

Pot calls kettle black

Human Rights
The Muslim
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AN INTERNATIONAL human rights body has censured the government of Pakistan for failing to check human rights abuses and said, "torture, persecution of religious minorities, arbitrary detention, discrimination against women, bonded labour, and other violation of labour rights continue in Pakistan."

Released by the Executive Director of Human Right Watch, Mr Kenneth Roth, covering events in 1994 the 362-page document, titled Human Rights Watch Report 1995 has specially mentioned 'the so-called blasphemy law' and 'abuses against women'.

Interestingly in this castigating meeting our able director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Mr I A Rehman was present at the Washington National Press Club, but the news item published in various papers does not record any resentment, explanation, defence or strike-back from our learned director. Actually, whenever we are under threats of terrorism or being painted as religiously intolerant society, these reports of international organisations form the basis of the charges of violations of HRS, mostly for political blackmail. The failure of our representatives at these forums or of the officials of the HRCPC to counter such false allegations, being used as a political tool, puts the country, from time to time, in a very troublesome and precarious situation. The time has come that efficacious remedies should be sought to cure the maladies of our intellectuals and political accomplices in the offices of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan or our NGOs.

If this curative therapy does not start as soon as possible, Pakistan is likely to be dubbed officially by most of the western countries as a fundamentalist or terrorist country. The west has already divided the world into Free, Partly Free and Not Free world. The underlying factors of this division were not unexpected. According to Freedom House a New York human-rights group, the number of countries denying basic rights grew last year, from 38 to 55, making 41% of the world's population "not free". Why the increase? Ethnic rivalries and Islamic fundamentalism were described as major factors. Seventy-two countries are now rated "free", 63 "Partly free" (Time, Feb 14, 1994).

groups are less resistant and more susceptible to alien ideas, particularly, if infiltrated with financial support under the garb of humanitarian assistance. Here, we must emphasize the

governments role in any social welfare or Islamic state in providing all the basic human needs to all its citizens without any discrimination of creed, colour, clan, race, etc. Failing to fulfil its own duties, the government will itself expose its people to foreign cultural invasion which will soon enslave them intellectually and economically. The government must adopt practical and endurable measures to reduce economic disparity amongst its citizens and provide enough and acceptable avenues for political accommodation so to bring prosperity and create a sense of belonging amongst the needy, down-trodden and deprived sectors. This will help promote patriotism, redress economic strains, relieve political tensions and checkmate the diffusion of foreign mediators either through pressure from international agencies or via the rapidly growing NGOs. These artificially — sustained so-called NGOs should be regularly monitored as a serious and considerate class of think-tanks now does not conceal its apprehension that if these 'ghost NGOs and self-styled humanitarian associations are not eliminated and purged outright, we, God forbid, will soon face an inevitable compromise on our national, ideological and intellectual frontiers. Often our ministers, civil servants and other officials are reminded, on their visits abroad, of the gross violations of human rights, sometime threateningly and other time didactically. Have our officials, lawyers, NGOs, human rights activists, social workers, politicians, bureaucrats or the HRCPC once reminded the western delegates of the gross and naked abuses of human rights and dignity in the affluent north? As far as the officials at the HRCPC are concerned, their observations and analyses are the same as those of these international bodies, for instance one can see the report of the commission on the State of HRs in Pakistan. The report says, "The anti-blasphemy laws went widely (italic mine) abused". "Discriminatory laws and social intolerance continued to impinge adversely on religious minorities in other ways too". (italic mine) Perhaps, we have no first-class information about the stark-naked

(b) Time in its issue of December 6, 1993 has reported that there are 400,000 homeless and shelterless peple in France, 3,000,000 in India, 150,000 in Germany, 100,000 in Australia and 2,000,000 in the USA.

(2) Has the discriminatory role of the western countries and the so-called 'World Community' against those few Muslim nations who have boldly refused to be fitted in and succumbed to the new sensuous and materialistic world order, been discussed with the international human rights groups by our human rights activists at people-to-people and NGOs-to-NGOs level? Do we see any compatibility of the indivisibility and wholeness of humanity with 'the latest estimates that 397,226 Iraqis have died owing to the US economic sanctions since 1990. Of them, 140,000 are under-5 children. Those suffering from malnutrition have increased from one lakh to nearly 15 lakh in four years. An entire generation of children is underfed and unhealthy'. This has been regarded genocide and discrimination of another kind.

(3) Have our officials at the HRCPC quoted the internal rotten conditions of HRs in the western countries in various forums from the reports of international organisations which form the basic references to our human rights situation? For instance, while giving details of the gross violations of human rights in both north and South Africa, the Amnesty International in its report 1993, listed for the America summary execution, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture and political imprisonment. The group noted that the United States was one of only six countries worldwide which allow the execution of prisoners, who were minors at the time they committed their crimes. In its report 1994, the AI has not spared the USA, the loudest torch bearer of the HRs for many incidents of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners by police and prison officials. One can see in the report anecdotes of religious intolerance, sex abuse of prisoners, and execution of juvenile offenders in violation of international standards in the United States. Do we quote these reports with the same vigour and skill to expose the champions of the HRs with which they tarnish the name of Islam and Pakistan in their tightly-controlled mass media and at international forums? Are we afraid or have no moral courage and strength to combat the prejudiced propaganda against our socio-economic fabric and

Banishing Islam, raising the bogey of Islamic militancy, exaggerating small events in the Muslim world as greater holocausts and creating hatred for Muslim society has become a fashion with the west and its stooges. Have we thought over the results of such biased propaganda against Islam and the Muslim world? It will not only harm the economic activity of Muslims but also localise Islam by paralyzing its dynamic flow towards the West. This deplorably gloomy picture has already reflected in the baleful impacts on the Muslim world and especially on a few targetted countries including Pakistan, in their diplomatic isolation, political setbacks and cutting off international sympathy for them.

THE West is striving to create sympathy for its mundane values by reducing distances and increasing interaction through cultural onslaught, and to create a common readership which thinks, feels and reacts alike. This depersonalisation and de-Islamisation process is intended to despiritualise the already faint-hearted Muslim to such an extent that he should become incapable of undertaking any serious enterprise which may demand sacrifice and hardship. The operational vehicle for this purpose is the philosophy of humanism. All over the world, particularly in the third world and the Muslim world, the West has spread a quagmire of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). These financially and diplomatically engineered social organisations have now developed a closely connected network. This artfully woven web, in every part of the world, is to entice their respective governments for not fulfilling their duties to the governments of their respective financiers, also collectively represented in the monstrous international bodies. Degrading their countries and disparaging their societies in workshops, seminars, references, conferences and reports to keep up appearances they claim working at the community level for creating mass-awareness, raising public consciousness, making public opinion and striving for community uplift. Before these mushroom like sprawling organisations become a formidable force, they should be curbed with an iron hand, lest they should make our country vulnerable to foreign humanitarian intervention by sending hyperbolic reports to their donors about violation of HRs and deteriorating human life. This must not be overlooked that the social sectors identified by the foreign godfathers (donor agencies) for an easy permeation of their ideas are the disabled, minors, women, minorities and the aged as these

Perhaps, we have no first-class information about the stark-naked violation of HRs in the west and elsewhere except those in Bosnia by Orthodox Christians and in Kashmir by fanatic Hindus, that too carried by individual associations and media. As far as these world wide violations of HRs and persistent persecution of the poor, especially the defenceless Muslims are concerned, HRCP seems to have no role in educating our masses about these glaring incidents of human rights abuses. I would like to suggest to our concerned circles and particularly our officials at the HRCP that whenever they are abroad in the west they must raise these issues with their 'hosts' and should vividly study their strategies and programmes in dealing with such problems. It must also be clearly pointed out that had any NGO working in those countries sent a report to the OIC, NAM, Arab League etc, if not to Pakistan, about the rising peak of violence and hatred against humanity in their countries? If not, the question must be answered why?

(1) The west and most of our writers whose only sources of knowledge are the reports of UNICEF, WHO, IMF, World Bank, UNDP, Amnesty International, HRW, etc, talk in terms of social indicators and Human Development Index (HDI). They have never endeavoured to invent any indigenous standard to measure growth and human progress. They complain of low adult literacy, poor sanitation, non-availability of safe drinking water, male and female disparity, high infant and maternal mortality rates, high birth rates, lesser expenditure on education and high defence budget and so on. Though such lamentable scenario does exist here and one should not belittle its disadvantageous implications on our society yet, the underlying causes may be altogether different as dictated to us by the west. But the real question is that have the foreigners taken enough pains to do something to relieve the agonies of their own frustrated and deprived people than to become restless about the crestfallen population of the third world. Do they show genuineness and heart-felt concern on human rights issues? Their own social indicators are also not promising e.g.

- (a) Among the findings for many of the 12 million children under age 3 in the United States.
 - More than 25% are born to unmarried women. About every minute, an American adolescent has a baby.
 - One quarter of women get little or no parental care.
 - Infants are the fastest-growing category of children entering foster-care.
 - One in three victims of physical abuse is a baby.

prejudiced propaganda against our socio-economic fabric and peace-loving Islamic values? The cause must be looked into and accordingly dealt with. Here are a few more examples of the inhumanity of the western society and the non-commitment of the western governments in preserving the dignity, honour and life and limb of mankind:

(a) The WHO estimates that 90 million worldwide have been subjected to genital mutilation as children, more than 10,000 children are said to be at risk in Britain.

(b) Those who support tougher laws against racial attacks in UK point out that such incidents were increasing and action is needed. The British Crime Survey estimated that there were 130,000 racial incidents in 1993. Of these, some 32,250 were assaults, 52,000 were threats, and 26,000 were acts of vandalism. It is estimated that up to 14 murders in 1993 were racially motivated.

(c) The number of Juvenile court cases in the USA involving serious offenses such as murders and aggravated assaults grew 68 per cent between 1988 and 1992, the Justice Department said. Of the 118,700 serious crimes committed by youngsters, aggravated assault cases increased the most in the period, upto 80 per cent to 77,900 in 1992, the study of the Department showed. Homicides increased by 55 per cent to 2,500; robberies went up by 52 per cent to 32,900 and forcible rape cases rose by 27 per cent to 5400.

(d) In 1992, 2,829 juveniles were arrested for murder in the United States, roughly two-and-a-half times more than were arrested for the same crime in 1984, according to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

(e) While the problem of child abuse in worldwide different definitions and reporting system "make international comparison hazardous", says a UNICEF report, but three of the richest countries - United States, Denmark and Japan - are among the worst offenders in the industrialised world, according to a "World Health Statistics Quarterly" table published in 1993.

(f) One in 13 juveniles was the victim of a violent crime in 1992, the US Justice Department reported, confirming that crime among teenagers is rapidly rising.

(g) A study released by National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, says that Asians in the United States were the targets of racially motivated crimes nearly once a day on average last year. This first national assessment by community groups concludes that 335 violent hate crimes were committed and that at least 30 Asians and Asian Americans died as a result.