament had no power to damage the basic features of the Constitution in exercise of its power of Constitutional amendment. On the same day in the evening the Government of India declared the appointment of Justice S. N. Ray the 4th Judge in seniority as the CJI from 25th April 1973, superseding the three senior most Judges.

It was not difficult for Tarkunde to realise the sinister implications of the aforesaid and similar other developments. He relentlessly criticised the said developments through the columns of the RH and the platforms of the IRI and IRHA and other media and forums available to him. On April 25, 1973 an overwhelming majority of the Lawyers in India condemned the supercession as being tantamount to undermining the independence of the Judiciary and abstained from working in Court for the day. In August 1973 the Bar Association of India convened in new Delhi a conference of eminent retired Judges, Jurists and Lawyers including Justice J. C. Shah, Justice M. C. Chagla, M. C. Setalvad, C. K. Daftary, V. M. Tarkunde, Jethmalani, Fali Nariman, Soli Sorabjee, Ashok Desai and others. Deliberating for two days on the issues arising out of the supercession the conference passed a resolution demanding constitution of a high-power collegium presided over by the CJI for appointment and promotion of Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts and for transfer of Judges of the High Courts.

This issue had a chequered judicial history.

Ultimately in answer to a reference made by the President of India the Supreme Court confirmed its decision of 1993 and held that the aforesaid functions should be exercised by a collegium comprising the CJI and his four senior most Judges of the Supreme Court. An amendment of the Constitution on the line of a Bill moved by the late Dinesh Goswami, then Law Minister in the Janata Dal Government in 1979, would have been a more satisfactory arrangement. The Bill lapsed with the fall of the Government. In any case according to the Law declared by the Supreme Court the final power of appointment, promotion and transfer of the Judges of the superior Courts does not vest today in the Government, which happen to be parties to litigation before the Courts, but in a collegium of Judges of the Supreme Court presided over by the CJI, thanks to the persistent efforts made in that behalf by the Lawyers of India including Tarkunde.

At or about the time when Tarkunde and his colleagues in the RH Movement were fighting against the increasing centralisation of all powers by Mrs. Gandhi in her hands by destroying the democratic institutions and human freedoms of the citizens, Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) and his colleagues in the Sarvodaya Movement, who had withdrawn from active public life, were also thinking on the same lines. There was a consensus between JP and Tarkunde on these dangerous developments and on the necessity of building a non-party organisation for the purpose of meeting this danger with the help of like minded persons. This resulted in the inauguration of an organisation named Citizens For Democracy (CFD) at a conference held in Gandhi Peace Foundation New Delhi on April 13-14, 1974. Eminent Citizens like V. M. Tarkunde, Nani Palkhivala, C. T. Daru, Govindrao Deshpande, P. G. Mavlankar, Soli Sorabjee and others were present. J.P. presided over the conference. Palkhivala inaugurated the conference in the absence of Justice Chagla who could not leave Bombay due to ill-health. A simple constitution of CFD was adopted setting out 14 aims and objects including developing a public movement of active

intolerance of all forms of corruption in public affairs, educating the people in the principles of democracy, securing recognition to the right of public dissent and generally to defend civil liberties and others covering the entire range of human freedoms and rights. JP was elected as President of CFD and S. M. Joshi and N. A. Palkhivala as Vice Presidents. Tarkunde at the age of 65 was elected as General Secretary. Rules were made debarring active members and office bearers of Political Parties as members of CFD in view of the past experience. Provisions were also made for the formation of branches of CFD in States, districts and towns.

As the very first act of the CFD, JP as President appointed a Committee consisting of Tarkunde, Masani, Mavlankar MP, A. G. Noorani Prof. K. D. Desai and E. P. W. D'costa (convener) to study and report on the necessity of electoral reforms on specific terms of reference. The Committee went into action immediately, sent out a questionnaire, interviewed a number of concerned persons including leaders of political parties and brought out a report within a year making wide ranging recommendations on the composition and working of the Election Commission, the misuse of Government Power and official machinery, the check of money power in elections etc. It also recommended public discussion on a system of proportional representation in the elections. The report received wide publicity in the Press.

The CFD was formed as if in anticipation of the declaration of the Emergency by Mrs. Gandhi during the night of June 25-26, 1975 suspending all important Fundamental Rights under the Constitution, after her election to the Lok Sabha was set aside by the Allahabad High Court and the Supreme Court in appeal gave only a limited stay. The declaration was made without reference to her Cabinet. The MISA, an Act for preventive detention, which was passed by her with a promise in the Parliament that it will not be used against the political leaders or workers or opponents, was drastically amended debarring the detainees from

even approaching the Courts of law. A draconian censorship was imposed on the Press and other media. More than a lakh of persons, including members of opposition parties of the first and second rank such as Morarji Desai, Vajpayee, Advani and Dandavate and even opponents from her own party like Chandrashekhar, Krishna Kant and Mohan Dharia were detained under the MISA.

The first midnight knock during the night of June 25-26, 1975 was at the Gandhi Peace Foundation New Delhi, for arresting under MISA old and ailing J.P., who was then engaged in guiding the spontaneous students' movements in Gujarat and Bihar and also demanding the stepping down by Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister, after her election was set aside by the High Court. Though he was suffering from acute diabetes, he was removed to an undisclosed place and kept in solitary confinement.

The period of Emergency was the most trying and testing period for Tarkunde, this being second such time in his life after World War II. He bravely took up the challenge, irrespective of the consequences of being detained under MISA. I think this was a glorious period in his life. He took a leading part in organising resistance to the Emergency rule all over the country, along with several others like leading lawyers of the Supreme Court and High Courts and retired Judges like M. C. Chagla, J. C. Shah and Nathwani of Bombay. On June 26, 1975 lawyers all over India strongly condemned the declaration of Emergency and arrest of J. P. and other leaders and abstained from work for the day. The lawyers were the most vociferous in resisting the Emergency, unlike other professions and fire eating trade unions. They filed Habeas Corpus Petitions on behalf of the detenus, successfully challenged orders against censorship of periodicals like *Bhoomiputra* of Ahmedabad, *Sadhana* of Pune and *Freedom First* of Bombay. The Supreme Court by a majority of four (with Justice Khanna differing) decided that MISA was not unconstitutional and detenuess had no right to file Habeas Corpus Petitions as vital Fundamental

Rights were suspended by the Declaration of Emergency. Tarkunde severely and fearlessly criticised the judgement of the Supreme Court through an editorial in *The Radical Humanist* under the caption "Judicial Suicide", since the Apex Court itself shut the doors of the courts to the citizens. As expected Justice Khanna was punished by Mrs. Gandhi's Government by superseding him when it was his turn to be promoted as CJI according to seniority.

As public meetings were not permitted during the Emergency, Tarkunde took a lead in organising and encouraging public meeting all over India in defiance of the authorities. As Gujarat and Tamil Nadu were governed by non-Congress Governments, a historical All India Civil Liberties Conference was held at Ahmedabad by the CFD on October 12, 1975, with Justice J. C. Shah presiding and Justice Chagla inaugurating. Justice Chagla delivered a hardhitting speech. C. T. Daru arranged to circulate printed copies of the speech all over India and abroad. A highly successful "Save the Constitution" convention was held at Ahmedabad on January 1, 1976. The Tamil Nadu branch of the CFD was inaugurated in Madras at a crowded meeting. Branches were opened in Bombay and many cities and State capitals. Though public meetings were not permitted by the police, by orders issued under section 144, Cr.P.Code, they were held by the CFD in Delhi Bombay and elsewhere on one pretext or the other. In Bombay the lawyers organised a meeting to discuss the State of Civil Liberties in the country. As it was not permitted by the Commissioner of Police his order was successfully challenged in the Bombay High Court by Justice Nathwani (Retd.), Palkhivala, Jethmalani and Cooper argued the case.

The CFD carried on its activities openly avoiding secrecy. They did not court arrest by any act of satyagraha. As the CFD largely consisted of lawyers who filed cases in the Courts, the Government perhaps, did not touch them or detain them in order not to invite any hostile criticism from the international community. Most of these activities

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of the CFD were carried out under the inspiration of Tarkunde.

It is one of the little known facts that Tarkunde was indirectly responsible for saving the life of JP who was dying in the institute near Chandigarh where he was confined due to mysterious failure of both of his kidneys. Due to the climate of fear the relatives of JP invariably took the help of Tarkunde in approaching the District Magistrate and taking his permission to meet JP. They found the ailment of JP and as it became public, the Government which did not want JP to die in custody, released him in November 1975. He was saved by the Doctors of the Jaslok Hospital. He had to live on dialysis on every alternate day.

As a number of members of political parties were not caught in the net of detention, they requested JP for a separate platform as they could not become members of the CFD under its Constitution. JP permitted them to constitute a movement named People's Union For Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights (PUCL & DR) later came to be known as PUCL. JP was its President during the Emergency.

The first Annual General Meeting of the CFD was held in Bombay in June 1976 for two days in order to enable JP to address it on his non-dialysis day. As Secretary of the Bombay Branch of the CFD with Justice Chagla as its President, I applied to the Chief Minister for permission, if necessary to hold the AGM relying upon the judgement of the Bombay High Court. Though no reply was received from Government and the police were creating problems by threatening the Principal of the College in whose premises the meeting was organised, we went ahead with the meeting under instructions of Tarkunde. It was attended by about 300 delegates from all over India and JP addressed it on the second day.

With the help of the captive Parliament, Mrs. Gandhi wanted to amend the Constitution substantially so as to institutionalise the Emergency Rule.

A RESTLESS CRUSADER FOR HUMAN FREEDOMS

Accordingly she caused to be introduced in the Parliament the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Bill. In a moment of bravado she announced 'let there be a public debate on the Bill'. Taking advantage of this announcement the CFD organised several public meetings in different places addressed by Justice J. C. Shah, M. C. Chagla, Tarkunde, S. M. Joshi, N. G. Gore and others. As a climax a national seminar was held on October 16-17, 1976 at New Delhi. It was attended by several eminent jurists, men of letters and oppositions leaders. At the seminar the sinister implications of the 44th Amendment were exposed.

Ultimately Mrs. Gandhi declared in December 1976 Elections to the Lok Sabha and released all political detainees. JP took a leading role in bringing all opposition parties together and in forming one Janata Party which contested the elections successfully by even defeating Mrs. Gandhi and her son. Under the platforms of CFD, IRHA and other organisations Tarkunde took an active role in educating the people to vote out Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress. The result is well-known. It was a second revolution for freedom in the history of India.

During the Janata Rule Tarkunde did not accept any office of profit under the Government. He refused the Governorship of any of the five states offered to him by the then Home Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh. He accepted the concept of Total Revolution put up by JP and Gandhians following him, which was not different from the concept of self-reliant people's committees propounded by the Radical Humanists. The CFD adopted Total Revolution as its aim at its conference.

Tarkunde engaged himself in several activities for promoting human freedoms and toured all over the country for that purpose. The Tarkunde Committee appointed by JP on Electoral Reforms brought out on March 19, 1978 another report on Election Expenses recommending bearing of substantial expenses by the State in order to eliminate

the role of money power in Elections. The CFD at its conference held in December 31, 1977 at Nagpur criticised the Janata Governments in reviving laws of Preventive Detention. The CFD also caused a report on "Education for our People" to be brought out by a renowned educationist Dr. J. P. Naik. Tarkunde was the Convener of the CFD Committee appointed for preparing the report.

At the request of the reformist section of the Dawoodi Bohras, a Shia Sect to the CFD that the High Priest of the Sect was depriving the dissidents of their human rights, a Commission presided over by Justice N. P. Nathwani and comprising of Dr. Aloo Dastur, Dr. Moin Shakir, Dr. Alam Khudnini, C. T. Daru and Tarkunde as members inquired into their grievances and brought out a memorable report on April 8, 1979 setting out the inhuman treatment meted out by the Priesthood to the reformist Bohras.

Tarkunde took a leading role with the active assistance of Advocate Kannabiran (now President of PUCL) M. V. Ramamurthy. Arun Shourie and others in inquiring into the alleged 'encounter' deaths of Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh and found that 16 young boys were actually murdered by the Police and passed off as encounter deaths. The Janata Government instituted a judicial inquiry into the allegations by a Commission headed by Justice Bhargava. The Commission was however abandoned as it insisted that the proceedings should be in camera and the Government did not continue its term.

The Janata experiment proved to be failure as the constituents began to quarrel among themselves. JP's world was again in shambles. He passed away at Patna on October 8, 1979. At that time Tarkunde was in Switzerland to attend a meeting of the Red Cross as he was President of the Indian Red Cross. On his return journey by Swiss Air, the plane caught fire while landing at Athens Airport and several passengers in the front portion of the plane were burnt alive. Tarkunde who was in the rear portion jumped out from an

opened door of the plane along with others. Before jumping out himself, he gave precedence to all those who were willing to jump, facing fatal suffocation.

In recognition of the valiant role played by Tarkunde in defence of human freedoms in India during the Emergency rule he was awarded the International Humanist Award 1978 by the International Humanist and Ethical Union. He was also awarded the title of Humanist Laureate by the Academy of Humanism of the USA in 1984.

The Eighties was a decade of various developments such as judicial activism, as against abject prostration during the Emergency by most of the Judges of the Apex Court, broadening of the vista of Fundamental Rights particularly of the Right to Life under Article 21 and Right to Equality under Article 14 of the Constitution, the birth and growth of Public Interest Litigations (PIL), the blossoming of a large number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) of young men and women working among the different weaker sections of the people for making them self-reliant and conscious of their rights, outbreak of violence in Punjab followed by storming of the Golden Temple, assassination of the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi leading to riots resulting in cruel killing of nearly 3000 Sikhs in the capital itself, rise of terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir and of political manipulations backed by large scale corruption. Tarkunde did play a positive role in all these developments.

In November 1980, Tarkunde took a leading part in convening a conference at New Delhi for converting the platform of PUCL into a membership organisation. The attitude of the major political parties was lukewarm. But a large number of young men and women who were not interested in politics of power, took enthusiastic part in forming PUCL as a membership organisation electing Tarkunde as its President. Branches of PUCL were formed in all States and major towns. The members worked among the weaker sections of the

people educating them in their rights. PUCL filed a number of PIL writ petitions in the High Courts and the Supreme Court for the rights of the down-trodden and the Courts responded very positively. PUCL spread like wild fire all over India. It is today a premier Human Rights Organisation (HRO) recognised nationally as well as internationally. It runs a monthly journal known as PUCL Bulletin. Tarkunde was the moving spirit behind the growth of PUCL. He was its President for a number of years since its inception. After he ceased to be its President and other able individuals took over the responsibilities, Tarkunde has been designated as its Advisor.

One of the earliest PIL was filed by the Bombay PUCL in the Bombay High Court, challenging the forcible and surprise deportation in State Transport buses of pavement and hutment dwellers from two localities in the city of Bombay on a rainy day in July 1981 at the instance of the then Chief Minister, Mr. A. R. Antulay with the avowed object of beautifying Bombay. Justice Lentin of the Bombay High Court gave interim relief in writ petition filed by PUCL Bombay Branch on the very day of deportation and directed the State and Bombay Municipal Corporation to bring back the deported and reconstruct the humble shelters of the victims. The Supreme Court got the petition transferred to it self, as a similar petition was filed by the journalist Olga Tellis directly in the Apex Court. Tarkunde along with Jethmalani and Indira Jaising argued the petitions in the Supreme Court who held that the right to shelter was a right to life and even pavement dwellers could not be evicted without reasonable notice.

Tarkunde argued several PIL cases filed in the Supreme Court by PUCL, CFD, IRHA or other HRO's or NGOs without charging any fees. A number of leading Advocates of the S. C. and High Courts came forward to argue PIL in those courts filed by HROs, or NGOs, for protection of human rights of the weaker sections of the society. PILs were also filed by public spirited citizens in matters involving important public issues such as

appointment or transfer of Judges of the Superior Courts or dissolution of State Assemblies under Art 356 or environmental issues. Tarkunde argued several such PIL cases as well as cases involving important constitutional questions. Tarkunde was one of the highly respected counsel by the Bar and the Bench of the Supreme Court. He was also recognised as one of the leading Human Rights Activists nationally as well as internationally.

During the anti-Sikhs riots in Delhi Tarkunde visited the affected areas along with Jethmalani, Soli Sorabjee, and activists of CFD, IRHA and PUCL and rendered whatever help they could do to the victims. Later a team headed by former Chief Justice Sikri and Tarkunde inquired into the riots and found a number of leading Congressmen instigating the killings of innocent Sikhs and torching their houses. He also lead teams of social activists belonging to the CFD, PUCL and IRHA to inquire into the atrocities allegedly committed by the Police and para-military forces as well as the army in Punjab and the Kashmir valley. N. D. Pancholi, General Secretary CFD was of immense help to him in conducting these citizens' inquiries. Tarkunde and his teams could freely move in Punjab and Kashmir refusing any State protection.

Tarkunde was of the firm view that private terrorism could not be met by State terrorism, as the State and its authorities were bound by rule of law and could not indulge in extra-legal killings by taking law in their hands. He also pointed out such acts of the State agencies were counter-productive. At the same time he did not condone the killings or violence by private individuals or organised groups, since such acts also amounted to violation of human rights. He also appealed to them to lay down arms and cease killing citizens and members of the police, in their own interest and in the interest of protecting human rights.

The decade of Nineties was one of the rise of Hindutva forces led by the Sangh Parivar and its political wing the BJP. The onslaught against the Muslim minorities in the decade commenced with the *Rath Yatra* taken out by Advani from

Somnath to Ayodhya, but waylaid in Bihar by Laloo Prasad. The Shilanyas and other symbolic agitations by the BJP leaders and the Sangh Parivar assisted by new outfits like Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, and others finally resulted in the despicable act of demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992 in the presence of BJP leaders like Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharati, in contravention of the solemn undertaking given by the Kalyan Singh Government to the Supreme Court. The ultimate outcome was the outbreak of serious Hindu-Muslim communal riots, more particularly in Bombay City in December 1992 and January 1993. Further consequence was the event of serial bomb explosions in Bombay with the use of RDX by some hotheaded elements among Muslims. The BJP and Sangh Parivar gained politically from the dastardly acts of killings of innocent people and destruction of their properties.

Tarkunde severely condemned the above acts of the BJP and the saffron brigade through the columns of the *The Radical Humanist* and other media. He made a distinction between fundamentalists and communalists, pointing out the former caused harm to their co-religionists by their conservatism whereas the latter destroyed social amity and caused damage to civilised life. He pointed out that there were religious humanists with whom the Radical Humanists could cooperate for restoring sanity in the society. He also formed a 'Coordination Committee on Kashmir' and 'Forum for Democracy and Communal Amity' the activities of which are vividly described by Iqbal Ansari in his article '*Justice Tarkunde - A Humanist Par Excellence*'. The article is published in the first part of this volume.

In 1997 a volume comprising writings of Tarkunde from 1982 was published by Ajanta Publishers under the title '*Through Humanist Eyes*' to commemorate completion of his 85 years. I made a selection of his articles under various headings relating to Radical Humanism, Marxism and Communism etc. They disclose Tarkunde's views on

current as well as permanent problems faced by mankind, with special reference to India.

On January 26, 1998, the Republic Day, the President of India announced the conferment of the honour of Padma Bhushan on Tarkunde for his social services in the cause human rights. The Bombay Bar Association and the Advocates' Association of Western India representing the Bar of the Bombay High Court felicitated Tarkunde on the lawns of the High Court in the presence of former and sitting Judges for the honour done to him by the President of India along with Nani Palkhivala who was conferred Padma Vibhushan. On that occasion Tarkunde responded for a few minutes urging upon the lawyers to spare some time for social service and in assisting the vulnerable sections of the society.

Tarkunde is a great optimist. Consistent with the philosophy of Radical Humanism he believes that humans being endowed with reason, will learn from experience, discard obscurantism, be self-reliant and free themselves from various shackles. In this respect he pins his hope on the various Human Rights Organisations and NGOs in India working among the vulnerable and weaker sections of the society. He also considers that the Panchayati Raj system and Municipal wards made compulsory by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment will help people to be self-reliant and progressively lead to conferment of power on the people and eliminate concentration of power in a few hands.

For 20 years Tarkunde lived in New Delhi, he resided in rented premises. He earned well, but he spent the better part of his earnings for the R. H. Movement and other causes to which he was committed. He never thought of owning any house of his own. At last he was persuaded to purchase a plot at Noida, outside Delhi (there being no other choice) and to construct a bungalow on it. He shifted to the bungalow in Noida in early 1990 along with his wife Chitratai. On September 23, 1990, Chitratai expired after a prolonged illness,

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which she bore very cheerfully. Warm tributes paid to Chitratai by her colleagues in the RH Movement originally published in *The Radical Humanist*, are now collected in an appendix to the book 'Though Humanist Eyes'. Chitratai was a humanist in her own right, but she effaced herself to assist Tarkunde. Since her passing away their only daughter Manik, son-in-law Raian Karanjawala and their two sweet daughters are residing with Tarkunde in the bungalow at Noida, to give him human company, which he badly needs.

In July 1997 Tarkunde retired from legal practice, though he was physically fit and intellectually clear and alert. Even after retirement he has been moving about from place to place, delivering talks, participating in seminars and attending Conferences, sitting for hours and writing continuously. People wonder how at this age he is physically and mentally agile. I think the secret of such good health is the exercises he takes regularly every day, the regular peg of whisky he enjoys every evening, without feeling any sense of guilt as several Indians do, restraint in food habits, adequate rest and habit of keeping busy working. May he live longer and render service to the Indian People!

The articles published in this book speak for the warmth of Tarkunde's personality and his inborn amiable nature and humility. Still there are some misgivings and misunderstandings on the part of some people. He is supposed to possess an ego and therefore he is unapproachable. I have been close to him since 1949 and I never had such feeling. He discussed with my wife freely on all serious

issues, though she is far unequal to him in intellectual capacity. I found him to be very emotional and soft in heart. In 1995 the IRHA had an All-India Conference at Patna. The women's institution where JP used to reside in Patna with his wife, invited Tarkunde along with some of us for dinner. The institution maintains a small museum on JP. After going through the museum, we arrived at the visitors' book. While making his remarks in the book Tarkunde broke down and began to weep like a child. It was difficult for us to pacify him. During his frequent visits to Patna to meet JP, he used to stay in the same premises. I have also personally seen him shedding tears at the passing away of his comrades in the movements.

Through his active life spread over eight decades, Tarkunde, like his Guru M. N. Roy, has been swimming against the current and popularly held views, as both of them were iconoclasts and endowed with critical and original thinking. Even in the RH Movement, Tarkunde is a nonconformist and dissident. He has been holding the view that in India there is no harm in Radical Humanists working with religious humanists and liberals, in protecting the open society and parliamentary democracy. Still he respects and is tolerant of the views held by others who differ from him. May his tribe increase!

This book is therefore dedicated to the memory of M. N. Roy and to several persons who were inspired by the ideas and actions of M. N. Roy, but who are alas no more!!