

Balraj Madhok

Nationalism
Democracy
and
Social Change

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Nationalism Democracy
And
Social Change

BALRAJ MADHOK

BRARATI SAHITYA SADAN

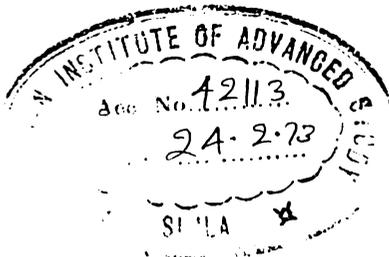
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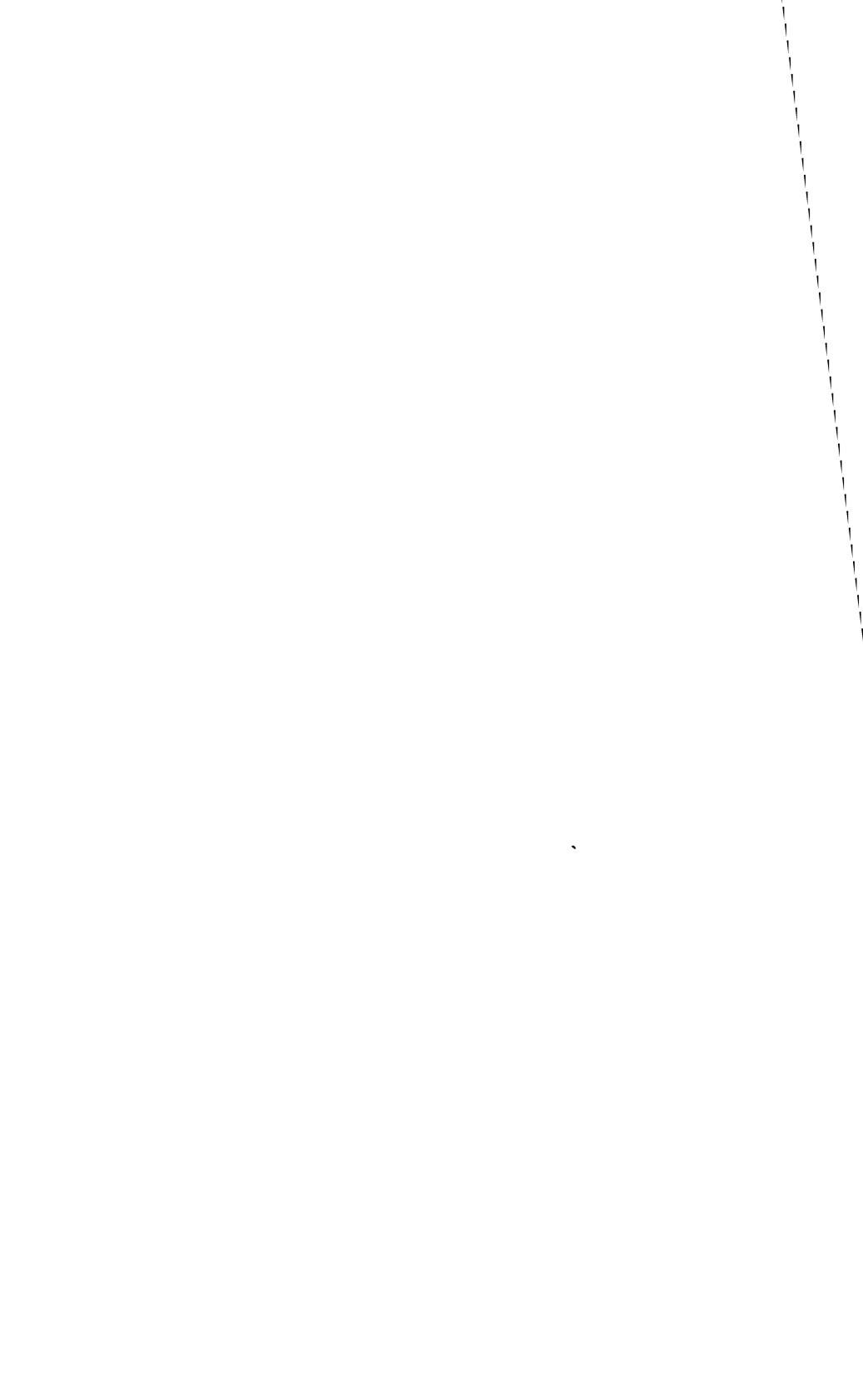
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INTRODUCTION

Nationalism, Democracy and Social change are the three main planks of the Bhartiya Jana Sangh as conceived by its founder President, late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee. These happen to be the corner stones of India to be as visualized by the architects of Indian freedom and makers of Indian constitution. The preamble of the constitution which reads—

“We the people of India having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign republic and to secure to all its citizens,

Justice, Social, economic and political

Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.

Equality of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all

Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the nation.

In our constitution Assembly, this 26th day of November, 1949 do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution.”—makes it absolutely clear that India is one nation, its form of Government will be Democracy and it will strive for a social order in which equality of status and opportunity is assured to all and not only to a few.

But it is a matter of deep regret and disappointment that all these three concepts and objectives have been totally ignored in action during the last twenty years. The fact that there is controversy going on regarding the exact meaning and basis of Indian Nationhood, that democratic norms and values are being thrown to the winds with impunity by a Prime Minister who has openly placed herself not only above her party but also above the country and that the gulf between the rich and the poor, between the educated and the illiterate and between the rulers

and the ruled is continuously getting wider and wider is in itself a proof positive that Indian Nationalism, Indian Democracy and the very concept of social change through peaceful and democratic means are in grave danger of being eroded and subverted to suit the political ends of these who are enemies of all these three basic concepts which sustain the edifices of Indian state and society.

Nationalism is the sum-total of the cohesive forces in a country. It is the greatest unifying force and the most effective anti-dote to divisive effects of democracy. It is an international concept with a definite and well defined meaning and criteria. The essence of nationalism is that loyalty to the nation group should transcend loyalty to all other groups—religious, linguistic, social or political—to which one may belong. To have extra territorial loyalty is a negation of nationalism and a crime against the nation.

India's misfortune is that its rulers since freedom are afraid of Indian nationalism. The ruling Congress Party, particularly after the death of Sardar Patel, has developed a vested interest in communalism, casteism, and regionalism, to perpetuate itself in power. It has been particularly careful to maintain and strengthen separatist feelings among the Indian Muslims which resulted in the partition of India in 1947, so that it may have monopoly over their votes in the elections.

The old policy of Muslim appeasement has been given the new name of secularism. This secularism of Congress—communist brand has nothing to do with secularism as understood all over the world. As a result, the theocratic Mullahs and Maulanas who stand for Islamic theocracy in Pakistan and elsewhere have become the most vociferous protagonists of secularism in India even though they remain committed to the ideology which resulted in the partition of the motherland in 1947.

Bhartiya Jana Sangh is the only party in India which has stood for pure nationalism. As a logical corollary to its nationalistic character, it has been most determined opponent of communist parties and the Muslim League which have extra-territorial loyalties and a consistent critic of the communal

policies of the Congress. But it too strayed from the right path for some time after 1967 elections when it became partner of the communists in coalition government in a number of states. Now that new dangers to the national unity have arisen from inside and outside, it is very important that the main springs of Indian nationalism are clearly defined and understood and possible steps are taken to strengthen it. Those who try to denounce nationalism in the name of internationalism try to put cart before the horse. India cannot play its rightful role in the international sphere unless it first develops a strong sense of nationalism and makes furtherance of national interests the basis of its foreign policy.

Democracy is not just a form of government. It is a way of life. Freedom of thought and expression, tolerance for other man's point of view and conscious striving for the greatest good of the greatest number are the main stay of democracy. It is not the letter of the constitution but respect for the spirit of it and right conventions which sustain democracy. In words of Mahatma Buddha full discussion, respect for the voice of the elders and the tradition are essential for the success of a democratic state.

India has a long tradition of freedom of thought, of tolerance as also of democratic institutions. But the current form of parliamentary democracy based on adult franchise is new to her. In the absence of proper education among a large majority of the voters, right conventions and two evenly balanced parties, democracy has become the play thing of those who can exploit caste and communal feelings and manipulate group votes on that basis. The apathy of the educated and the enlightened towards elections and absence of right conventions regarding democratic norms has put a premium on castism, communalism, misuse of political, economic power and even physical violence against opponents for winning the elections. Multiplicity of parties and the growth of a new class of vested interest in the shape of politicians who control different parties or factions among them has further worsened the situation. This explains the dominance

of Mrs. Indira Gandhi who would be reckless enough to play on caste and communal feelings of the legislators openly through Fakhar-ul-Ali Ahmed and Jagjiwan Ram during the presidential election of 1969 to have her candidate elected.

The growing strength of the communist parties, who have never made any secret of their determination to subvert democracy and wreck the constitution, and the increasing dependence of Mrs. Indira Gandhi on them and Soviet Union has further endangered the very existence of democracy in India.

It is time therefore that democratic elements and parties in India make concerted efforts to save democracy. That requires two things. First, they should have real faith in democracy and must scrupulously maintain democratic norms and values in the working of their own parties. One cannot be authoritarian at home and democratic outside. Secondly there must be some kind of polarisation of like minded political parties and forces so that two evenly balanced democratic political parties may emerge with the communist party or parties as the inevitable third. The split in the Congress, let us hope, will lead to such a polarisation.

The social order which grew during centuries of foreign rule in which a small privileged class had best of the both worlds at the cost of toiling millions has found new patrons in free India. Doctrinaire socialists like late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter Mrs. Indira Gandhi have further widened the gulf between rich and the poor by their unrealistic economic politics. The social order remains the same. Only the men on the apex have changed. The place of Rajas and Zamindars has been taken by the corrupt ministers, legislators, bureaucrats and a new class of industrial and commercial barons, who happen to be hand in glove with the politicians in power. The growing class of educated unemployed and frustrated youth has been giving a new direction to the natural popular discontent against this state of affair. Anti democratic elements like the communists are exploiting this situation to achieve their objectives of "Proletarian dictatorship" in the country.

The failure of those who have climbed to power through the ladder of democracy to pay heed to popular voice unless it is expressed through violent means has put a premium on violence in all walks of life. This has created a situation in which nihilism and anarchism can pass muster as sure means of social change. Even such democrats as Shri Jai Prakash Narain also seem to be losing faith in democratic methods for bringing about rapid social change. But the alternative they suggest is worse than the disease. It is time therefore that concerted steps are taken not only to create awareness about the need for social change but also to bring about the desired change through democratic and peaceful means and methods.

Any attempt to force the pace of social change at the cost of democracy would be self defeating.

It should be clearly understood that State control of all means of production and distribution as advocated by the socialists in India is incompatible with democracy. Freedom of thought and expression which sustains democracy is unthinkable without freedom of living. If everyone becomes dependent on the state for his living there can be no freedom of thought and no democracy. He who pays the piper calls the tune. He who will control the state apparatus will determine what people should think and say as has been the case in Soviet Union and other communist countries. Such socialism is therefore incompatible with democracy. Therefore any attempt to force Russian type of socialism on the people in the name of social change must be resisted by all democrats and nationalists.

In view of the great importance of nationalism, democracy and social change to the future of India as a democratic nation some esteemed friends suggested that some of my printed articles on these subjects be brought together in a book form. It goes to the credit of "Bhartiya Sahitya Sadan" that this suggestion has been given a concrete form. The articles on "Nationalism", "National integration" and "Hindu Politics in National Politics" were first written for "Seminar". Times of India and the The Times, London, respectively. The articles on "Future of

democracy” and “Democracy and Non-violence” were written for “Jandeeep” and “Gandhi Peace Foundation” and that on Social change for the citizen and week End Review.”

The view point given is my own but it approximates to the view point of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji the founder of Bhartiya Jana Sangh on these fundamental questions.

Balraj Madhok

INDIAN NATIONALISM

Cohesive and divisive forces and factors have existed side by side in all countries at all times. The unity or disunity of a people and a country depends upon the relative strength of these two forces. If the forces and factors of unity are properly assessed, emphasised and a proper attitude towards them is inculcated, they get stronger hold on the minds of people than the forces of division. In modern parlance this attitude of giving preference to the unifying forces over dividing forces and subordinating one's loyalty to all groups—social, religious or political—to which a man may belong to his loyalty to his nation group, is called nationalism. It has come to be recognised as the most important and effective factor for unity of a country in the modern world.

A land of diversities :

India is an ancient country. It is also a vast country. It has therefore lot of diversities of all kinds. Climatically it is a world in miniature. All the variations of climate from the arctic to equatorial, can be seen in it. The same is true of its soil and terrain. The Himalayan heights and high lands, the alluvial plains of the river system of the Sindhu, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra, the table land of Deccan, the long coastal plains with beautiful hills, valleys and rivers spread all over add charm and beauty to the landscape of the whole country.

This variety of climate, of terrain and soil and of other physical features is naturally reflected in the dress, food habits and mode of living of the people in different parts of the country.

The physical distances and geographical variety has given rise to a rich variety in the form and mode of self expression through the word of mouth. According to ancient Indian masters of linguistics, variation in pronunciation of the same word takes

place after a distance of every seven miles. In course of time it gives rise to new dialects within one and the same language. When this process goes on for long centuries over long distances, the development of a number of languages and dialects in a vast and ancient country like India is quite natural and understandable.

A land of freedom of thought and worship :

India has been a land of freedom of thought and spirit from the earliest times. Rig Veda, the oldest book in the library of man and fountain head of Indian thought, philosophy and culture first preached the concept of one universal God who is called by many names by the wise:—

“स एको सद् विप्राः बहुना वदन्ति”

This noble concept is quite different from the concept of one God as preached by Islam and Christianity. Islamic God is one but His prophet is Mohammed. Christian God is one but His son is Christ. One must accept both God and His special prophet and special son to be accepted as equal and worthy of the mercy of God according to Islam and Christianity. But the Vedic God as accepted by the Indian society for ages past is one but has no special prophet or son. He is Father of all irrespective of the way He is worshipped and the name by which He is called. This vedic concept which has been imbibed by the people of India in the course of her long history is the real basis of freedom of thought and belief which has been the characteristic feature of Indian culture and life pattern all through the ages. That is why India has never stood for any kind of conformism, religious, intellectual, or political. That explains the well known Sanskrit dictum “as many minds as many beliefs”. The Indian tolerance and the secular character of Indian or Hindu State springs from the basic concept and approach to life.

Naturally therefore different religious sects have always flourished in this country side by side. The political scientists and law givers like Manu and Chanakya enjoined upon the Indian rulers that they should follow their own Dharma “Raja Dharma”

but see that their subjects are able to follow their own “Dharma” without any let or hindrance. That explains why the Raja of Anhilwada permitted the Parsis who took refuge in India when Islam overtook Iran, to follow their own way of worship freely. The same attitude was adopted by Indian rulers towards Syrian Christians, Jews and Muslim when they first came to India as traders or refugees. That again explains equal treatment given to their Muslim subjects and equal respect shown to their religious books and places by Chhatrapati Shivaji and Maharaja Ranjit Singh when they established Swarajaya in Maharashtra and Punjab in contrast to the policy being pursued by contemporary Muslim rulers like Aurangzeb towards the Indian people who did not belong to the Islamic faith. Maharaja Ranjit Singh even built a church in his Capital city for French Officers of his army who happened to be Christians. They were thus secular kings in the true sense of the term. The only condition that Maharaja Ranjit Singh imposed on his Christian employees and Raja of Anhilwada imposed upon the Parsis was “thou shall not kill cow”. In fact total ban on cow killing had come to be considered as an attribute of sovereignty in India. This is clear from the treaties between the Indian Princes and the foreign Mughal and British rulers.

The Caste System :

The division of Indian society into four castes is as old as the Rig Veda in which they are first mentioned in the “Purush Sukta”. But then it was purely a division of labour based on “Guna”, “Karam” and “Swabhav”—quality, ability and aptitude of the individual concerned. The division therefore was not water tight and frequent examples of change of caste are mentioned. In course of time vested interests developed and birth was made the main criteria for determining one’s caste. But even then the process of change of caste continued. All those who come to have political and military power automatically became “Varmans” or Kashtriyas. That explains elevation of Gonds, Marathas and jats to Kashtriya status when they rose to political power.

Caste system helped Indian society to absorb various foreign elements like the Greeks, Kushans, scythians, Huns etc. who came to India at different times. They could be assigned to different castes according to their status and avocation which facilitated their assimilation into the Indian society.

Politically the country was very often divided into a number of states. But to bring the whole country under one political sceptre was considered to be the legitimate and laudable ambition of all kings who aspired to be "Chakravarties". The very name Bharat is a reminder of the political unity of the whole country from Himalayas to the seas, first achieved by King Bharta, the first Chakravarti King of the whole country according to the Indian tradition.

The unifying Factors :

As against these divisive factors of language, religion, caste, regional or local politics and difference in dress and food habits, there have been cohesive forces which have been imperceptibly influencing the Indian mind all through the ages. They provide the basis for Indian Unity amidst all the diversities referred to above.

First and in a way the most important of these unifying factors is the universal consciousness of India being one country. There are few countries in the world which have as well defined natural boundaries and few people who are as much conscious of this fact as the Indian people. The exact boundaries and size of the country has been mentioned in Indian literature for thousands of year. For example Vishnu Purana describes Bharat as country which lies to the South of the Himalayas and north of the sea.

(उत्तरं यत् समुद्रस्य हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणाम् ।
वर्षं तद् भारतं नाम भारती यत्र संनानि ॥)

Vayu Purana goes a step further. It gives exact length and breadth of the country and also describes the people who live across its pronters in the East and West. What is even more important and significant is that systematic and planned efforts

were made by the leaders of thought and action all through the Indian History to inculcate the sense of oneness of the whole country in the common people. The concept of seven holy mountains, seven holy rivers and seven holy cities spread all over the country from Himalayas to Nilgiris and from the Sindhu to the Kaveri emphasised not only the geographical unity of the whole country but also sought to create reverence and love for the entire Bharat from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari. The "Bhumi Sukta" of the Atharva Veda in particular and the rest of the Indian literature in general is replete with hymns and passages in the adoration of this land. The basic idea of giving precedence to one's country over everything else which underlies the nation concept has been exquisitely put in the mouth of Lord Rama by Valmiki in the following famous couplet of his Ramayana.

(अपि स्वर्गमयी लंका न मे लक्ष्मण रोचते ।
जननी जन्म भूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयेसी ॥)

(O Lakshman, I feel no attachment for golden Lanka because mother and motherland are greater than heaven even)

The fact that the country was often divided politically in numerous states in no way militated against this basic unity of the country, Bharat, Hindusthan or India denoted a single country to all Indians and outsiders till the makers of the present Indian constitution wrongly described it in Article I of the constitution as a "Union of States". It was a grave blunder. Such a description of India is against facts and history. It has provided a handle to disruptionist elements to undermine the unity of the country. The sooner this article of the constitution is amended the better it would be for Indian unity.

The traditional Western boundary of India is the Sindhu. This is the first geographical land mark that meets the eye of any entrant into this country from the West. The Iranians who came into parts of North West India in the 5th century B.C. Christened the country as Sindhu Sathan or Hindusthan and

called its people Hindus. The Greeks who came a century later pronounced the Sindhu as Indus and therefore called the country of the Indus as India and its people as Indians. The word Indian is therefore exact Greek synonym for the word Hindu. Both these words together with the word Bhartiya refer to the people of India as a whole and not to any particular religious or ethnic group. The term Hindu religion is a misnomer. No such thing is known to Indian literature. In the first place the concept of religion as understood in the West is foreign to India. A religion pre-supposes a particular God and His prophet, a book and a dogma. India had never known a religion in this sense till the advent of Christianity and Islam. It is wrong to translate Dharma as religion. The way of life of the Indian people can be described as Indian or Hindu Dharma. It cannot be called a religion. Guru Govind Singh Ji beautifully explained this through his famous couplet :

“सकल जगत में खालसा पँथ गाजे
जग धर्म हिन्दू, सकल भंड भाजे।”

“Let Khalsa Panth (Sikh religion) be victorious in the world
Let Hindu Dharma awake, arise so that all falsehood may disappear.”

The greatest living Indian Philosopher and our former President, Dr. S. Radha Krishnan, has described Hinduism as a Common Wealth of various Panthas, or religions, or ways or worship, all of which find equal place in India.

This historical and geographical unity of India has been strengthened and cemented by her cultural unity. The cultural unity of this great country is too patent and obvious to require any proof or arguments. It is writ large over the whole country from Kashmir and Kailash, the abodes of Shiva in the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari, the abode of the goddess who decided to remain virgin if she could not marry Shiva, at the Southern most tip of the country. The sway of Rama and Krishna, of Lakshman, Hanuman, Bhim and Arjun and of Sita, Draupadi and Damiyanti, the epic heroes and heroines of

this country extending from end to end, of this vast land gives its cultural unity a substance and a soul which only the blind can miss to note.

Sanskrit language and its literature served as the Vehicles which carried the spirit of this unity to the remotest corners of this country. It is still the greatest common factor in the languages and literatures of India. Excepting the four Southern languages, all the major Indian languages are directly derived from Sanskrit. Even the so called Dravidian languages of the South are replete with "Tatsam" or "Tad bhav" Sanskrit words. They constitute upto 60% of the vocabulary of these languages.

Unity in Diversity :

All the people of India irrespective of their ethnic origin, caste, creed or community or language have been deeply influenced by this cultural tradition of the country which they have tried to enrich in their own ways. Foreign elements that came into India in the course of history also contributed something to enrich this culture. But like the Ganga which embraces a number of streams on its long run from Gangotri to Indian ocean without changing its name and the basic quality of its water, the Indian culture also continues to be one and indivisible inspite of the numerous elements that have entered it in the course of history. No culture and no people can claim to be absolutely pure or homogeneous. All are composite. There can be nothing more composite than the American nation and American culture. But no country and no people in the world countenance the use of word "composite". To describe their culture because it amounts to giving encouragement to divisive factors. Therefore, it is wrong and impolitic from the point of view of national unity to describe Indian culture, which is in many ways more homogeneous than the culture of other comparable countries like the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and China, as composite. All those who stand for Indian unity and want to strengthen it must be careful in the use of such words.

Muslims are not aliens :

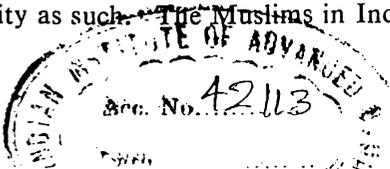
The critics of this view point often ask what is to be done with the 10% Muslim minority which refuses to accept Indian culture as its own. Fortunately this cannot be said of other religious minorities barring a small section of Christians. The first thing to be noted in this connection is that most of the Indian Muslims are not foreigners. In the words of late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad 95% of Indian Muslims are converts. The actual percentage may be even higher. Most of them were converted under military, political or economic pressure. They have the same blood and speak the same language or languages, as their non-Muslim compatriots. The change of religion could not have changed their forefathers who are the same as those of other Indians. Rama and Krishna, Ramayan and Mahabharata are as much theirs as that of any other Indian. There is no reason why they should not own them when the Muslims of the so called Islamic countries like Indonesia, Iran and Afghanistan not only own but take pride in their pre-islamic ancestors and heroes including Rama.

And, if there are any Muslims in India who refuse to accept their Indian heritage or identify themselves with the Indian nation and her culture what stops them from going away to Pakistan, which was meant to serve as homeland of this type of Indian Muslims. In fact it is wrong to talk in terms of permanent religious majorities and minorities in a country like India where there are hundred and one religious sects. I, for example, happen to be an Arya Samajist. There are not more than one or two per cent, Arya Samajists in the whole country. The same is true of Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Lingayats, Dadu Panthis, Kabir Pantis, Radha Swamis etc. From the religious point of view India can be said to have only minorities. But from the wider point of view of culture and way of life almost all of them are comprehended within the broad stream of Hindutva or Bhartiya. Islam can have an assured place in this Common Wealth of religions as Mohamadi Panth if it is treated as a way of worship and not as something

which colours basic loyalties of its votaries. This demands modernisation and nationalisation of Indian—Islam and its liberation from the clutches of obscurantist Mullahs, and fanatic products of Aligarh Muslim University. Actually in a political democracy there are political majorities and political minorities which keep changing. Jan Sangh is in majority in Delhi Metropolitan Council, therefore, the lone Muslim member of Jan Sangh Party in the Delhi Metropolitan Council is also in majority inspite of Muslims being a microscopic minority in Delhi.

The need for Indianisation :

Those who keep harping on the rights of regions minorities in the name of secularism conveniently forget that so called Islamic countries like Malyasia, U.A.R., Sudan, Syria and Indonesia have a larger percentage of non-Muslims than the percentage of Muslims in the Indian population. Yugoslavia has 13% Muslims in her population and almost same is the case with U.S.S.R. Even in Pakistan the ratio of Hindu and Buddhist minority to the total population of that country is still the same (about 10%) as that of Muslims in India. Has any one ever tried to compare the lot of non Muslim minorities there with that of Muslim minority in India. These countries even refuse to accept that they have any minority problem because the minority groups understand fully well that they must identify themselves with the main stream of the nation. It is only in India that instead of making Muslims realise the basic unity of the country and its culture and taking steps to make them shed their separatism and emotional commitments to Pakistan and identify themselves with the national life and hermitage, systematic efforts have been made and are still being made by the ruling Congress Party, the communist parties and some other political parties to maintain and emphasise the separatist feelings among the Muslims to win their block votes in the elections. In doing so they not only harm the unity of the country but also do a positive disservice to the Muslim community as such. The Muslims in India can grow and make



progress only as a part of the whole and not as a foreign element in the body-politic of the country.

Disintegrating effect of democracy :

Democracy based on adult franchise does encourage parochialism and separatism because of the importance of block votes for individual candidates and the parties. This is as much true of U.S.A. and U.K. as it is true of India. This disintegrating and disruptive effect of democracy can be countered by a strong sense of nationalism. It is why all possible steps are taken in U.K., U.S.A. and other democracies of the world to imbibe a strong sense of nationalism in the people.

But in India while we have accepted democracy, precious little has been done to revitalise and strengthen Indian nationalism which suffered an almost fatal blow when India was partitioned in 1947 on the basis of two nation theory. Instead of learning some lesson from that and making a re-appraisal of the basis and fountain springs of Indian nationalism, the powers that be began the same old policy which led to the partition of India in 1947 with a vengeance to win the Muslim votes. The only difference in the situation is that the place of the British has been taken by the Congress Party. The Muslim leadership which has learnt that separatism pays dividends is again following the same old path of communalism. It has put the Muslim community on auction once again with Communist parties and the Indira Congress trying to out bid one another in submitting to its separatist demands in order to have its support in the elections.

This is a dangerous situation which if allowed to develop may lead to further disruption of the unity of the country with a much worse holocaust and orgy of blood shed.

Nationalism is the answer :

It is time therefore that all patriotic and thinking people give serious thought to the main springs of Indian nationalism and the basis of Indian unity. Nations are never made by

bargain with different sections of the community nor unity can be built on empty slogans and aimless confabulations. Nationalism is an emotion, a sentiment, a group feeling which cannot be measured in terms of votes or money. It is the sum total of cohesive forces which create the feeling of oneness and the will to be a nation in a people. The negative approach of condemning of casteism, communalism and regionalism is not going to make us into a strong nation. Existence of different castes, languages and religious communities is a fact of Indian life. They cannot be wished away. They have their influence on the mind of the people. What is needed is greater emphasis on the cohesive forces, the forces of unity and nationalism which may prove stronger than the divisive pulls mentioned above. Such a positive and constructive approach is needed if Indian unity is not to founder once again on the rocks of communalism, casteism and linguism, which are being exploited by anti-national forces within the country in furtherance of the aggressive designs of Pindi-Peking axis from without.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION

There has been going on in India a lot of loose talk about national integration for some time past. The National Integration Council, which was found unnecessary after the massive and exhilarating display of national solidarity at the time of the Chinese invasion in 1962, has been revived and a number of conferences and seminars on national integration have been held. But in spite of all these efforts, the factors and forces of disintegration seem to be gaining ground.

The only conclusion that one can draw from this situation is that there is some thing wrong with the diagnosis of the disease itself.

Every country and every people in the world are subject to integrating and disintegrating forces at the same time. The bigger and older a country is the greater is the variety and strength of both the divisive and cohesive forces influencing its body politic.

Democratic elections too encourage separatist forces and parochialism based on caste, creed, class and tribal instincts and interests because of the importance of block votes for the candidates and political parties. National Integration demands greater stress on the cohesive forces and playing down of the divisive forces. Nationalism which impels a citizen to give priority to his duty and loyalty to his nation group over the loyalty and attachment that he has to other social, religious, cultural and political groups to which he might belong, represents the sum total of the cohesive forces operating in a country.

India happens to be a vast country. It is also a very ancient country. Naturally, therefore, there is greater variety and diversity in this country than that existing in many of the smaller

and comparatively new countries and nations. Because Indian culture and philosophy have never stood for any kind of conformism, religious or political, and because freedom of thought and belief has been a basic tenet of Indian culture and philosophy India has always had a variety of religious beliefs and ways of worship. The vastness of the country has also led to the evolution of a large number of languages and dialects though most of them have a common origin in Sanskrit.

The division of society into different groups and castes on a functional basis is necessary for the orderly and integrated growth of any people. With the growth of vested interests, birth came to have precedence over other considerations making the caste system more rigid.

The divisions based on differences of climate and regional peculiarities have also steadily grown and the reorganisation of the country on a linguistic basis has made them further marked. The existence of a large number of political parties, some with a distinct regional character and bias, and an anxiety to bag the block votes of minority groups, particularly of the Muslims, has also strengthened the separatist, proclivities of such minority groups. All these are facts of Indian life. They cannot be wished away.

All the sermons, invectives against casteism, communalism, linguism and regionalism during the last 21 years of freedom have only aggravated the situation in this regard. It is now clear that this negative approach has failed. The policy of appeasing separatist forces by offering baits and bargains to different religions and such other groups has only tended to make such elements more intransigent and has created in them a vested interest in separatism. This is not a happy situation.

To make things worse there does not seem to be any clear conception of Indian nationhood and of the basic ingredients of Indian Nationalism. Real national integration can only swell out of nationalism which is a positive concept. It is an emotion which cannot grow out of pacts and bargains. It grows out of

common loyalties and common attachment to a national homeland and its culture, tradition, history and its great men. The country or the territory with well-defined boundaries, constitutes the body of the nation and the culture and traditions which give it a distinct personality and identity form its soul. The body and the soul go together. They cannot be separated nor can loyalty and attachment towards them be divided.

India has had a distinct territorial and cultural identity and personality of its own for ages past. It is not just a Union of States of a congerie of castes and communities as the British tried to present it in the pursuit of their policy of divide and rule.

There have been definite and distinct forces of cohesion in India which have been continuously nursed by her leaders of thought and action to overcome the forces of division inherent in her vastness. These forces of cohesion kept the concept of Indian unity alive even when India, was divided into hundreds of separate principalities. The "Vishnu" and "Vayu" Puranas written thousands of years ago gave the exact boundaries and dimensions of this country. The concept of seven holy rivers, seven holy cities and seven holy mountains spread all over the country created the awareness of the geographical and cultural unity of the country in the common people even when the means of communication were very difficult and primitive.

The concept of political unity of the whole country is clear from the very name Bharat which is derived from King Bharat, who according to Indian tradition, was the first "Chakrawarti" King of India and who brought the whole country from the Himalayas to the Sea under one political sceptre.

This concept of overall unity and oneness of the country and her people does not ignore the diversities and distinctions that are part of Indian life and cannot be done away with. But it can and must transcend them if national integration in the true sense is to be achieved.

This demands that every thing possible should be done on

the educational, social, economic and political planes to emphasise and energise the unifying forces and play down the forces of division and disintegration. The stress being laid on the special rights of certain minority groups cuts at the very roots of national integration.

Muslims are not aliens. According to the late Maulana Azad over 95 per cent of Indian Muslims are converts. They have the same blood, the same ancestors and the same heritage as the rest of the Indians. Islam is one of the many ways of worship prevalent in this country. Its votaries have equal rights and they must have equal obligations. The discrimination being made in favour of them in the matter of Civil Laws regarding marriage etc, must go. Every effort should be made to Indianise their outlook and wean them away from the lingering influences of Muslim League politics of prepartition days.

Once there is clarity about Indian nationalism, there need be no quarrel about the name by which it is called. Historically speaking, the word India is the Greek synonym for the word Hindu, which has never been used in the sense of a religion in the vast range of Indian literature. One can understand some people's preference for the word 'Indian' or 'Bhartiya'. But that does not warrant hostility to the word Hindu.

Time has therefore come when the leaders of thought irrespective of their party affiliations, turn their attention to revitalise and strengthen Indian nationalism. (Copyright; Publication Syndicate).

Balraj Madhok

HINDU POLITICS IS NATIONAL POLITICS

There is no such thing as Hindu politics as distinct from nationalist politics in present-day India. Hindus have been the mainstay of India's political struggle for freedom for centuries. And therefore national politics in whatever form has always had a Hindu character about it. In that sense Indian politics is and will always remain Hindu politics so long as India exists as a nation.

To understand this one must look back to the beginning of the twentieth century when the word Hindu or Indoo was generally used in the same sense as Indian all over the world. Both of these words are derived from the river Sindu, which was pronounced Indus by the Greeks when they first came to the land of the Sindhu in the fourth century B.C. Even historically it is difficult to draw a distinction between Indian politics and Hindu politics.

But the essential character of Indian politics changed when the British rulers made a distinction between Hindus and Muslims, which led to the formation of the Indian Muslim League in 1906. This in turn led to the formation of the Hindu Mahasabha, essentially to safeguard Hindu interests. However, the organization remained aloof from politics until the Indian National Congress began making pacts with the league, giving the Muslim community special rights.

The Hindu Mahasabha protested and this heralded "Hindu politics" as the words are used today. However, with an overwhelming desire for independence most of the Hindus ignored the organization in favour of the Congress, which continued to appease the Muslim League until ultimately India paid the price of partition.

The corollary of partition, as Mr. Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, concluded, was the exchange of population but the Congress refused to accept this conclusion even in the face of the planned carnage of Hindus in West Pakistan.

The attitude gave a resurgence to Hindu politics and gave an opportunity to the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (R.S.S.), the spearhead of Hindu awakening, to "Hinduise" Indian politics.

But the failure of the R. S. S. leadership correctly to appraise the situation and its distrust of the Hindu Mahasabha paralysed both of them.

Then came the murder of Mahatma Gandhi by Shri Nathoo Ram Godse, a Hindu Mahasabha worker of Poona. This gave an effective handle to the Indian National Congress over both organizations, and Hindu politics appeared to have been finished once and for all. Secularism became the new slogan and began to be used for appeasing the Muslim minority, which was still emotionally committed to Pakistan, to secure its support for the Congress Party in the elections to offset the conscious Hindu vote which was supposed to go against it. Thus began the Congress Muslim alliance in Indian politics which replaced the Anglo-Muslim alliance of pre-independence days.

This alliance ensured sweeping Congress victories in the general elections of 1952, 1957, and 1962 and it enabled the Muslim leadership to regain confidence and secure advantage place in Indian politics without shedding its extra-territorial attachment with Pakistan.

A feeble attempt was made by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ram Rajya Parishad to stage a comeback into Indian politics in the name of Hinduism in the 1952 elections. But identification of the Ram Rajya Parishad with the feudal and extremely orthodox elements among the Hindus made it an anachronism in the changed situation. The Hindu Mahasabha had neither the will nor the means to make an impact on the political scene. Its image had been tarnished beyond repair. Dr. Shyama Prasad

Mookerji, the one man who had the capacity and the stature to resuscitate it, had left the Hindu Mahasabha in disgust. He was in the political wilderness after his resignation from the Nehru Cabinet in April, 1950, and was in search of a new political platform. The R.S.S. leadership had realized the need for a political organization through which its ideas could find expression.

Bharatiya Jana Sangh the Indian People's Party which was founded in October, 1951, was the result of the joint efforts of Dr. Mookerji and the R. S. S. Because of these antecedents, Hindu politics then became identified with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

Today the characteristic of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh is not its emphasis on Hinduism or the rights of Hindus as distinct from the nation, but its emphasis on unalloyed nationalism based first and foremost on allegiance to the Indian soil and its age-old heritage and culture. It wants to separate completely religion from politics and is opposed to special treatment of any group on the basis of religion. It wants to treat Muslims as equal citizens of the country with equal rights and equal responsibilities.

DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

Democracy has been variously defined as government by discussion, a government of the people, by the people and for the people and a government in which the people have direct participation. Whatever the definition may be, the fact remains that in a democracy the people have a right to make themselves felt in so many peaceful ways. They can decide as to who should run the government by choosing the men of their choice at the time of the elections. They can hold meetings, stage demonstrations, pass resolutions and take deputations to the authorities concerned to express their views on various matters of interest to them and demand the redress or solution. They can also change the government and instal a new government through the medium of the ballot-box.

This system, therefore, has a superiority over dictatorship where the military dictator or the party boss does not permit any other party to exist. The people cannot change the dictator by peaceful means. He generally comes by sword and goes by sword. In extreme cases people can and do raise banner of armed revolt resulting in bloodshed. In a monarchical system, the ruler comes to the helm of affairs by succession. Normally he too cannot be removed without an armed rebellion unless he has good sense to obey the people's will voluntarily through abdication. Therefore, violence cannot completely be ruled out in monarchical and authoritarian systems of government. Armed rebellion is and will remain the last weapon with those who want to bring about a change of master or masters in such forms of government.

Democracy is the only form of government in which violence can be completely ruled out. People in a democracy can get all that they want done without taking resort to force or arms.

A revolution can be brought about in a democracy also as happened in India in 1967. But such a democratic revolution is brought about by peaceful means and therefore stands as a class apart.

Freedom of thought, expression and association are the essential pre-requisites and concomitants of democracy. Therefore, it is essential that not only these freedoms are scrupulously respected by the powers that be but they must also give due weight to the suggestions and demands put forth through peaceful and democratic ways. Democracy cannot succeed without giving due respect and recognition to democratic processes and institutions. Where it is done, the people can voice their feelings and get things done through democratic methods and democratic institutions. As such, there remains neither the need for any jurisdiction for taking resort to violent methods.

India has chosen to be a democracy based on adult franchise. We have had four general elections during the last 20 years. Traditionally India is a land of tolerance in which conformism of any kind has always been looked down upon. Freedom of thought is the basic principle of Indian culture and philosophy. Acceptance of all forms of worship as different paths leading to a common objective has been the quintessence of Indian thought in regard to religion. स एको सद विप्र बहु न वदन्ति is the Vedic exhortation about the unity of Godhood "which is called by many names by the wise." As such, India is ideally suited for democracy. In fact India can well be called the mother of democracy. Great republican states flourished here long before the Greeks had even conceived the idea of democracy.

India is also a land of non-violence. "आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु"— "Treat others as you would like to be treated by others", is the Vedic exhortation in this respect. It has produced great apostles of non-violence like Vardman Mahavir, Mahatma Buddha, and Mahatma Gandhi. Still we find that there is more violence in this country than in any other democratic country of the world. Every agitation, of the students or the factory workers, or the white

colour functionaries takes a violent form sooner or later. The violence on the part of democratic government is no less. There have been more police firings and lathi charges during the last 20 years of freedom than those that took place during 100 years of British rule. This situation only baffles any democrat. He wonders how Indian democracy and this growing violence can go together and he, naturally, sees a grave threat to the future of democracy and democratic institution if this violence continues. The question therefore arises : why violence has not been eradicated in spite of the establishment of democracy and what steps should be taken to see that non violence is observed in thought and action in the country.

To my mind, the first pre-requisite for eradicating violence in India is to make the democratically elected rulers show proper respect, for democratic institutions, means and methods. They must pay proper attention to the people's wishes when they are expressed through democratic methods of public meetings or resolutions or peaceful demonstrations. They should make up their mind quickly whether a demand is just and correct or not. If the demand is just, they should not dilly-dally in accepting it. If they are convinced that the demand is unjustified and its acceptance will not serve the ends of justice, then they must firmly reject it after reasoning it out with those who put forth the demand. They must also take the general public into confidence in regard to the stand they have taken in order to isolate those who persist in unreasonable and wrong demands.

But actually what has been happening in this country is that when a demand or a request is put forth in a democratic way it is seldom heeded. No attempt is made to go into the merits or demerits of the demand. An authoritarian approach is adopted towards those who put it forth. But when the same people take to violent methods, start burning buses, looting public property and beating up officials, then the same democratic rulers find arguments and justification for accepting that demand. As a result, the impression has gone round in the

country that only violent and agitational methods succeed. This has put a premium on violence and violent methods and even those who are intellectually convinced about the incompatibility of violence with democracy sometimes feel constrained to take to violent methods to get the just and reasonable demand accepted.

It is, therefore, my considered opinion that the first essential for making non-violence prevail in public affairs in the Indian democracy is that democratic rulers of the country should develop a democratic approach to the national problems. Authoritarian ways and democratic institutions and forms cannot go together for long. They should be prepared to court even temporary unpopularity by resisting violence and violent pressure till the people begin to feel that violence will not pay and that their grievances and demands can be redressed through peaceful and democratic ways.

Secondly, leaders of Opposition parties should also be clear in their minds that they cannot go on harping on democratic rights while taking resort to undemocratic and violent methods to achieve those rights. For that matter a clear distinction will have to be drawn between the parties which really believe in democracy and those which only want to use it for getting control over the governmental apparatus and then impose an authoritarian regime over the country through that apparatus. It is the duty and responsibility of the democratic parties and elements whether in power or outside to make a concerted effort to isolate and expose those parties and elements which do want to make use of democratic liberties but have no faith in democracy as such. If they continue the present policy of submitting to the undemocratic pressures of such parties as Marxist Communists, they would be only prompting others to toe their line and follow their methods. The initiative in this matter must come from the men in power who have risen to their present position through the leader of democracy.

A third necessity to root out violence is to create a sense of security and fair play in the mind of the common people. So

long as the feeling persists that particular sections of society are given a favourite treatment while even the most legitimate rights and interests of others are trampled under foot for the sake of securing block votes of particular groups in the elections, the faith of the people in democracy and democratic methods will continue to be undermined. Very often violent and rowdy elements in the body politic of the country get sustenance and encouragement from the high priests of democracy and non-violence themselves. Complete equality before law, equality of opportunity and no discrimination either in favour or against any individual or group of individuals on the basis of birth, caste or creed are essential pre-requisites for creating faith in democratic values in the people in general.

Unless this is done and the men at the top set the right example of democratic and non-violent behaviour, all talk of non-violence is going to remain mere eye-wash. Non-violence like democracy is not a matter of forms but of convictions and outlook. They represent a way of life, a method of ordering relations and shaping things in a society. They demand respect for certain basic values for which Indian culture has stood all through the ages. You cannot have non-violence and democracy by denouncing that culture day in and day out or equating it with those cultures and ways of life which idolise violence.

At the same time non-violence should not be carried to the absurd lengths by suggesting that the country need have no armed forces. A strong and powerful army and preparedness for war are as much guarantees for non-violence within the country as for security of the country against armed aggression from outside. So non-violence in the social and political life of the country and preparedness to meet violence with violence when it comes from any external source, must go side by side. Even democracy and non-violence have to be sustained by preparedness to take to violent methods for the wider interests of the society and the country.

FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Democracy has been defined as government by discussion and government of the people, by the people, for the people. But basically it represents an approach to human affairs, a way of thinking and living which abhors authoritarianism and dictation by one individual however exalted and concedes the right of the people who are directly affected by political decisions to have a say in making those decisions. Popular participation in decision making is the essence of democracy. The form by which this end is achieved, though important in itself, is not basic to the issue of democracy. The basic thing is the spirit, the acceptance of the principle that man is a thinking animal and that human personality and individuality must be recognised and respected. Freedom of thought and expression, tolerance for the other man's point of view even if it radically differs from one's own are therefore the essential pre-requisites for success of democracy of any form.

OUR ANCIENT TRADITION OF TOLERANCE

India is a land of tolerance par excellence. Respect for human individuality and freedom of thought and belief are the hall-marks of Vedic culture and philosophy of life. India is the only country and Vedic-Hindu culture is the only culture in the world which have stood against any kind of conformism, political or religious, all through the ages. This is why democratic institutions grew and flourished in India long before anything of the kind was even conceived by the Greeks. Sabha and Samiti of Vedic times, the powerful republics like the Lichhavi republic of North Bihar which flourished at the time of the advent of Buddhism and the republican State of Punjab and Sindh which offered determined resistance to Greek hordes

of Alexander in the 4th century B.C. point to antiquity, universality and vitality of Indian democracy. Some of the greatest leaders of thought and action in India like Lord Krishna and Mahatma Buddha were the gifts of democratic States of the Sakyas and the Vrashnis. Therefore, democracy is neither new nor foreign to Indian soil and Indian genius. Even when Islamic theocracy and authoritarianism were imposed on India by Turk and Mughal invaders, democratic institutions like the village and professional Panchayats continued to function in the areas where the invaders' influence did not reach directly. As late as 1853, Sir Charles Metcalfe, the British governor of the then North Western Province (present Uttar Pradesh) described the villages of his satrapy as miniature republics, because of the hold of the Panchayats on the village affairs and the wide powers they enjoyed by common consent of the people.

The distinctive features of Indian democracy as it functioned in ancient times were respect for tradition, which provides continuity to the State in the absence of hereditary monarchy, respect for elders, whose views were given special weight, and free and frank discussion of all issues by the representative assemblies. Consensus rather than the rule of bare majority used to be the desideratum and age and experience rather than the fact of one's being adult used to be the basis of participation in democratic forums.

BRITISH DESTROYED GRASS-ROOTS DEMOCRACY

The British first destroyed our grass-root democracy of village panchayats to be able to enforce their direct authority in the remotest corners of this country and then plant new forms of democratic institutions on the British model. But till they left India for good in 1947, these institutions were devoid of real power and were therefore soul-less. By injecting the poison of separate electorates, they made them engines of disruption and disintegration of our society and country.

After freedom, the Congress successors of the British in.

their enthusiasm for everything western decided to adopt the British form of democracy in toto. No effort was made to delve deep into the democratic institutions and processes that had been developed in India in the past and which had suited the Indian genius so well. Adult franchise which had been introduced in Britain in slow stages in about 100 years—1832 to 1928—was introduced at one stroke without taking into consideration the general lack of education and economic backwardness of the masses.

While the full paraphernalia of democracy of the British type was introduced at the centre and state level, the village panchayats and town municipalities were left at the mercy of State governments who, in the absence of any genuine interest in democracy as such, used their powers to suppress and undermine the grass-root democracy than to foster its growth.

In spite of all these handicaps of the common man in India, who is traditionally tolerant and accustomed to “Panch Nirnay” or decision through chosen representatives gave a very good account of himself in the successive general elections. The credit for orderly elections involving an electorate of over 200 millions, mostly illiterate, goes to the robust common-sense and tolerance of the Indian peasant and worker and democratic traditions of the country and not to political parties and leaders. The ruling Congress party which should have exerted itself to set the right conventions and norms of democratic behaviour for the benefit of democracy, tried to corrupt and distort Indian democracy from the very beginning by emphasising and exploiting caste and communal factors for its partisan ends. The absence of a strong opposition party on ideological bases and the mushroom growth of splinter and factional parties out of the Congress monolith further contributed towards creating confusion in the mind of most of the voters. The personal conduct and behaviour of the chosen representatives and leaders disillusioned many others.

SELECTIVE 'MASSACRE' OF CONGRESS BOSSES

The selective massacre of the Congress bosses by the electorate in various states in the Fourth General Election was an indication of its anger and aversion for the things as they had been developing during the monolithic rule of the Congress party. The people voted for whichever party and candidate they thought could beat the Congress. The verdict of the Fourth General Election was primarily against the Congress. It is difficult to discern positive preference of the voter for the different alternatives from the voting pattern and behaviour of the common people in different states. Only some minority groups which are motivated mainly by communal considerations, voted in a planned way for the candidates who they thought would further their communal interests irrespective of their parties.

The situation that has emerged as a result of the Fourth General Elections is both an opportunity and a challenge for Indian democracy. It is an opportunity in so far as the monolithic control of the Congress party has been ended, political change has been brought about in a number of States, through the ballot box and a situation has emerged in which opposition parties are shouldering the responsibilities of government in a number of states. A democratic revolution has come in the political spectrum of the country. It has strengthened the faith of the democrats all over the world in Indian democracy and left the sceptics aghast.

COALITIONS AND THEIR EFFECTS

But in the absence of any single party emerging as a democratic alternative to the Congress party all over the country, an atmosphere of political instability is developing. The diverse opposition parties ranging from the Jana Sangh to the Communist party did come together in some of the States to form composite non-Congress ministries on the basis of common minimum programmes. But it was clear to all those who had any understanding of communist ideology and

methodology that this experiment was not going to be a happy one and in the long run it would undermine and weaken people's faith in democracy rather than strengthen it.

However one good has come out of this experiment of composite ministries. They have created the realisation in all democratic and nationalist elements that Communists and their allies are not interested in making the democratic experiment a success. Their main motive and interest in joining the composite ministries is to utilise the democratic power to strengthen their party apparatus and to create conditions of anarchy and lawlessness in preparation for staging a violent revolution of their conception. The way the Communist elements in the strategic states of West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir have been found hobnobbing with Communist China and Pakistan has indicated the limit to which they can go. Open and virulent attacks on their coalition partners and the politics of crisis, the latest example of which was provided by the Communist brink-manship in Kerala has made it clear that coalitions with communists are dangerous for the future of democracy in India.

It is wrong to think that the inevitable result of the withdrawal or expulsion of Communists and their fellow travellers from the coalition governments would be the return of the Congress to power. The Congress itself is a composite grouping of as diverse elements as the composite ministers of the opposition parties. Ideologically and emotionally some of them are nearer to Communists and S.S.P., while many others would find themselves more at home with the Jana Sangh. In fact many of them have no ideology at all. They have remained perched on the Congress band-wagon because that alone could take them to seats of power. But the situation has radically changed since the fourth general elections. With the opening of other roads to power, some of them have been changing parties without any qualms of conscience or ideological inhibitions. That explains the politics of defections which has become a glaring feature of the post-election politics of India.

PRESSING NECESSITY OF SINGLE ALTERNATIVE

All this points to the pressing necessity of developing a single countrywide democratic alternative to the Congress party at the quickest pace. Bhartiya Jana Sangh has the potentiality to become such an alternative. The rate of its steady growth during the last sixteen years of existence points to its becoming the democratic alternative to the Congress party in a large part of the country in due course of time.

But as things are, the pace at which the Congress party has been disintegrating is faster than the pace at which Jana Sangh has been growing. As a result some kind of political vacuum has emerged. In some states like Madras and Orissa it has been filled by the D.M.K. and the Swatantra-Jana Congress alliance. In Kerala and West Bengal it has been filled by a combination of left parties. But the real power in those states has come into the hands of communist-communalists combine which is out to create conditions of anarchy in the country to suit the Chinese Communists and Pakistani theocrats. In Gujarat and Rajasthan, the Swatantra Party has emerged as the major challenge to the Congress. In Bihar the S.S.P. has gained an edge over the Jana Sangh. Apart from Delhi, where Jana Sangh has been returned with a clear majority Madhya Pradesh is the only state in which Jana Sangh happens to be in a commanding position among the opposition parties. The peculiar situation of Punjab has provided an opportunity to Jana Sangh to play the role of the great healer and re-establish the unity between the Sikh and non-Sikh Hindus who had been estranged by the 'divide and rule' policy of the successive Congress governments. Jana Sangh has an assured future in that state if this unity is maintained and further strengthened.

NEED FOR POLARISATION

It is clear from this political pattern that it can be easily exploited by anti-democratic and anti-national forces which have got some foot-hold in all the States, with a commanding position in some, to subvert democracy and disrupt national unity unless

the nationalist and democratic forces can be mobilised and united to meet their challenge. Apart from the Jana Sangh which is and must remain the spearhead of such forces, they are scattered in all other nationalist and democratic parties. Even though many of them share the consciousness of the common danger to integrity and security of the country and its democratic way of the life from anti-national and totalitarian forces, they often work at cross-purposes to achieve petty party ends to the neglect of wider national goals.

It is therefore of utmost importance for the country that they are brought together. The best thing would be for all such elements to merge into one powerful and integrated force. But till that is achieved, some way must be found by which they could be brought nearer to one another inside and outside the legislatures and their activities could be coordinated. This is absolutely essential if the anti-national and totalitarian forces, which have international support as well, are to be effectively countered and checkmated in the present fluid state of Indian politics.

The future of democratic will ultimately depend upon the success or otherwise of the nationalist and democratic forces to achieve such a confluence. The Jana Sangh with its mass support and growing strength can play a key role and become the arch-stone of the edifice of national and democratic unity whenever it comes into being.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Why and How ?

It is accepted by everyone that there is need for social and economic change in India today. A situation in which more than 50 per cent of the Indian population does not have even the minimum of food, shelter and clothing, and a system which cannot provide work to millions of qualified and willing workers cannot last for long. They will have to change, they are bound to change. But there is a difference of opinion in regard to the method and means of bringing about the required change.

The Sarvodaya leader, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, has done a service to the country by posing this question and giving his viewpoint about it. In the Sarvodaya terminology he has described the three possible methods of change as *katal* (violence), *kanun* (constitutionalism) and *karuna* (persuasion). He himself is not a protagonist of violence but his impatience with the existing situation and his experience about the slowness and ineffectiveness of constitutional methods has prompted him to make remarks which can be construed as favouring those who stand for violence as a method of social change.

The communist parties, including their Naxalite wing, have never made any secret about their faith in violent or armed revolution as the only effective means of social change. The Russian revolution of 1917 and the continuing Chinese revolution are their models and guides. Communist ideology and methodology are very clear about both the thought and practical content of violent revolution, and they have been following them with minor variations all over the world. There is no wonder therefore if communist leaders of India denounce the Constitution and constitutional methods and make use of all the

opportunities available to them to prepare the ground for violent revolution.

Creating conditions of chaos and anarchy in the economic and political field and exploiting the have-nots for putting through a violent class struggle are nothing new to them. The so-called Naxalities are part and parcel of their practice. Most probably this avowedly violent section of the communist movement is working with the blessing and connivance of these communists who have gone into the government and cannot preach and practise violent methods as openly as their ideology and methodology demand.

The violent revolution of their conception may bring about change, but it is going to change for the worse and not for better. The experience of the USSR, China and other communist countries bears this out. The lot of the common man in such countries is worse, not better, than in comparable countries in which there has been no violent revolution. Not only the price paid in the form of blood and misery for the common people is too heavy and dreadful but change has been brought about at the cost of the basic freedom and liberties of the common man. These countries have become vast prison houses in which the human soul has been strangled for a vague and unfulfilled promise of two loaves for the physical body.

The exploitation of man by man has not ended in these countries. Only a new exploiting class--the bureaucrats and the managerial class drawn from the ruling party which in itself happens to be a small minority of the total population--has replaced the old ruling class. The worker in whose name communists run the government in such countries have neither the right to strike nor of collective bargaining. Therefore methods of violent change are self-defeating. They invariably end up with concentration of power in the hands of a dictator or a ruling junta who prove to be worse tyrants than those whom they replace. In any case they have no place in democracy which provides for all kinds of changes through the ballot-box.

But it also is a fact that the changes which India needs so badly have not come through the ballot-box so far. Rather the social and economic disparities become more marked and the life of the common man has become more difficult than what it was before freedom. Naturally therefore there is a growing feeling about the ineffectiveness of democracy and constitutionalism as a means of social and economic change.

But the one thing that is forgotten is that democracy and constitution by themselves are nothing but a framework for action. The action part has to be provided by the man or men who operate the framework. If, therefore, there has been a failure, it is that of the human factor and not of the institution as such.

That brings us to the crux of the problem. Man is both the instrument and the subject of social change. That is why all social and political servants have always laid stress on the quality and efficiency of the human factor. Once that factor is there, he can use and mould any instrument to give the required results. The basic malady of India during the last 20 years or so, when a social and economic revolution could have been brought about by peaceful and constitutional means, has been the absence of the right type of men, or to be more exact, the failure of the democratic apparatus to throw up the right type of men to positions from which they could have acted as instrument of social change.

Democracy and constitutional methods can become effective methods of social change, as in Britain, only if the common man, the electorate, is politically awake and educated. Little has been done in India during the last 22 years of freedom to educate him. The ruling Congress party developed a vested interest in the ignorance of the people. It gave all sorts of slogans and deployed resources and opportunities of all kinds of projects except those required for the education of the 'masters'. As a result laws and changes that were made in the name of the people were actually imposed on them. This process must be

reversed. Educating the people and creating public opinion is the first requisite for a democracy to become the effective means of social change. This task has to be performed not only by the State and political parties but also—and more so—by non-political agencies.

If we look at the past history of India, saints and *sanyasis* have been the most effective instruments of social and political awakening and change. In the recent past Rishi Dayanand, the founder of Arya Samaj, and Mahatma Gandhi have been most effective instruments of social awakening and change in the country. Both could play the role they played because they were considered by the people as saints who had no axe of their own to grind. They had the will and the earnestness which people understood and appreciated. They could rouse the people to action even against the mighty British empire.

After freedom we had the power and means to bring about change but those who came to control that power lost all the will and earnestness they required. What is worse, even those who were out of Power and who were in a position to create popular awakening through their spiritual or moral eminence began to be corrupted and attracted by the lure of politics and power. There were a number of individuals and organisations in the country like the Arya Samaj, the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, the Sarvodaya Samaj and their leaders who could have become more effective as instruments of mass awakening and mass education if they had continued to stand on their own, untainted by politics. But they too were drawn into the vortex of politics which continued to sink lower and lower as idealism evaporated and the social purpose, which motivated people during the freedom struggle, became weaker.

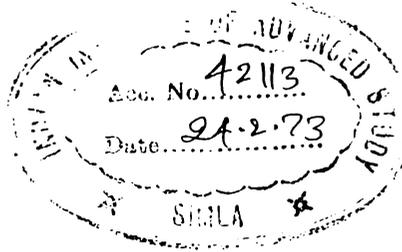
Therefore the need of today is not rejection of democracy and constitutional means, which will amount to playing the game of the communists and a much worse kind of enslavement, but reappraisal of the democratic apparatus and the Constitution in the light of the experience of the last 20 years and reinforc-

ment of this apparatus with the powerful action of mass awakening and education through non-political institutions and associations. A few *sanyasis* of the type of Dayanand and Vivekanand can even today do more to bring about a revolution in the minds of men, which must precede social change, than the political parties and leaders put together. Can men like Jai Prakash Narain, M.S. Golwalkar and Vinoba Bhave take up the challenge and rise to the occasion before it is too late ?



ERRATTA

Page 14	Line 13	एकं सद् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति ।
„	16 „ 30-31	उत्तरं यत् समुद्रस्य हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम् । वर्षं तद् भारतं नाम भारती यत्र संतति ॥
„	17 „ 16-17	अपि स्वर्णमयी लंका न मे लक्ष्मण रोचते । जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ॥
„	18 „ 18	जागे धर्मं हिन्दू सकल भंड भाजे ॥
„	32 „ 23	एकं सद् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति ।



THE AUTHOR

Prof. Balraj Madhok was born at Askardu, the winter capital of the Ladakh province of Kashmir State in 1920. After a distinguished academic career, he joined the D. A. V. College Srinagar (Kashmir) as Professor of History. He was an eye witness to the developments leading to and connected with Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir and played a significant role in the defence of Srinagar till the arrival of the Indian troops on the scene. He founded Jammu & Kashmir Praja Parishad in 1948, and later collaborated with late Dr S. P. Mukherjee for the formation of "Bhartiya Jana Sangh" of which he has been a leading light since its inception in 1951. He was elected to the Indian Parliament from New Delhi first in 1961 and then again in 1967.

Prof. Madhok is the author of a number of books in English and Hindi. His best known published works in English are— "Kashmir Divided" (1949), Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee—a Biography (1953), Indian Nationalism (1956), Political Trends in India (1959), Portrait of a Martyr (1968).



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