

## YOUTH DIALOGUE ON RADICALIZATION AND NONVIOLENCE



### Affirming Nonviolence via Hind Swaraj

### Hind Swaraj and Nonviolence in Kashmir: Part-2

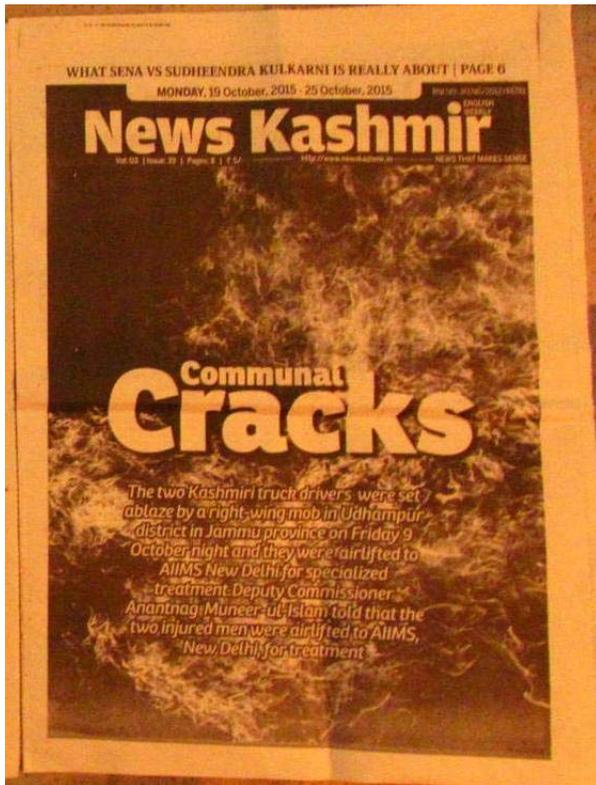


From Right to left: Miss Kausar Jahan, Miss Siama Bashir Shah, Sh Mushtaq-ul-haq Ahmad Sikandar, Rameez Makhdoomi, Tajamul Imran, Mir Quisar who initiated discourse on Hind Swaraj

**Introduction:** With a popular alternative independent media run by activist journalists publishing in three weekly issues articles on Hind Swaraj, underlining Gandhiji's nonviolence and vision of Swaraj, it is a space created for a new discourse by this team of Swaraj Peeth Kashmir. This is second part of a report on how the youth dialogue on radicalization and nonviolence brought in Hind Swaraj, Gandhi's root text which defines freedom in terms of swaraj, that is, all round nonviolence in all the departments of life, without which there is no moral life.. For these Kashmiri youth leaders nonviolence of Gandhi is appealing because it is not external to the life one lives, it is not a technique, but a means to free from all forms of fears, i. e. material, mental and metaphysical that grip our economic, political, social, intellectual-aesthetic-cultural and religious areas of life

*and make man fearful, immoral and if he submits, ground him down to a subhuman state.*

**Srinagar, Kashmir 19 October 2015.:** News Kashmir, an independent weekly magazine published third write-up on Hind Swaraj by Miss Siana Bashir Shah today having published first by Rameez Makhdoomi on 25 Sept and second by Syed Tajamul Imran on 5<sup>th</sup> October. All these three “reviews” (as only in the name of ‘review ‘ the magazine could have published them) reveal what appeals the radical, bright, activist Kashmiri youth, besides the depth of their seeking and understanding.



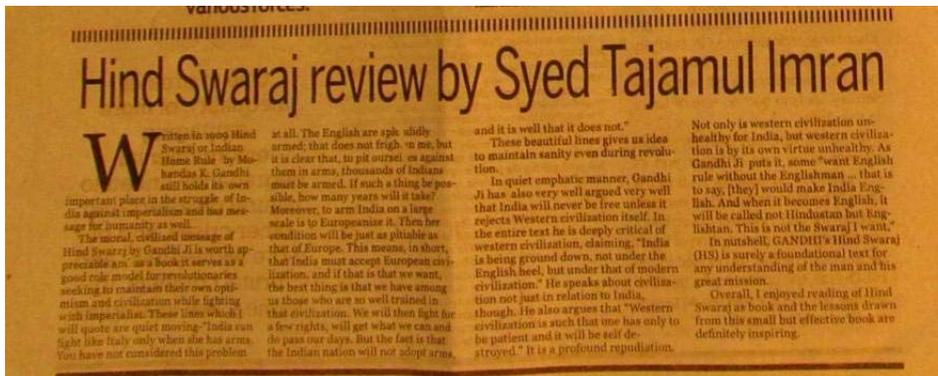
We had not thought that Hind Swaraj will gain focus in the manner it has among the members of our group in Kashmir and they would start writing on it in alternative independent magazines, print and online. But that has happened. There was no such planning or preparation to ‘sell’ Gandhi or his book, except building up a natural open process of dialogue; understanding each-other’s views, thoughts, seeking, sufferings and struggles. (see Part-1 and other many reports) The group decided to commemorate Gandhi Jayanti as International Nonviolence Day, something uncommon, for the first time since the troubled times for any group of senior, intellectual-activist group of Kashmiri

youth leaders with a profile and impressive reach-out in Kashmir, in particular in Srinagar, for Gandhi is not taken kindly in particular among the ideologues of new, present wave of radicalization and popular among the youth.. I will write separately on why politicized Kashmiri youth are hostile to Gandhiji.

I have already written in Part-1 how among the youth associated with Swaraj Peeth interest in HS started without any suggestion from us –either me or Niruji. They conducted one meeting in July, followed up by write-ups for wider circulation. They held a meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October in spite of tensions in the air due to political heat on

account of beef-ban controversy and unfurling of ISIS flags on Fridays after the Prayer congregation. 2<sup>nd</sup> October fell on Friday. I was there.

Three of the group, Rameez Makhdoomi, a senior journalist; Syed Tajamul Imran, an MBA student; and, Miss Siamah Shah, who recently completed her M Phil, wrote. Considering that Hind Swaraj is the ultimate dialogue on nonviolence, and publication in a weekly News Kashmir magazine run by activist youths, part of independent 'freedom' media, with 1100 printed copies and between 40,000 to a hundred thousand online readership, this is significant, symbolic and a turn. *Gandhiji's vision of nonviolence I don't think has been so introduced to the Kashmiri youth by Kashmiri youth!* I asked for a couple of copies, but they all had been sold out by the third day. They have a dedicated readership.



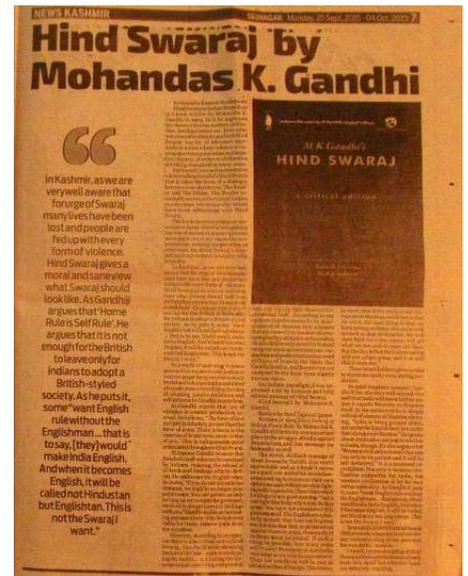
I could not believe Syed Tajamul calling Hind Swaraj 'inspiring' He writes in the independent print and online media. From Shopian, very independent

minded radical young man of 23, he is part of our group. He had, interrupting an ongoing meeting of about twenty intellectual youth activists in 2013, bluntly, rather rudely, confronted me questioning me why I was here and who sends me to Kashmir. Eventually became a dear friend, phoning me every week. (see blog "Take Me to That Heaven of Freedom." on <[www.swarajpeeth.org](http://www.swarajpeeth.org)> For him to write an appreciative piece is quite a turn. But what impressed me the most as revealing of a radicalized mind of a young Kashmiri is the fact that he chose to pick up the Chapter "Italy and India". I have hardly seen any one choosing the Chapter on Italy to introduce Hind Swaraj, whereas that is the chapter that lays the argument for nonviolence. Considering that these friends have read HS only recently, with no other particular introduction to Gandhiji's thought nor any introduction to Hind Swaraj by me or any, I find their writings remarkable. I asked him if he found things from the internet. He told me, "No, when Mushtaq Sikandar discussed among the group the idea of reading Hind Swaraj and then some of them writing on it, he spoke his own thoughts, but I thought I must write something differently." Tajamul's concluding lines : " In nutshell, Gandhi's Hind Swaraj is surely a foundational text for any understanding of the man and his

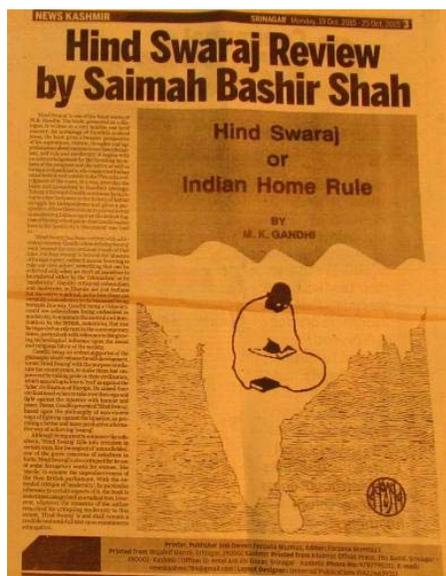
wonderful mission...I enjoyed reading the book and the lessons drawn from this small but effective book are definitely inspiring.”

HeAll three were put up on their FaceBook . A good number of their Kashmiri friends complemented them, commented appreciatively and even shared the links and got several “likes”. (See Tajamul’s write-up at <http://www.newskashmirmagazine.com/opinion/hind-swaraj-review-by-syed-tajamul-imran/>)

In his ‘Hind Swaraj by Mohandas K Gandhi’ Rameez writes: “ In Kashmir, as we are very well aware that for the urge of swaraj many lives have been lost and people are fed up with every form of violence. Hind Swaraj gives a moral and sane view what swaraj should look like. ...In the world of ours where violence as an active means to seek justice or vent our anger has given way to many brutal and inhuman outfits; and, above all made state a brutal idea , the idea of adopting passive resistance and self-reliance by Gandhi, stands firm. (See the write up at <http://www.newskashmirmagazine.com/opinion/hind-swaraj-by-mohandas-k-gandhi/>)



Miss Siamah’s one full page brings up brilliant points (News Kashmir 18<sup>th</sup> October 2015) She writes: “‘Hind Swaraj’ is one of the finest works of M.K. Gandhi. The book, presented as a dialogue, is written in a very humble and lucid manner. ... It begins with an... acknowledgment of the roots, in a way, provides the basis and grounding to



Gandhi’s ideology..... One of the important points that Gandhi makes here is the ‘positivity’ a ‘discontent’ may lead to... Gandhi while defining ‘swaraj’ went beyond the conventional trends of that time. For him ‘swaraj’... means ‘learning to rule our own selves’, something that can be achieved only when we don’t let ourselves to be enslaved either by the ‘colonialism’ or by ‘modernity’. Gandhi critiqued colonialism and modernity, to liberate not just Indians but the entire mankind, as for him these are certainly contradictory to the essence of being humans....\_ He aimed their civilisational values to take over their ego and fight against the injustice with honour and peace. Hence,

Gandhi presented 'Hind Swaraj', based upon the philosophy of non-violent ways of fighting against the injustice; 'Hind Swaraj' is and shall remain a credible and soul-full text upon resistance to subjugation. (See Siamah's article at <http://www.newskashmirmagazine.com/opinion/hind-swaraj-review-by-saimah-bashir-shah/>)

What is remarkable is that all the three have differently underlined nonviolence. And, modernity as inimical to the essence of man. They find HS capturing their imagination. Their doubts are no different from what have become reasonless fixations and dogma with modernizing Indians.

**Hind Swaraj and Nonviolence Study Camp in Srinagar:** Kashmir Swaraj Peeth chapter members asked for Hind Swaraj Study camp in Srinagar sometime this winter and before Delhi Conference with about 50 people from both Jammu and Kashmir. We might conduct one by Rajiv sometime in January/February when Kashmir hibernates under snow. God bless us! However, Delhi Conference is overdue and Hind Swaraj discourse, before that will create a clearer grounding and direction for the Conference. A new voice, a different discourse, from Kashmir needs to be heard and register its presence

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*Rajiv Vora 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015*