



# **INDIAN NATIONALISM**

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# INDIAN NATIONALISM

*By*

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## Introduction

The National Liberal League of Punjab invited monographs in 1944 on "Communal Problem—its causes, and solution" and offered a prize of Rs. 1000/- for the one adjudged best by a team of reputed scholars and men of affairs. It was a time when the demand for partition of the country on the basis of two-nation theory as propounded by the Muslim League at its Lahore session of 1940 was gaining ground. I was then teaching in a college at Srinagar (Kashmir) and had a lot of leisure for academic pursuits. I, therefore, decided to avail of the opportunity to make an objective study of the problem which was threatening the age-old unity of the country. With my background of history, I studied and sifted most of the available published material on the subject and after a sustained labour of many months prepared a monograph of about 10,000 words by the end of 1945.

I was happy to learn in 1946 that my monograph was adjudged the best out of about 500 monographs submitted by scholars and public men from different parts of the country. By this time, the situation had been further aggravated and partition of the country seemed to be imminent. Therefore, a number of friends, including Dr. A.L. Sirivastva, then Head of the History Department of the Panjab University, Lahore, advised me to publish it. It appeared in a book form under the title "India on the Cross-roads" in 1946.

I had pointed out in that monograph that the root cause of growing communalism and separatism among the Muslims was the premium put on separatism by the so-called Indian nationalism as conceived and projected by the Indian National Congress. Instead of emphasising the basic unity of the country and its people irrespective of their caste, creed or religion, and instead of laying stress on loyalty to the common motherland and its age-old heritage, the Congress had been trying to build Indian Nationalism on the basis of bargains with separatist forces represented by the Muslim League. Common habitation, common economic interests and common opposition to the British rule which were the main planks of the Congress brand of Indian Nationalism, I had then pointed out, cannot weld the people into a strong and well-knit nation. Nowhere has a nation been made on the basis of such ephemeral and negative factors. The seeds of two-nation theory were inherent in this makeshift approach to the vital question of Indian Nationalism and partition of the country in 1947 came as its logical corrolary.

My conclusions and worst fears having come true, I hoped that the Congress leadership of free but truncated India would do some re-thinking on the question of Indian Nationalism in the light of the lessons of partition. As an aid to the process of re-thinking a revised edition of the book was published under the title 'Hindu Rashtra—A study in Indian Nationalism' in 1955. It was hailed as a useful contribution to political thought by most of the national newspapers which reviewed it. That book was sold out quickly

and has been out of print for many years now.

In the meantime the evil effects of the old policy of appeasement of separatist forces by offering baits to them instead of making any concerted effort to bring them into the national current began to manifest themselves once more. The backing that such separatist forces are now getting from Pakistan which has proved to be India's born enemy, in collusion with communist China have added to their potentiality for mischief. At the same time parochialism and separatism in other forms have been encouraged by the democratic elections in which candidates and parties pander to separatist emotions and trends to secure bloc votes of different social, religious and linguistic groups. As a result the unity of already truncated India is being seriously threatened once again.

This has forced some people at least to think of Indian Nationalism which demonstrated its latent strength during the Chinese invasion of 1962 and Pakistani invasion of 1965. The National upsurge against the enemy from end to end of the country under which all differences were submerged, came as a pleasant surprise to nationalist India and as a shock to those who had been denouncing nationalism as a bourgeois concept and preaching the theory of India being a multi-cultural and multi-national state. But even the nationalist opinion was surprised to find that this upsurge of nationalism manifested itself mainly through Bhartiya Jan Sangh whom they had been maligning as a communal organisation and not through the Indian National Congress and its political allies who had been masquerading as monopolists of



Indian Nationalism. The massive support that the Indian electorate gave to Bhartiya Jan Sangh in the general elections of 1967 further confirmed the strength of true Indian Nationalism of which the Jan Sangh has come to be recognised as the spearhead.

As a result the question that should have been asked immediately after partition—what is the real basis of Indian Nationalism and Indian Unity?—has begun to be asked seriously now after 21 years of bungling during which the people were taught to follow late Pt. Nehru in being either individualists or internationalists.

Once the need for nationalism as a force for maintaining the unity of the country was realised, search began to be made for discovering the basis for it. As a result, I received a number of queries about the book which was no longer available in the market.

The title of the present edition which has been thoroughly revised has been deliberately changed to 'Indian Nationalism—A study in Hindu Rashtravad' so that those who are allergic to the name Hindu may also read it and dispel their ignorance about the real connotation of that word. What is important is not the name but the content of Indian Nationalism and its mainsprings. Once one is clear about them, it should not be difficult to resolve the controversy about the name.

I undertook this study long before Bhartiya Jan Sangh was born. I have tried to be objective to the best of my capacity. But even the most objective man cannot claim to be completely immune to subjective thinking. So I do not claim any infallibility

about my conclusions.

I would feel amply rewarded for this study if it provokes thought and sense of urgency about strengthening and revitalising Indian nationalism as a necessary bulwark for Indian Unity.

New Delhi

**Balraj Madhok**

January 18, 1969.



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## Nationalism—A Living Force

Nationalism as a supreme expression of group sentiment in man capable of inspiring him to acts of great heroism and self-sacrifice for the national group to which he belongs, has been a vital force in shaping the history of the world, particularly since the French Revolution, which is said to have released the two great forces of nationalism and liberalism in Europe.

It has since been one of the strongest factors for war and peace, for emancipation, unification and consolidation of areas and peoples having certain common features or unities underlying the nation concept and disruption and disintegration of vast empires lacking any such cohesion.

But it would be wrong to think, as is sometimes suggested, that nationalism is a sentiment of recent origin, that it is a modern concept about which the ancients were blissfully ignorant. Rather nationalism represents a definite stage in the evolution of man in the social-cum-political sphere. Gregarious instinct has been a natural instinct with man since his creation. It has been the basis of his social and group life. Biological necessity has been aiding it. Family, tribe and bigger groups, like a union of tribes or nation, "Rashtra"—as the Rigvedic Aryans called it—are the natural steps in this evolution on human side as home, village, canton and country have been on the territorial side. Generally the territorial phase of this evolution has been keeping pace with the

evolution of human phase with the result that families, tribes and nationalities have been identified from the earliest times with definite territorial regions. The group sentiment of man has also been expanding with this evolution. The bigger groups have been steadily having stronger claims on the loyalties of individual. The national group claims the supreme loyalty of the individual in most parts of the modern world.

### **Internationalism Presupposes Nationalism**

Comprehension of the whole world as one unit, and of the entire mankind as one group is a still higher stage in this group consciousness of man. The present-day talk about internationalism and world state is an expression of the wish to raise man above the national stage where he often finds his national interests clashing with the similar interests of other nations resulting in world conflicts. The League of Nations, The United Nations Organisation and numerous other international organisations have been the instruments forged to give a practical shape to this wish.

But it would be too much to believe that internationalism has taken hold of the mind of man. It is as yet a hobby and a device of some statesmen of the bigger powers of the West, who have had all the advantages accruing from nationalism but who now find the submerged and suppressed nations asserting their rights, to distract the minds of such people from the tasks of national consolidation and assertion of their rights.

This is why the suppressed people, who have not yet developed a strong nationalism and are yet

struggling for their national emancipation have little faith in the internationalism sponsored by the dominant powers of the West. Internationalism, they rightly assert, can only grow out of nationalism which is its necessary basis and pre-condition. It can have little meaning for people who lack an active nationalism growing out of an honourable national existence. That explains the fervent appeal of late Dr. Sun Yat-sen—the maker of modern China—to his country's youth not to be carried away by the slogans of internationalism which the Westerners had been preaching to divert their minds from the task of China's national consolidation and reconstruction, which went counter to their interest. "We must understand", he pleaded, "that cosmopolitanism grows out of nationalism ; if we want to extend cosmopolitanism we must first establish our own nationalism ; if nationalism cannot become strong, cosmopolitanism certainly cannot prosper. If we discard nationalism and go and talk cosmopolitanism, we put the cart before the horse."

### **Nationalism in Communist Russia**

The strength of nationalism and its importance in developing patriotism and spirit of supreme self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation is best illustrated in our own days by communist Russia—a state which began with the denunciation of nationalism as a bourgeois concept and a reactionary sentiment. In pursuit of the slogan "Workers of the world unite" and in their anxiety to rouse revolutionary fervour all over the world,—particularly in Britain, Germany and France, the most industrialised National States of the West



in which, according to the communist thesis, the communist revolution should have come first,—the Bolsheviks of Russia condemned nationalism and appealed to the workers of Germany and Britain to rise against their own national governments. In their own country they denounced Russia's past as something ignoble and reactionary. They wanted the Russians to forget their past and their national identity and start their history anew from 1917 as harbingers of international revolution. The great Russian heroes like Alexander Novesky, who fought the invaders of Russia in the 7th century, Peter the Great and Katherine who had done so much to make Russia what she is today, Prince Suzonov who had led Russian armies against Napoleon, and countless other kings, generals and scholars of Russia were condemned as reactionary representatives of a dark past which must be treated as dead and gone.

But during World War II it was felt by the communist leaders of the same Russia that they could not inspire the Russian youth to acts of heroism demanded by the situation merely by communist slogans about bread and "revolution". They had to take the help of Russia's past history to create national consciousness among the Russian people. They had to revive and revitalise Russian nationalism. They lionised Peter and Katherine, presented Novesky and Suzonov as great national heroes and urged the communist youth to emulate them. It astounded the admirers and critics of communist Russia alike. "Never before since the coming of the Soviets", observed Maurice Hindus in his *Mother Russia*, "has Russia been so

indefatigably and enthusiastically re-discovering herself in her past, interpreting it, reinvesting it with fresh meaning and fresh glory". He considered it "the most amazing social phenomenon of Sovietism", but admitted : "yet it is as real as it is universal and is a fresh and unexpected testimony of the power of nationality in our times."

### **Retreat of Indian Nationalism**

Bharat, after a long and sustained struggle for freedom, has recently achieved her national independence. Nationalism has been one of the weapons with which she carried on this struggle. But to the utter disillusionment of all nationalists, nationalism as preached and propagated during the last sixty years or so, failed to preserve and consolidate the unity of India which has existed as a unit—geographical, cultural as well as political—for ages past. It could not stop the partition of the country on the basis of the two-nation theory which stands as a challenge to the very basis of Indian Nationalism.

This failure of nationalism to preserve and reinforce India's unity which was already a reality—whereas it has been the main instrument in the unification of countries like Italy and Germany which had been divided into dozens of separate States—has made all thinking people ask the question : *What is wrong with our Nationalism?* Why did Indian nationalism fail to evoke the same feelings of solidarity and cohesion among the Indian people, which is its characteristic function ?

It was expected that leaders and architects of free India would give serious thought to this failure of Indian Nationalism to discover the causes of its failure, and to find out what could be the true basis of a strong and scientific Indian nationalism.

But unfortunately that expectation has not been fulfilled so far. These leaders, now secure in power, have not only not felt it necessary to analyse the causes of this failure but, what is more amazing, have also been defending and preaching the same Congress brand of nationalism which has been completely exploded with a bang by the partition. They have been trying to deceive themselves and the people by putting the blame for the failure of their brand of nationalism to preserve India's unity on the British and the so-called "communalists". They have lacked the courage to admit that there has been something wrong with their basic approach to the question of Indian Nationalism. Instead of facing facts, they have been quarrelling with all those who dare to point out the fallacies from which their brand of nationalism suffers, and who advocate its reconsideration. Or else, they find an escape in internationalism which has been put in vogue to distract the people's mind from the problems that failure of nationalism has created in the country.

As a result, national consciousness which had survived the de-nationalising policies of the British rulers is now getting weaker and weaker and fissiparous tendencies are raising their ugly heads all over the country. Casteism, linguism sectarianism, provincialism have begun playing havoc with the national unity

and their appeasement for party ends masquerades as nationalism. This situation is creating a sort of cynicism in the politically conscious people. They are finding an intellectual escape in internationalism. They are becoming either individualists or internationalists while the masses are getting steeped into casteism and provincialism.

This situation is fraught with grave dangers for a country like India which is just struggling to achieve national health. Her security and integrity—nay, her very existence—is being threatened by disruptive forces from within and without. She can face the clouds that are gathering and fulfil her destiny only if she is strong and united, sure of the loyalty and patriotism of her citizens. This is not possible without sound nationalism capable of inspiring the common man irrespective of his caste, creed or province and uniting him for service to the common Motherland.

That demands a scientific study of Indian Nationalism, its ancient roots, its present form and the causes of its failure, to discover the means and methods of revitalising it or to make it an effective instrument for national unity and national regeneration.

# Genesis of Nationalism

A clear understanding of the nation concept, of the factors and forces that tend to create the consciousness of being a nation in a people is an essential prerequisite for a scientific probe into Indian Nationalism, its origin, growth and present character, to find out the causes of its failure and to determine the true basis for a strong nationalism which India so badly needs today.

## **Nationhood Defined**

As is the case with most social studies, the theoretical discussion about Nation and Nationalism began long after they had become a living reality and a vital factor in the shaping of history. The attention of the political thinkers of the West was particularly drawn towards them when the rising tide of nationalism after the French Revolution began to change the face of Europe with breath-taking rapidity. They then began analysing the factors underlying the national movements in different parts of Europe and theorising about what makes a nation.

*Prof. Holecombe* explained it as corporate sentiment, a kind of fellow-feeling or mutual sympathy, relating to a definite home country. It springs from a common heritage of memories, whether of great achievements or glory or of disaster and suffering.

*Burgess* defined a nation as "a population having a common language and literature, common customs

and common consciousness of right and wrong, inhabiting a territory of geographical unity."

*Bluntschli* described a nation as "a union of the men of different occupations and social status, in a hereditary society of common spirit, feeling and race bound together especially by language and customs in a common civilisation which gives them a sense of unity and distinction from all foreigners quite apart from the bond of the State."

*Gettell* defined it as "a population having common bonds of race, language, religion, tradition and history. These influences create a consciousness of unity that binds individuals into a nationality."

In the light of these definitions and actual experience the essentials of nationhood are sometimes described as Five Unities—*viz.* Geographical (country), Racial (race), Linguistic (language), Cultural (culture) and Religious (religion). For a group of people to be a nation the existence among them of these unities or common factors came to be considered as essential.

Some more modern political thinkers like *Renan* and *Sir Ernest Barker*, the famous British political scientists, have grown more philosophical about the nation concept. According to *Renan* nation is a "soul, a spiritual principle having its roots in depths of the hearts of man" rather than in the mere existence of the unities referred to above which are only contributory factors. According to him "two things which are really one, go to make up this soul or spiritual principle. One of these things lies in the past, the other in the present. The one is

the possession in common of a rich heritage and the other is the desire to live together and the will to continue to make the most of joint inheritance. The nation, like the individual, is the result of a long past spent in toil, sacrifice and devotion. Ancestor-worship is of all forms the most justifiable, since our ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men and glory—I mean real glory—these should be the capital of our company when we come to found a national idea.”

*Sir Ernest Barker* is more explicit. He compares nation to a living body, a combination of two basic factors—physical body represented by a common and well-defined country, the territorial heritage, and the soul or spirit represented by the common culture, language, traditions, memories and aspirations which together form the spiritual basis of a nation. Both are essential to a nation's existence, just as a body of bones and flesh *and a soul* are essential for an individual's existence.

Though all these unities or factors—physical as well as spiritual—have their importance in the nation idea, there have come to light in actual experience certain exceptions about some of them. A close scrutiny of them taken severally is, therefore, essential to assess the part of each in the development of a nation.

### Country

Taking the geographical unity first, it is a patent reality and an indisputable fact that for any people to be a nation a compact territory of its own—preferably

delimited by national geographical boundaries—is essential. Such a territory forms the physical basis of a people's national life. A nation without a country is unthinkable. A people endowed with all other unities but deprived of a country of their own cease to be a nation, as happened with the Jews and Parsis when they were driven out of their homelands by the Muslim Arabs. On the other hand, a people inhabiting a definite territory in common under a common Government tend to develop other unities and get welded together into a distinct nation, as has happened in the case of U.S.A., Canada and Australia in very recent times. The Jews also have regained their national status since the creation of Israel. Now Jews, scattered all over the world as they are, can look up to Israel as their national homeland and claim membership and protection of the Israelite.

The compactness of the territory is essential to make it an effective physical basis of the nation. A people divided into widely separated territories even though under the same Government tend to develop on different lines. The ties uniting them get weaker as they become conscious of the distinct life, customs, manners and interests as dictated by the geographical basis of their existence. That is how the British people settled in Australia and Canada developed a separate nationhood. The experiment being tried in Pakistan to weld its Eastern and Western wings, separated as they are by over a thousand miles of Indian territory, into a common Pakistani nationhood is bound to fail for the same reason. In



fact the signs of its failure have already appeared.

Reverence of the common territory is a necessary corollary of the consciousness of nationhood. Mere habitation in a country without having a feeling of loyalty for it, does not make such inhabitants a nation. But this is a rare phenomenon. Generally speaking, a people in a well defined territory invariably tend to develop love and loyalty for that territory. That is why the national territory is referred to as motherland or fatherland by its nationals all over the world.

### **Race :**

It had been usual sometime back for most European political thinkers to assert that "race" is the essence of nationality. Sometimes race and nation were even used as inter-changeable terms. But recent studies in ethnics have shown that race, which is essentially a biological and ethnological concept, has little to do in the making of modern nations, most of which are an agglomeration of a number of ethnic groups which came to be welded together in the course of history in all parts of the world. The English nation, for example, is a mixture of a number of ethnic or racial elements such as Iberians, Romans, and Anglo-Saxons.

But racial unity in the sense of a common race spirit, some common traits which may have originally belonged to one particular race or ethnic group but which came to be adopted by all the racial elements comprising the national group in the course of history and which distinguish it from other groups, is an

important factor in the making of nations. In England, for example, it is the Anglo-Saxon race which has coloured the life and character of the English people most. It has given England its name and language.

It can, therefore, well claim to be the mother race of the English. The English Nation is unthinkable without the Anglo-Saxon race.

Similarly in India the Aryan race occupies the place of mother race. Numerous ethnic and racial groups have contributed to the making of the Indian people but life of all of them has been imperceptibly coloured and moulded in the Indian pattern by the Aryan culture and ideals, the Aryan race spirit. Thus racial unity taken in its strictly scientific or biological sense may not be considered as an essential factor in the development of a nation. But racial unity in the sense of a common race spirit, giving rise to common language, culture and traditions is an essential of all modern nations. Elements which are not assimilated by the mother race of the country, or have not developed a common race spirit, continue to be foreign elements within the body of the nation irrespective of the length of time for which they might have been living in that country—unless they annihilate the mother race and its life pattern as the Muslim Arabs did in Egypt in the 7th century A.D. Now Egyptian people form part of the Arab race. Their original racial characteristics, language and culture have become completely submerged—just as the Celts got submerged in the Anglo-Saxon race in England.

This common race spirit which is coloured by the language and culture of the dominant element in the

racial-make up of a nation, manifests itself through the national culture.

### **Culture :**

Culture is a comprehensive term. It is used to denote the distinctive life pattern, the social ideals, artistic traditions, intellectual attainments, the historical achievements and memories of the past which colour the mental attitude and loyalties of a people in the present. Religious beliefs and dominant philosophy of life also have great influence on the culture of a people as distinct from external amenities of life which represent the civilisation of the age or the country concerned. Naturally only those achievements in the field of art, literature, philosophy and other fields of activity can have an abiding influence on the people which have some intrinsic greatness about them. They must be the highest achievements of that people in the various fields. It represents a nation's highest values of life which distinguish it from other nations. Shakespeare and Kalidas represent the highest attainment of the English and the Indian people in the field of literature and as such have become the cultural symbols of their respective nations.

The culture of a people is sometimes very materially influenced by the religion professed by them when that religion happens to be something more than a mere form of worship. For example Christianity till recently and Islam even today have been colouring every aspect of the lives of their followers and determining the precedence of their loyalties. There has

been, therefore, a good deal of talk about a Christian culture and a Muslim culture. But with the growth of the national feeling the national cultures of different peoples have come in the fore-front with the result that now we hear more of a German culture, a French culture, a Turkish culture rather than of a Christian or an Islamic culture which should be common to all the Christian and Muslim nations of the world.

The growth of a common culture or the cultural unity of a people is both the cause and effect of their being a nation. In the case of U.S.A., the growth of American culture is a direct result of U.S.A.'s emergence as a separate and distinct state claiming to be a nation. But in the case of Germany and Italy the existence of a common culture, a common history, traditions, memories of achievements and great men and, above all, a common language led to their unification and emergence as national States.

Whether it precedes or follows the birth of national consciousness, culture is the most important ingredient of the national edifice. It is the spring from which the *will* to be a nation develops in a people's heart. It is why it has been called the soul of a nation. Cultural unity is a *sine qua non* for national unity. Where it is absent or where a substantial section of the people refuse to owe allegiance to the national culture their national unity is bound to be impaired sooner or later.

### **Language :**

Language, which, broadly speaking, forms part of a nation's cultural heritage, is sometimes taken as a

distinct factor in the growth of nationhood. As the vehicle of man's ideas its importance in shaping and influencing the minds of men cannot be overemphasised. "Men," as Fichte, the German philosopher, observed long ago, "are formed by language far more than language is formed by men."

The influence of language in shaping the mental outlook of a man is sure though sometimes imperceptible. Every word, every expression of a living language depicts the nation's life and ideals. That explains why it is said, "Kill the language and you will kill the nation". The truth of it is borne out by history. The British tried to force the English language on India in their bid "to create a race of Indians who would be completely denationalised and therefore very useful to the British masters." They succeeded to some extent and the result is there for everyone to see. The Arabs succeeded in imposing their language on the Egyptians and the result is that ancient Egypt of the Pharaohs is dead and gone for ever.

In the case of modern nations like the U.S.A. where more than one language was spoken by the different sections of emigrants from Europe, the development of a common language, English, which has been adopted by all has proved to be the most potent factor in welding them into a nation. In other big countries like the U.S.S.R. and China where the existence of a number of distinct languages and dialects is quite natural, the existence of a common national or federal language has been serving as a unifying link between linguistic regions and thus aiding the national unity.

Switzerland, however, presents an exception. There

three languages—German, French and Italian—are spoken in the different cantons without in any way undermining the national unity of the Swiss people. The reason is that the Swiss people have otherwise developed certain common traditions and institutions which transcend their linguistic differences. Further Switzerland has never been subjected to those stresses and strains which test the national cohesion of people. It is a political nation whose separate existence does not jar her neighbours who look upon her as their common play-ground, a common resting place. It is, therefore, a national state enjoying international patronage.

But this exception only proves the rule. Linguistic unity is and has always been an effective factor in the development of nations. As the repository of a nation's literary treasures it plays a very important part in the evolution of national culture.

### **Religion**

The unity of religion has all through history played an important role in creating a type of group-consciousness among followers of different religions. Religious unity was considered to be a most potent unifying force in most states of Europe till recently and all means and methods were adopted to secure such unity in the people.

But with the growth of religious eclecticism as a natural adjunct to the growth of scientific spirit and outlook, religion has ceased to be, in most countries of the West, a compelling factor in the nation concept. It is becoming more and more a matter of conscience

and has ceased to colour the loyalties and outlook of the people about social and political matters. A man can be a German or English or Italian by nationality and at the same time be a Catholic or Protestant or for that matter a Muslim or a Buddhist.

But still religion plays an important part in the national life of most European countries. Political parties based on religion have been a marked feature of the political life of many of the continental countries. England still has a state-religion and its kings and queens tenaciously cling to the title "Defender of the Faith". Religious unity does act as a cementing force in their national lives even today though Christianity has ceased to colour their loyalties to the same extent as it did a couple of centuries ago.

The same has been true of India where religious uniformity has never been the rule. Ecclecticism—as many minds, so many ways—has been the characteristic feature of religious life of India. A common way of life, a common culture, rather than a common form of worship, has been a distinguishing feature of India's national existence.

But in the case of most Islamic countries religion has continued to play the dominant part in shaping their national life. Islam still pervades the entire life of its votaries, their political loyalties, social outlook and cultural ideals are still shaped by it more than anything else. It is a whole system of life and not a mere form of worship. Therefore loyalty to Islam of most Muslims living in non-Muslim states comes in conflict with their loyalty to the states in which they live and loyalty to religion generally

proves stronger with them. That is why Islam has been playing a disruptive role in most states in which it does not occupy the dominant position. That explains why conversion of a man to Islam results in a complete change in his loyalties and outlook. It involves a change not only in his form of worship but also in his way of life, in his attitude towards his own forefathers and heroes, nay towards everything that counts in the life of a nation. In his case his nationality changes with his religion.

A time may come when other factors of nationalism may overcome the exclusiveness of Islam and it may be reduced to a mere form of worship as was tried by Kamal Ata Turk in Turkey. But for the present, Islamic consciousness is proving to be stronger than national consciousness even in Muslim states, not to speak of the Muslims living in states like India which are considered by them as non-Muslim states.

Thus religion will continue to be a factor of supreme importance where it continues to be much more than a mere form of worship, as is the case with Islam. Elsewhere it has ceased to be a compelling factor.

Generally culture, language and religion together form a compound factor in the making of a nation. It is only recently that they are seen in their separateness and the relative importance of each is assessed. They together form the soul or the spiritual basis of a nation. They are the life-spirit of the nation idea and the "will" to be a nation, about which Renan and some other writers have been so eloquent, is born out of this consciousness of a common soul. No nation can hope to maintain its national character by for-



getting its soul.

### **Modern Factors**

Some modern thinkers, while not denying the importance of the five unities referred to above in the formation of nations, lay special emphasis on economic and political factors in creating group consciousness. Such was the thesis of Karl Marx when he advocated the unity of workers of the world on the basis of their economic interests.

But actual experience of the present times as also of the past belies this contention.

German workers have fought the Russian workers twice in recent history. Sudetan Germans and the Czechs had common economic interests and yet they could not be one. The truth is, as Renan has put it, that community of interests can bring about "commercial treaties" but cannot form a nation, which is a body and soul put together and has a sentimental side which is much more important than the economic side. Patriotism which is born out of national sentiment and which in its turn sustains and protects the nation cannot be measured in terms of economics as communist Russia herself learnt by experience during the last war.

The same is true of political factors. Political unity under one Government is no doubt important in the growth of national spirit and unity. But its role is only that of a helper. It cannot be the basis. It can only help the growth of nationalism where some or all the unities referred to above exist. If they do not exist, political unity, particularly under a democratic

set-up, in which individuals and political parties work up caste, communal, regional and such other parochial feelings to secure block votes, accelerates the forces of disruption rather than of unity. The recent history of Europe as also of India bear testimony to this fact.

As seen above not all the factors that lie at the root of the nation concept are altogether indispensable, There are examples of living nations where all of these unities did not exist. Again there are examples where one or the other of these unities played a stronger part. The important thing in all cases is the consciousness of being a nation, the existence of a supreme group sentiment which demands loyalty of the individual when it comes in clash with his loyalties to other groups,—social, political, economic or religious—to which he may belong.

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## Historic Roots of Indian Nationalism

A study of the history and culture of India in the light of the foregoing discussion about the nation concept and the factors and forces that contribute to the growth of consciousness in a people of being a nation reveals that almost all of them have been in existence and have been influencing, more or less, the life and history of the Indian people and moulding them into a nation from the very dawn of her history. The view that Indian nationalism is a thing of recent origin, an effect of the impact of Western ideas on Indian life, has no basis in fact or history. Rather nationalism in the sense of group sentiment based on consciousness of a common country and common culture has been a distinguishing feature of Indian life from very early times. It has been manifesting itself in so many ways and endowing the diversified life of this vast and varied country with a basic unity and integrity. This unity in diversity, inner consciousness of being one people in spite of the geographical distances and linguistic differences that divide people of one part of the country from the other, has been a distinguishing feature of India all through the ages. The seeds of Indian nationalism are in this consciousness of unity which in its turn is the result of a number of factors.

The most notable manifestation of Indian nation-

nalism is provided by the clear conception of India as the land of the Indian people and the sense of reverence and pride for her with which the Indian tradition and literature, religious as well as secular, is replete.

This comprehension of India as the common motherland (Matri Bhoo) and holy land (Punya Bhoo) of the Indian people as a whole, irrespective of caste or creed, has grown with the evolution of Indian history. The early Vedic literature is full of hymns in propitiation of the land on which the Rigvedic Aryans lived. There is one full chapter in Rigveda—Prithvi Sukta—in which mother earth as the land of the Aryan people is praised. The word *Rashtra* in the sense of country or nation is also first used in Rigveda.

### **Aryan Extension**

But to begin with, this land of the Aryans was confined to north-western parts of the present-day India, which is now generally accepted to be the original home of the Vedic Aryans. Rigveda named it as “Brahmavarta” or “Sapta-Sindu”, the land of the seven rivers. As Aryans spread themselves in the East bringing the whole of North India within the Aryan pale, the whole of it came to be known as Aryavarta. But the Aryan expansion did not stop there. Vindhya were soon crossed and the whole of South India was also Aryanised.

### **Bharat-varsha**

This extension of Aryan cultural sway to the South made the name Aryavarta inadequate. It could not be used for the whole country, the Southern part of which

was not Aryan by race. So a new name expressing the cultural and political rather than racial unity of the country was needed. That name is Bharat-varsha. It originated with King Bharat, the first Chakravarti King of the whole of India from the Himalaya to the seas known to the Indian tradition. In course of time the name of the entire people of India irrespective of their caste, creed or race came to be Bharatiyas after the name of the country.

This fact finds a very explicit expression in Vishnu Purana wherein Bharat-varsha has been defined as the country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains and is so called because it is the abode of the descendants of Bharata...

उत्तरं यत् समुद्रस्य हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम् ।  
वर्षं तद् भारतं नाम भारती यत्र संतति ॥

It further gives details about its geographical features and main rivers and mountains. The mountains mentioned are Mahendra, Malaya, Suktimat, Riksha, Vindhya and Panipatr. It is also mentioned that to the East of Bharat dwell the Kiratas—barbarians—to the West the Yavanas (Greeks) and in the centre dwell the Aryans.

Vayu Purana goes a step further. It gives exact dimensions of Bharat. It says that the length of Bharat from the source of the Ganga to Kanya Kumari is one thousand yojanas :

योजनानां सहस्रं तु द्वीपोयं दक्षिणोत्तरम् ।  
आयतो ह्याकुमारिक्यादागङ्गा प्रभवाञ्च यः ॥

### **Hindu and Indian**

Later in the course of history when the people of

the West, the Persians and the Greeks, came in contact with Bharat-varsha they gave it new names derived from the river Sindhu, the first great geographical land-mark of Bharat-varsha which immediately strikes an incomer from the West. The Persians pronounced Sindhu as Hindu (S of Sanskrit is changed into H in Persian) and so called the land of Sindhu as Hindusthan and its people as Hindus. Later when Greeks came to Bharat they also were struck by the grandeur of the Sindhu which they pronounced as Indus. So after Indus, India and Indian became the Greek forms of Hindusthan and Hindu respectively. Thus the names Hindusthan and India and Hindu and Indian came to be first applied for Bharat-varsha and her people. The Greek names naturally became more popular with the Europeans and so they are now most commonly used by them. But for a pretty long time the Persian-Sanskrit names of Hindusthan, Sindhusthan and Hindu or Sindhu remained more in vogue and have continued to be more popular than any other name. Both these names as shown above have a geographical rather than racial or religious origin. It is, therefore, very wrong to give a narrow or sectarian connotation to any of them. Bharatiya Rashtra, the Indian Nation or the Hindu Rashtra thus stand for the same thing and should convey exactly the same sense. Those who feel shy of the term Hindu but take pride in being called Indians either betray pitiable ignorance about their own past or have not yet been able to shed their mental slavery of the West, particularly of the English, which makes them prefer the names given by them to their own

original names.

This comprehension of Bharat as a whole, as one country was not a mere territorial conception. Devotion or adoration for her has been instilled into the Indian heart in so many ways from the earliest times. The classic example of this adoration of the country as motherland is provided to us by Shri Ramchandra in whose mouth Valmiki has put the famous lines :

अपि स्वर्णमयी लङ्का न मे लक्ष्मण रोचते ।  
जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ॥

(Lakshman, even the golden Lanka has no charm for me. Mother and motherland (Bharat) are greater than heaven even) which represent the quintessence of nationalism.

This comprehension and adoration of Bharat as a whole was further facilitated and encouraged by the identification of the land with the seven holy mountains referred to above spread all over the country and seven holy rivers, Sindhu Saraswati, Yamuna, Ganga, Narmada, Godavari and Kaveri which, between themselves cover the whole of India from extreme North to extreme South.

### **Ancient Nation**

Thus, consciousness of a well defined territory which forms the physical basis of nationalism, has been in existence in Bharat since remote past to serve as the territorial basis of Bharatiya, Indian or Hindu nationalism. The fact that the people of Bharat had not only become conscious of their territorial heritage but

had also developed the proper attitude of reverence towards it shows that nationalism had taken roots in the Indian hearts much earlier than most Western political writers could believe.

This consciousness of territorial unity has been reinforced by the unity of race spirit and culture. Racial unity in the sense of existence as one pure race, as discussed earlier, is more a myth than a reality. No nation of the world can claim to have perfect racial purity and homogeneity. This is true of India also. The present Indian or Hindu society is the sum total of the intermixture of a number of racial elements both indigenous as well as foreign which have, in the course of history, been welded together. So no one in India can have the audacity of a Hitler to claim racial unity for the people of India as a whole.

But there is no denying the fact that the Aryan race spirit has pervaded the various racial elements that go to form the Indian or Hindu nation, just as the Anglo-Saxon racial and cultural characteristics have pervaded the life of the people of England, whatever their racial origin may be.

The process of this amalgamation of the various racial elements that have contributed to the present Indian stock with the Aryan people is a fascinating study and helps us to understand the evolution of Indian nationalism. Each racial group must have had at some stage of its history a distinct life-pattern and culture of its own. But as it came in contact with the Aryan people a process of assimilation began, as a result of which the Aryan life-pattern and culture got invariably writ large over the life-patterns of the other



racés. Of course racial elements like the Dravidians also made some contribution to the resultant cultural amalgam. But their contributions have been so well assimilated that it is not easily possible to distinguish between the Dravidian and the Aryan elements in the culture and life-pattern of India. They have become indistinguishably one.

The same has happened with the waves of foreign invaders who entered India from the West from time to time. They have all been assimilated by the main current of Indian or Hindu life. They have all become so well Hinduised that they have become an indistinguishable and indivisible part and parcel of the main current of Indian or Hindu cultural life. They can be compared to the tributaries of the Ganga whose waters, once they join the Ganga, all become "Gangajal" and develop its qualities.

This cultural unity of the Indian people has been manifesting itself in so many ways. The geographical situation of the holy places, rivers, towns and mountains of India, spread as they are from one end of the country to the other, are the most concrete reminder of this cultural unity. It is comprehended alike by the rich and the poor, by the learned and the illiterate.

But the most potent and abiding instrument of this cultural unity of India is the unity of language which Sanskrit has given to her. Sanskrit, though it has ceased to be a spoken language in any part of the country, is the mother, the unifying link, between all the Indian languages including the Dravidian languages of the South, which, though not directly derived

from Sanskrit, have been very deeply influenced by it. Some of them contain as many as sixty per cent words of Sanskrit origin.

Literature written in Sanskrit, and the great masters like Valmiki, Vyas and Kalidas, are the common property and common pride of the whole of India. They are the cultural symbols which are equally cherished by the North and the South irrespective of caste or creed. That explains why there is such a unanimity between politicians and scholars of both North and South about encouragement to Sanskrit studies both for the revitalisation of Indian cultural life as also for strengthening the forces of unity in the country.

The part played by religion in creating cultural and linguistic unity in India is a matter of opinion. Religion in the sense in which Islam and Christianity are religions, India had none. Islam is unthinkable without Mohammed the Prophet, his Shariat and the Quoran. Christianity is unthinkable without Christ, his gospel and the Bible. It is faith in a particular prophet and book which makes a man Muslim or Christian. They are monolithic creeds which demand undivided and exclusive allegiance from their votaries.

India never had a religion like this. The Rigveda, which is the main-spring of Indian culture and religious philosophy, sang the noble truth, which is the quintessence of religion, that God is one and the wise call him by many names :

एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

A natural result of this approach to religion is mental catholicity and tolerance for every kind of worship

and religious dogma without any kind of fanaticism for any of them.

Naturally, therefore, India never had a religious unity of the type of Christian or Muslim countries where all people were forced, as is even now being done in some of the so-called Islamic countries, to conform to the religion of the rulers. This type of religious uniformity is alien to the spirit and teaching of the Vedas which are the ultimate source of religious life in India.

But though there is no uniformity of dogma and way of worship yet there is an underlying unity about the way of life, the philosophy of living that the people of India have been pursuing in different parts of the country. That way of life is common to the votaries of all the religious sects and creeds which have always flourished in India and which are sometimes collectively referred to as Hinduism by the Westerners. This word "Hinduism" in the sense of a religion is unknown to Indian history or literature. It is a term coined by the Western scholars to give a collective name to the scores of religious sects and creeds that flourish in India and whose votaries are together known as Hindus because they all follow the way of life which is distinctive of the nationals of Hindusthan. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, it is a 'commonwealth' of all the religious sects that have been flourishing in India, each with a distinct form of worship but all bound together by a common belief in doctrines of re-birth and 'Karma', and common loyalty to India, her great men and her great cultural heritage. Perfect tolerance and scru-

pulous regard for the beliefs and sentiments of the others, an instinctive faith in the principle of 'live and let live' has been the corner-stone of this common edifice of the commonwealth of Hinduism."

A logical result of this comprehensive character of Hinduism—Vedicism would perhaps be a better word, because that would avoid the confusion which identification of Hinduism with a religion by the Western writers has created in the minds of some people—is that India has not one prophet but many prophets, not one religious book but a plethora of them and the people have always had a wide choice before them in the matter of worship and beliefs. They think for themselves and make a selection of their own liking without prejudice to others. What is expected of them is not religious uniformity but a general conformity to the Indian way of life, reverence for the sages and savants to whatever sect they may belong and reverence for Bharat as the common mother of all Indians, the cradle of all her saints and philosophers, and the repository of all her treasures, material as well as spiritual.

This comprehensiveness of the Vedic religion or religions as they developed in India enabled them to absorb foreign elements as they came to India from time to time without making any fuss about them. Greek Heliodorus became a Vaishnava, Kushan Kanishka became a Buddhist and Hun Mehirgula became a Saivite. They all got merged into the wide sea of Hinduism, both socially as well as culturally.

Even people like Parsis and Syrian Christians, who clung to their own religious beliefs and practices tena-

ciously, got slowly absorbed into the Hindu society in so far as they adopted the Indian way of life. India demanded nothing more from them. It tolerated their ways of worship as it tolerated other sects of indigenous origin.

Thus India enjoyed a sort of religious unity also whose strength lay not in its rigidity but in its flexibility, not in its dogmatic uniformity but in freedom of choice in matters pertaining to the spirit. It only enjoined a general acceptance of some basic principles of life, a code of conduct. This catholicity of Vedicism, which some call its looseness, not only enabled Indian society to stand the shocks that impact of foreign hordes gave from time to time but also helped it to absorb them.

As a result of the imperceptible working of the unifying factors and forces discussed above, the people of Bharat developed long before the advent of Christianity a consciousness of their being a distinct people, with common history and traditions and a robust faith in the destiny of Bharat to be the Jagat-Guru, an instrument of God for civilising the world. This consciousness was echoed by Manu, the Indian law-giver when he declared :

एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः ।  
स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः ॥

“From Brahmans born in this land learnt people from all over the world how to mould their respective lives.”

Thus the factors and forces that tend to create national consciousness in a people, had begun to

operate in India since the days of Rigveda and, with the evolution and expansion of the Aryan society to the natural limits of India this consciousness also became co-extensive with the country as a whole. A common motherland whose rivers, mountains and cities spread from end to end of the country had a special significance in the eyes of the common people; a common cultural heritage, common history and great men as represented by *The Ramayana*, *The Mahabharat*, and their heroes, a common language and above all common laws, beliefs and way of life created in the people of India a feeling of being a distinct unified people. All outsiders who happened to visit India as friends or foes from the days of Persian and Greek invaders to the present day have been struck by this organic unity of India and her people. That is why they called them together by one name—India and Indians or Hindusthan and Hindus.

Of course political unity—the unification of the whole country under one administration—which is considered to be the logical aim and end of the growth national consciousness was not always achieved in India. But that is not at all surprising when the vastness of the country and the inadequacies of ancient means of communication are kept in mind. What is really surprising is that even in those days of primitive means of communication, the sages and statesmen of India comprehended India from the Himalayas to the seas as one country and considered it a duty of all Chakravarti kings to bring the whole of it under one “Chhatra”. What is even more important is that this political unity was actually achieved

from time to time. The very name "*Bharat-varsha*" as said above commemorates the fact of political unity of the whole country under King Bharat.

Even when the country was divided into a number of independent states, the fact of their being integral parts of one country—whose people had everything in common except the Government—was kept in mind by rulers of such states. That explains why scrupulous care was taken not to do any harm to the social and cultural life of the people in inter-state wars and sometimes combinations forged to meet foreign invaders. But still it must be admitted that national consciousness was more acute and universal on the cultural plane than on the political plane and that lack of unity in the political sphere many a time enabled foreign invaders to effect physical conquest of parts of the country. But invariably the forces of unity and nationalism asserted themselves sooner or later to vanquish such victors socially and culturally leading to their absorption in the main body of the Indian or Hindu nation.

Thus Bharat, India or Hindusthan—by whatever name one may call her—was able to preserve her national culture and character inviolate, in spite of the various stresses and strains of history. She went on absorbing foreign elements one after the other who all became steeped in the spirit and culture of the land whose common adoration made all of them equal and indistinguishable partners in the Indian Nation or the Hindu Rashtra.

This even flow of the national life was disturbed with the advent of Islam in Bharat.

# Indian Nationalism and Islam

The advent of Islam in India, first in Sindh early in the 8th century A.D. and then in the Punjab early in the 11th century and its subsequent thrusts into the rest of Hindusthan delivered a rude shock to the even tenor of India's national life which had been going on undisturbed by any outside danger for a number of centuries.

The long spell of peace and prosperity from fifth century onwards had made Hindus somewhat complacent. They had lost much of alertness and the capacity to adjust themselves with the times which had been a distinguishing feature of their history.

## **The Challenge of Islam**

Islamic hordes on the other hand presented a problem which no earlier invaders had ever presented. They came to India not as mere free booters and nomads in search of new lands to settle, but as missionaries of a new monolithic faith which had successfully engulfed some of the greatest countries of the then known world like Iran, Egypt and Spain by cutting them off from their national moorings. They wanted to engulf India as well and make it an Islamic land by putting an end to its national culture and traditions which had so far withstood successfully so many onslaughts from the earlier foreign invaders.

To appreciate this difference between the Muslim intruders and the earlier invaders who had all been



assimilated by the Hindu society one after the other, one must have a clear understanding of Islam which is not only a religion—and a monolithic religion at that insisting upon unquestioned faith in Prophet Mohammed and his book, the Koran—but also a social and political philosophy dominating and influencing the entire life and outlook of its followers. The conception of racial, national or territorial divisions of mankind is foreign to it. Its world consists of only two groups—Muslims and non-Muslims. “Millat” and “Kufar”. A country in which Muslims live and rule is Dar-ul-Islam and where non-Muslims happen to be in power is Dar-ul-Harab, the land of war, for it. It enjoined upon its followers to extend the sphere of the Millat as a matter of religious duty by conquering Dar-ul-Harabs and converting their people to Islam.

Thus the Muslim invaders, whether Arabs, Turks or Mughals, came to India with a set purpose. They wanted India's wealth but more than that they wanted to add her to the empire of Islam by converting her people to the faith of Mohammed which demanded of the converts a complete break with their past, their culture, philosophy and traditions. Advent of Islam, therefore, was a challenge to Indian nationalism, to the very basis of Indian life and culture, the like of which it had never faced before. It put it to a severe test. It ranged the proselytising zeal of the crusaders of Islam against assimilative powers of Hindu Rashtra.

To begin with, the new intruders were able to score some easy political victories on the Hindus who, in their ignorance of Islam and its exploits in Western Asia, did not take the newcomers very seriously.

Moreover centuries of peace, prosperity and immunity from external attack had made the people of India indifferent to the needs of national defence to meet the challenge effectively. They perhaps thought that the newcomers would get submerged in the sea of Indian humanity like earlier invaders.

But as the new invaders showed their dragon's teeth, started destruction of the symbols of national life and employed all and every means to subvert the loyalty of the Hindus to their motherland and her age-old cultural ideals by their conversion to Islam, the leaders of Hindu society began giving serious thought to the new and unprecedented situation.

### **The Long Struggle**

Thus began the struggle between Indian nationalism, the will to exist and maintain its distinct personality by the Hindu *Rashtra* and the alien Islam and its denationalised or de-Hinduised Indian allies, which has continued with varying vicissitudes to this day. It was not merely a struggle between two religions or two social orders. It was a struggle between the Indian nation, the national society of India and the aliens who wanted to submerge her. That explains why throughout Indian history these invaders and those whom they could win over to their faith in India have been referred to as Turks—territorial name of a foreign people—and *not Muslims*, while the Indians who resisted them have been always referred to as Hindus, the national name of the people of Hindustan and not as Rajput or Brahman or Shaiv, Sikh or Jain or as Punjabis or Bengalis, the different

castes, religions and provinces in which the Hindus are internally divided. Even today Muslims are called Turks or Turkadas in many parts of India.

This struggle has been carried on on two planes—political and social. Politically, India, unlike Egypt and Iran, never accepted the defeat which looked so complete in the beginning. She continued the fight for national emancipation in one form or the other. She never allowed the foreign Muslim rulers of Delhi, whether they were Turks, Afghans or Mughals, to feel that they had subdued the spirit of India. Patriots continued to rise from the peasants and princes of India to carry on the fight in one part or the other of this vast land. The peasantry of the Doab, the Rajputs of Marwar and Mewar, the Rajas of Vijayanagar, the Gonds of Central India, the Marathas, Jats and Sikhs continued the struggle for freedom in the course of which a galaxy of great men, soldiers and statesmen, saints and scholars, enriched the national history and tradition by their worthy exploits and heroic achievements. Prithviraj and Hamir, Krishna-devaraya and Durgavati, Pratap and Shivaji, Guru Gobind Singh and Chhatrasal and many other known and unknown patriots became the symbols of national resistance against foreign rule and ultimately succeeded in putting an end to it by the middle of the 18th century.

Before this freedom, regained after long centuries of struggle, could be consolidated, the British stepped in and another period of struggle against foreign rule began which partly ended in 1947.

This continuous struggle which lasted for about 9

centuries is a marvel of Indian history. History knows of no other people or country which carried on its struggle so long and so strenuously for regaining its national freedom and for preservation of its national life and ideals.

This long-drawn struggle on the political plane could not have been sustained but for the resistance India could put forth on the social and cultural planes and which in its turn was made possible by the spirit of freedom and national pride which was kept alive by the political struggle.

### **No Co-existence**

Islam, as said above, came to India not to go along peacefully with numerous other religious sects and creeds that flourished in India but to engulf all of them. Peaceful co-existence being foreign to its aggressively monopolistic nature, its votaries started the work of imposing it on non-believers in right earnest from the very beginning of the Muslim conquest of India. The Hindus first felt annoyed at this monopolist fanaticism of Islam which appeared to them so repugnant to true spirituality. For some time they could not decide as to how to meet this new menace. Then they adjusted themselves to the new situation and started the counter-attack. They tried not only to reclaim those who had been forcibly converted but even tried to Hinduise Islam itself. A new Smriti, the "Deval Smriti," was written which authorised and laid down the ceremonies etc. for the redemption and reconversion of those who had been forcibly converted, defiled and polluted by the Muslim

invaders in their zeal for Islam.

But they soon realised that it was not easy to meet the menace of forcible conversions and assimilate or Indianise Islam so long as it had the political backing of the rulers who used both political and economic power to propagate it. Conversion to Islam meant not only security of life, property and honour but also status and position in the government. Malik Kafur and Khusru were tempting examples of renegade Hindus rising to the highest position in the foreign government. On the other hand refusal to embrace Islam meant all kinds of hardships ; to renounce Islam after conversion meant death. Muslim historians of the period have drawn vivid though revolting pictures of the methods adopted to make India another Egypt or Iran by systematic humiliation and oppression of the nationals of the land to renounce their ancestral religion and culture and embrace Islam.

This situation made the leaders of Hindu society change their tactics. They realised that it was impossible for national life to be preserved intact in face of such overwhelming pressure from the alien rulers. The question that then posed itself to them was not how to Indianise or Hinduise the newcomers but how to prevent the national society from being engulfed by aggressive foreigners and their monopolist and denationalising religion.

### **A Defensive Armour**

The solution they hit upon was something unknown to India before. Hindu society had so far been known

for its amazing adaptability and assimilative power, its capacity to absorb and digest alien peoples. Now it was put in the reverse gear. It became exclusive. The Muslims whose vandalism and barbarism had created a strong revulsion in the minds of the common man were decried as low and uncouth. They came to be called "*Mlechha*" and '*Yavans*' to distinguish them from the national society—the Hindu society. Social system was tightened and any contact with the Muslims was tabooed. A feeling was created that a Hindu even of the lowest origin was superior to a Muslim of the highest origin.

This was a defensive armour devised to face the aggressive inroads of Islam. It served the purpose well. It saved Hindu society from being engulfed by Islam. Even the so-called untouchables showed a tenacity for their ancestral faith and culture which gives a lie direct to the far-fetched theories of Muslim historians like M. Habib of Aligarh that Islam came as an egalitarian force and was welcomed by the down-trodden humanity of India. The very fact that even the low caste people of areas surrounding the centres of Muslim power like Delhi and Lucknow have remained predominantly Hindu is a sure testimony to the intrinsic strength and power of resistance shown by Hindu society in general through long centuries of hostile pressure.

### **Links and Adjustments**

But in spite of these defensive measures, some people did become converts to Islam under pressure, political as well as economic. Naturally such forcible

converts could not change their life pattern all of a sudden. Islam sat very lightly on their heads and hearts. They continued to follow their traditional way of life and culture. They even continued to be governed by their traditional laws, customs and manners. Many of the high caste Muslims of Punjab and U. P. were, till recently, married by Brahmans according to Hindu rites before a Maulvi read their *Nikah*. Such incomplete new converts therefore began to supply the social and cultural links between the national society and its foreign ruling class which began to be influenced by the way of life and culture of the Hindu humanity in the midst of which they had to live. Thus a process of Indianisation or Hinduisation of Islam began.

This process was quickened by the teachings of saints like Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Dadoo who presented Hindu life and culture in its pristine purity and simplicity which gave a new direction to the lives of the common people by creating in them a spiritual fervour. It stole the thunder of the so-called Islamic egalitarianism and helped the semi-converts and even some truly religious minded foreign Muslims to develop a new faith in the traditional Hindu life, ideals and great men.

### **Hinduisation of Islam**

Akbar's eclecticism which was so foreign to Islam further helped this process of assimilation. Progressive growth of Hindi as the language of the people and its patronage by Akbar, as also the growing interest in Indian art, music and literature with all their Hindu themes and melodies created a deep

appreciation and understanding of Indian life and ideals, religion and philosophy in the cultured and refined among the foreign Muslims who had long since settled in India. This process of Indianisation or Hinduisation of Muslims which was imperceptibly at work is best reflected in the writings of a number of Muslim nobles, scholars and poets of the time.

A Rahim who could compare the elephant's habit of throwing dust on his head to his desire to be blessed by that particle of dust which, being sanctified by Sri Rama's touch, could transform the mythical wife of the sage—

धूर धरत निज शीश पर  
कह रहीम केहि काज  
जो रज मुनि पत्नी तरी  
सो ढूँढत गजराज

or a Raskhan who could sing in ecstasy ;

मानुष हो तो वही रसखानि  
बसौं ब्रज गोकुल गांव के गवारन  
जो पशु हों तो कहाँ वसु मेरो  
चरीं नित नन्द के धेनु मंभारन

or a Taj, the Punjabi poetess, who sang

नन्द के कुमार कुरबान तोरी सूरत पर  
हीं तो तुरकनी हिन्दवानी हो रहूंगी मैं

had ceased to be foreigners. They had grasped the spirit of India and had become truly Hindu in life and outlook though they continued to worship according to the Islamic way. Islam in them had become Hinduised—it had become a form of worship and had ceased to be a monolithic dogma and philosophy of life incapable of co-existence with anything non-Islamic



and subverting the loyalty of its votaries to their ancestral land and culture.

### **Sabotage by Mullahs**

But this process of Indianisation of Islam was not liked by the Ulema, the Mullahs and Maulanas, the traditional custodians of Islamic theology, who symbolised in their lives Islamic exclusiveness and fanaticism. So long as they had the dominant influence in the Muslim courts, which they generally had because of the theocratic character of Muslim State, they did everything in their power to preserve the aggressive and exclusive character of Islam and used state power to oppress non-Muslim nationals of the country for the "glory" of Islam. Before Akbar few Muslim kings dared to flout them. Akbar's greatness lay in his independence of character, in his capacity to break new paths. His eclecticism, his fraternisation with the Hindus and his efforts to identify himself with the life and culture of the people, may be for political reasons alone, was resented by the Ulemas. Their attitude towards the national society of this land even in the days of Akbar is best reflected in the answer Badayuni, Akbar's court historian, got from a Mullah companion whom he asked on the battlefield of Haldighat as to how could he distinguish between Pratap's Rajputs and imperial Rajputs. "Shoot indiscriminately" he was told, "whoever is killed would mean a Rajput less and hence Islam would gain."<sup>1</sup>

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1. 'Religious policy of Mughal Emperors' by Shri Ram Sharma.

This should be an eye-opener to those who glibly talk of Akbar having created a national state. Akbar's eclecticism, his broad understanding of Indian life was shared by very few of his nobles of foreign origin and none of the Ulema who then, as now, controlled the Muslim mind. With the death of Akbar, the Mullahs again regained their position in the Mughal court. The process of Indianisation of Islam which had been going apace much against their will was checked and its exclusive foreign character again began to manifest itself in so many ways. The climax was reached in the reign of Aurangzeb when oppressive tendencies and foreign character of Islam came before the people in their worst form. It created an equally strong reaction. The national resistance which had become somewhat weak during the reign of Akbar and his immediate successors—it never died as is clear from the exploits of Maharana Pratap—again became strong. Resistance movements began in different parts of the country. But it was strongest in Maharashtra where Chhatrapati Shivaji made it a broad-based national movement. A bitter struggle between the nationalist forces and the foreign oppressive forces as represented by Muslim rulers and their co-religionists ensued in which the nationalist forces generally got the upper hand. The final show-down between the two took place on the historic battlefield of Panipat in 1761, where the Indian Islam rallied round the foreign Mussalman, Ahmed Shah Abdali, who had been specially invited. Though Abdali was victorious, he could not capitalise his victory because of the general Hindu resurgence in the country. The

Marathas were soon able to assert their position at Delhi once again.

### **A Period of Equilibrium**

Thus a situation developed in which Indian Islam lost its political and military support. A sort of equilibrium between the oppressive tendencies of Islam and the protective vigour of Indian nationalism was created all over the country. In some parts of the country, as in Punjab and Kashmir, Muslims, after long centuries of domination over the Hindus, found the tables completely turned upon them. As a natural result of this situation Muslims began to lose their sting and develop respect for the Hindus whom they had so long been treating with contempt as "Kafirs". The cultural and numerical superiority of the Hindus also began to make itself felt. Many of the Indian votaries of Islam, who had been only half Muslim in their actual life and outlook, began to realise that it no longer paid to be a Muslim. Thus conditions were created for the assimilation or Hinduisation of Islam in India.

But long centuries of oppressive domination of Islam and continuous struggle for existence had checked the mental growth of Hindusthan. Hindu society had lost its social dynamism, its capacity to move with the times. It failed to realise that protective armour of social ostracism that it had adopted against the Muslims to protect itself against their aggressiveness backed by political and economic power had outlived its utility and that time had come to renew the efforts to assimilate Indian Islam

## INDIAN NATIONALISM AND ISLAM

with the main current of the Indian or Hindu life. Maybe, the change in the situation would have brought the necessary change in the outlook of the leaders of Hindu society in the course of time and accelerated the process of assimilation of Indian Islam that had been imperceptibly going on particularly in areas cut off from the centres of Mullahism. But that was not to be. The advent of the British as the dominant power in the country changed the whole situation and brought new forces and ideas into play which gave quite a new twist to Indian nationalism.

## Anglo-Congress Twist to Indian Nationalism

The advent of the British as the dominant power in the country, to begin with, helped the process of bringing Muslims—both of Indian and foreign origin—nearer to the main body of the Indian or Hindu nation. Their growing power was a challenge and a menace not only to the nationalist forces, which were deprived of the fruits of their centuries-long struggle against Muslim domination, but also to the Muslims who found their remaining vestiges of power being destroyed by their supplanters. As between the British and the Hindus, the Muslims in general found themselves nearer to the latter with whom they had learnt to adjust. Even the fanatical Mullah class, which had lost state patronage because of the disappearance of Muslim ruling houses and the British policy of strict neutrality in religious matters, developed a greater hatred for the new infidel than the rest.

The establishment of a unitary form of government, homogeneity in the composition of British Indian Army and replacement of Persian and Sanskrit by English as the common passport to power and position in the new Government tended to create a certain amount of fellow-feeling and mutual understanding in the upper classes of Hindus and Muslims which had been generally absent all through the centuries of Muslim domination.

The great rebellion, mis-called "Mutiny of 1857" was a common venture of both Hindus and Muslims against British rule. The common sufferings and the common hatred of the British had brought the last of the Mughals and the last of the Peshwas—who had for long been fighting for mastery over India—together against the Western usurpers.

But there was no positive content in this unity. Their aims differed. There was, therefore, neither a unity of command nor of purpose. Of course Bahadur Shah tried to win the hearts of Hindus by declaring a ban on cow-slaughter. But it was only a tectical move demanded by the exigencies of the situation. It is doubtful whether the two could have pulled together after success.

But still it had some important results. The terrific oppression and cruelties perpetrated by the British on the people after their victory created memories of common suffering in the hearts of Hindus and Muslims alike which, naturally, drew them nearer to one another as against the British—for the time being at least.

### **The Consequences of 1857**

At the same time the Great Rebellion, its origin, development and final defeat, came as a revelation to the British. They realised how their Eastern edifice had almost crumbled to dust by the co-operation of the Hindus and the Muslims and how they had been able to meet the threat by exploiting the sentiments of Sikhs and the Gurkhas against the Purbias (inhabitants of Eastern U.P.) who formed the bulk of

the British army before 1857. They had also seen how the group feeling created among the Hindu and Muslim soldiers serving together in the same regiments had led to the rising of entire regiments against them. They learnt their lessons from it and began a new policy of reviving, emphasising and exploiting the differences between the Hindus and their erstwhile Muslim oppressors. They, therefore, began to take steps to disturb the process of mutual adjustment and synthesis that had been apace for some time past and which was expected to be quickened by the memories of common suffering during and after the Great Rebellion.

To begin with, this new policy took the form of segregation of Hindus and Muslims in the armed forces and a comparative neglect of the upper classes among the Muslims who had played a very active role in the Rebellion. English-educated sections of Hindus, particularly from the Presidency towns of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, which had remained peaceful during the rebellion found the British more favourably inclined towards them than before.

### **The Lesson of 1857**

But it did not take the British long to realise that the real challenge to their position came from the Hindus, the national community of India, which had carried on a ceaseless struggle against the alien Muslim rulers for centuries and which had offered the most determined resistance to them also. It was found by them that even during the Great Rebellion, though the ruling classes of the Muslims in Delhi and

Lucknow and the Ulema had played a notable part in creating discontent against them, yet the actual resistance with the fervour of a national movement had mainly come from Hindu leaders like Nana Sahib, Kanwar Singh, Lakshmi Bai and Tantia Tope. It was, therefore, decided by them to befriend Muslims as against the Hindus. This policy was explained by Sir John Strach thus : "The existence side by side of these (Hindu and Muslim) hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India. The better classes of Mohammedans are a source to us of strength and not of weakness. They constitute a comparatively small but an energetic minority of the population whose political interests are identical with ours."

In pursuit of this policy the British rulers began to make advances to Muslims. They soon found in Sir Syed Ahmad Khan a useful tool for the success of their policy. The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College that he started at Aligarh became, under its British Principals like Beck and Archibald, the nursery for rearing the upper class Muslims as friends and stooges of the British policy in India. The Ulema who had become very sullen at the debacle of the Rebellion on which they had banked high hopes about the revival of glories of Islam in India, however, kept aloof from the Aligarh movement in the beginning. The Muslim masses, consisting of incompletely converted Hindus remained, in general, uninfluenced by the new trends of the Ulema and the English-educated Muslims. They continued to be drawn nearer and nearer to their parent society—the



Hindu society. But for the conservatism of the leaders of Hindu society they could have been completely assimilated and Hinduised in the post-Rebellion years. In the Jammu and Kashmir state and some other parts of the country they actually made mass requests for their re-conversion and re-incorporation in the Hindu society.

### **Congress is "Born"**

In pursuit of the same policy of divide and rule the British administrators and educationists began to preach that India was not a nation but a "congeries of castes and communities", that there was nothing to keep the warring peoples and communities of this vast country together except the Pax Britannica.

But in spite of these precautions, the British administrators had a lurking fear that the discontent and natural hostility of the Indian masses, bound together by ties of blood, culture and common memories may burst out at any time and present a fresh danger to their imperial sway over India. They, therefore, wanted to create a safety valve, a forum through which the new English-educated class could give expression to the pent-up feelings of the Indian people without in any way doing any harm to the British power.

That was the motive behind the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 by A.O. Hume, a far-sighted British civilian, with the blessings of Lord Dufferin, the British Governor-General of India.

The Indian National Congress was thus, in its origin,

a British-sponsored organisation of Anglicised Indians. Its aim, as would be clear from a study of the presidential addresses of its first few Presidents, was to strengthen the foundations of British rule in India.

But within a few years this organisation of Anglicised Indians began to transgress the limits laid down for it by its sponsors. It became too outspoken. The Anglicised Indians, though cut off from their Indian moorings by their education, could not remain uninfluenced by the history and movements of thought in Britain and other European countries. The ideas of liberalism as propounded by the Western thinkers began to appeal to them. They began to think in terms of nationalism and liberalism in regard to India as well. But most of them implicitly believed in the British thesis that India was a conglomeration of warring tribes, castes and communities and not a nation with any basic unity of history and culture. Thus began the efforts to weld the people of India into a new nation without reference to any of the basic unities which form the basis of nationalism and which existed in India to an ample degree. Instead, common habitation of the people in India, their common economic interests and their common aspiration for self-rule and consequent opposition to British rule, were put forth as the new basis of the Indian nationalism.

### **The Tilak Age**

But by the close of the 19th century another class of English educated Indians which had been deeply influenced also by movements like Arya Samaj and

Prarthana Samaj had been coming into existence. The most notable representatives of this class were Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chander Pal, Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Aurobindo Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai. Their English education had failed to denationalise them. They were conscious of the roots of Indian nationalism which had preserved Indian life and entity intact in face of the worst and prolonged attacks. They set to revive and revitalise that age-old Indian nationalism by a direct appeal to India's glorious past, her heroes, culture and history. They presented India to the Indian masses as Bharat Mata, the common mother of all true Bharatiyas whose life she had sustained through thick and thin. Bankim presented her as Durga, the destroyer of enemies in his eternal song, Vande Mataram, while Lokmanya Tilak brought the people in touch with their culture and heritage through *Shivaji Utsav* and *Ganesh Utsav*. The Indian masses including the Muslims began to be influenced by this new wave of Indian nationalism which created genuine patriotic fervour in the hearts of the people. They gave a new truly nationalistic turn to Congress politics.

### **British Create Muslim League**

This turn in the Congress politics unnerved the British who had already withdrawn their patronage from it. They decided to weaken this nationalist movement by setting the Muslims as a body against it. They therefore reinforced their efforts to wean the Muslims away from this current of Indian

nationalism by reviving in their minds a feeling of pride based on their past role as rulers of India and fear of the Hindus in the event of transfer of political power to the people of India.

Partition of Bengal to carve out a Muslim majority province of East Bengal and Assam was a part of this plan of reviving separatism among the Indian Muslims. This won them sympathies of the feudal leaders of the biggest solid block of Muslims in India. But it created a strong reaction in Bengal and gave a great fillip to the nationalist movement there as also in the rest of India. It gave rise to terrorism which got inspiration from the national literature and heroes as represented by the Gita and Shivaji. This made the British somewhat panicky and they took the most drastic and dangerous step of introducing the virus of communal representation in the political life of India through the command performance of Aga Khan in 1906. The All India Muslim League, as a separate political organisation of the Indian Muslims, was also organised in the same year.

The Indian National Congress which at that time was controlled by Anglophil liberals like Shri G.K. Gokhale and Sir Tej Bahadur Saprú failed to realise the grave import of the British move. It did not even register an effective protest.

In the years that followed Muslim League began to gain strength and prestige due to British patronage. It became the mouth-piece of the Muslim upper class. But it had not yet developed a mass following.

The beginning of the war of 1914-18 quickened

the pace of political awakening in India. Mrs. Annie Besant and Lokmanya Tilak organised the Home Rule movement in the country which put the Indian National Congress, now controlled by the moderate liberals, in the background. The appeal of Tilak and Besant was based on India's past history and culture and, therefore, could be appreciated by the common people. Tilak became a mass leader and a national figure.

The Anglo-Muslim friendship also began to be strained by the treatment meted out to Turkey during the Balkan wars and the first world war of 1914-18. Sultan of Turkey was then recognised as Khalifa of Islam and his discomfiture pinched the Mullah class in India. It came out of its seclusion and began to influence the Muslim League. As a result the Muslim League also became anti-British and began to hobnob with the Congress. League-Congress Pact of December, 1916, by which the Muslim League agreed to support the Congress demand for self-government in return for acceptance of separate electorates and weightage for Muslims by the Congress, was the result.

### **Muslim Separatism Takes Roots—Lucknow Pact**

The Lucknow pact was a turning point in the political life of modern India. It marked the first notable success of the British game to stop the process of Indianisation of Muslims by reviving in them separatist Muslim consciousness as distinct from national consciousness.

It also determined the future course of the Muslim

League. It learnt that separatism pays. This realisation tempted it to enter the political market of India as a commodity for sale, as a courtesan wooed by both the British and the Congress. It soon learnt that it could blackmail both in turn.

The Congress entered into this pact as a matter of political expediency. Instead of reviving and revitalising the dormant Indian nationalism and drawing Indian Muslims within its orbit by a conscious and intelligent effort to Indianise their outlook, it decided to follow the short cut of appeasing their British-made leaders. It was a wrong policy even from the point of view of composite nationalism of Congress conception, because it was bound to give a fillip to separatist tendencies of Islam as represented by the Mullah class. It amounted to sacrifice of principle at the altar of expediency. This policy was foredoomed to failure. It had in it the seeds of destruction of national unity at the hands of separatist forces. It put a premium on Muslim communalism.

Had the leadership of the Congress and the country remained in the hands of astute men like Tilak who had no illusions about building a nation by pacts and bargains and who looked upon the Lucknow Pact as a mere expediency, a political move to put pressure on the British Government when reverses in war were making it panicky, the failure of this pact, which was inevitable, to make Muslim leaders national-minded might have saved the country from such misadventures in future. It might have then remained as a mere experiment.

### Where Gandhiji Failed

But that was not to be. Soon after this pact the Congress came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, who, with all his qualities of head and heart, failed to the end of his life to understand the true basis of Indian nationalism. What Congress had done as a policy in 1916 became its guiding principle under Mahatma Gandhi. Muslim co-operation at any price was his new slogan. He declared it to be the essential pre-requisite of India's freedom.

This approach made him take up the Khilafat question, which had then been agitating the minds of the Mullah class, to win friendship of Muslims. It was a declared religious question arising from the extra-territorial loyalty of Muslims to the Sultan of Turkey as the Khalifa of Islam. It emphasised and encouraged the dangerous and un-Indian doctrines of extra-territorialism, theocracy and religious war on non-believers. Its inspiration came from the Islamic conception of "Millat" and "Kufar", which puts loyalty to the Millat and its Khalifa above loyalty to the national group to which a Muslim may belong.

Thus Mahatma Gandhi took over the leadership of Indian Muslims in this purely religious question and the movement began to be organised and financed by the Congress. Khilafat conferences were organised and Khilafat workers, Maulvis and Mullahs, sent round the country at the expense of the Congress. They appealed to religious sentiments of the illiterate and partially Hinduised Muslims of the

remotest areas, roused their fanaticism against the infidels, by which they then meant the Christian Britons, and preached holy war—jihad—against them for the glory of Islam and its Khalifa.

It had two ominous results. The Islamic consciousness as distinct from national consciousness, and the exclusiveness and fanaticism that go with it, were revived in the Muslim masses. This put an end to the process of their Indianisation. Secondly their leadership once again came in the hands of the Mullahs and Maulanas who have all through the history of Islam in India and elsewhere symbolised its exclusiveness and fanaticism. It had its inevitable results. History began to repeat itself. As the influence of Maulanas increased the process of Indianisation of Islam stopped. The hands of the clock were put back. The era of adjustments and assimilation of Indian Muslims with the national life ended. If the English were Kafirs, so were the Hindus. If jihad against the English was enjoined by Islam, it equally applied to Hindus as well.

Thus the net result of the Khilafat movement was to send the poison which the British had injected in the minds of a small group of Muslim landlords, who constituted the Muslim League in the beginning, down to the humblest Muslim in the country. Indian Islam once again became an aggressive foreign creed bent upon securing exclusive privileges for it at the cost of national interests of Hindusthan as a whole. Instead of identifying themselves with their motherland, her people and culture, they again began to think in terms of Islamic culture and Millat as dis-



tinct from the nation.

Mahatma Gandhi by supporting and organising the Khilafat movement in the country unwittingly did the greatest disservice to the cause of Indian nationalism. He helped to create separate Muslim consciousness as distinct from national consciousness among the Indian Muslims by bringing them under the influence of Maulanas once again in the political sphere as well.

The change that came in the Muslim outlook as a result of this revival of Islamic consciousness is best illustrated by poet Mohamed Iqbal. Early in the 20th century when he made his debut as a budding Urdu poet, his innate nationalism—he was a Kashmiri convert—found expression in such nationalistic couplets as :

सारे जहाँ से अच्छा हिन्दोस्तान हमारा  
हिंदी है हम वतन है हिन्दोस्तान हमारा

(Our Hindusthan is the best country in the world. We all Hindis are co-patriots and Hindusthan is ours.)

But as Islamic consciousness as distinct from Indian national consciousness began to grow in the country as a result of the teachings and preachings of Khilafatist Mullahs, he began to sing of Islamic exclusiveness which makes a Muslim look on an alien Muslim as nearer to him than his non-Muslim countryman, even if he be a next-door neighbour :

मुस्लिम है हम वह वतन हैं सारा जहाँ हमारा

(We are Muslims and the whole world, Islamic world, is our homeland.)

## Results of Gandhiji's Policy

The evil results of the policy of Gandhiji became evident as early as 1920-21. After Kamal Pasha, a Muslim himself, had unceremoniously finished the Khilafat to the chagrin of Indian Khilafatists, the fanaticism of the Indian Muslims, roused against the British infidel, was turned against the Indian infidels, the Hindus, resulting in bloody massacres in Malabar, Kobat, Saharanpur and many other places. It was about this time that Maulana Mohamed Ali, whom Gandhiji had made President of the Kokanada Session of the Congress, publicly declared, "A meanest and adulterer Muslim is far better than Mahatma Gandhi." The explanation he gave was worse. To a Muslim, he explained, any other believer was nearer and dearer than the greatest of non-believers. It was the clearest exposition of Muslim separatism and should have opened the eyes of Gandhiji. But Gandhiji refused to learn from history or even from his own experience. He persisted in the policy of carrying Khilafatist Muslims with him at any price. Inclusion of Muslims became the sole test of his nationalism. The most patriotic of men if they had no Muslims with them were dubbed communal and reactionary while an organisation of down-right scoundrels could claim to be a national organisation if it had some Muslims on its rolls. Appeasement of Muslims as a community, which had begun in Lucknow as a matter of policy, now became a part of the Congress creed.

It had disastrous results. On the Muslim mind its effect was quite the opposite of what Gandhiji had intended to create. Congress policy confirmed Indian Muslim in his separatism. He began to raise the price for his co-operation and became aggressively communal. He began to talk of separate Muslim culture and language and to emphasise the differences with and hostility to Hindus. The prospects of transfer of power to the Indian hands made him panicky because as a community Muslims were in a minority in the country and he had not learnt to think as an Indian which would have enabled him to share the power in common. He began to think in terms of unchangeable religious majorities and minorities. This, coupled with his memories of the past when Muslims ruled over large parts of the country, created in him a fear and pride complex. He began to depend more on the British as against the main body of Indian nationalists for his political future. Furthermore, it made the position of the few Muslims who had joined the Congress ridiculous. Many of them left the Congress and joined Muslim League. A few remained in it to maintain Muslim separatism from within the Congress.

The British who had deliberately revived Muslim separatism were gratified at the success of their policy. They began to take Gandhiji at his words and insist upon Muslim agreement and approval to any scheme of political reforms. At the same time they went outbidding the Congress which in its wild-goose chase of Muslim co-operation for the struggle for freedom went on making most anti-national

concessions to their separatism one after the other.

### **Hindus Develop Inferiority Complex**

The Hindus, on being continuously told that freedom was impossible without the co-operation of Muslims, developed an inferiority complex. In their patriotic eagerness for national emancipation they went on submitting to the most anti-national demands of the Muslim League at the behest of the Gandhian Congress. Those like Veer Savarkar, Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Bhai Parmanand and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji who had the foresight to see the futility and dangers of this policy repeatedly appealed to the Congress to desist from this suicidal and anti-national policy. They warned the country of its dangers. But their warning proved of no avail.

Secure in his hold on the mass mind of nationalist India, Gandhiji persisted in his efforts to purchase Muslim co-operation for the success of his experiments in composite nationalism. He went on blaming the British for Muslim separatism instead of taking any positive steps to build Indian nationalism on the solid basis of first and foremost loyalty to India and her age-old culture and heritage. He conceded the Muslim demand that they had a separate culture and language. He even went to the extent of dubbing national heroes like Maharana Pratap and Shivaji as "misguided patriots" to please the Muslims. Efforts began to be made to whitewash or mutilate history to suit the Muslim taste. The real basis of Indian nationalism—allegiance to India and her culture and heritage—began to be not only ignored

but also denounced as something narrow and reactionary.

### **Roots of Two-Nation Theory**

All this gave a further fillip to Muslim separatism. The claim to separate culture, language and history directly led to the claim to be a separate nation. Thus Congress brand of Indian nationalism instead of strengthening age-old Indian nationalism and bringing general mass of the followers of foreign creeds within its orbit—a process which was already going apace—threw them more and more into the lap of Mullahs, who had been the greatest hurdle in the way of Indianisation of Indian Islam, and of the Aligarh School of Muslim politicians which had been brought into existence by the British to serve their imperialist ends. In its vain attempt to build up a composite Indian nation comprehending all and sundry merely on the basis of common economic interests and common opposition to the British rule, the Congress helped to revive and intensify Muslim separatism and materially contributed to the birth of Muslim nationalism as distinct from Indian nationalism.

The roots of the two-nation theory propounded by the Muslim League, as seen above, lay in the very alien character of Islam, its tendency to subvert the loyalty of its Indian votaries to their land, culture and heroes and make them Turks or Arabs in outlook. The role of Indian Nationalism is and ought to have been to weaken this separatist influence of Islam by emphasising and strengthening the loyalty to India and her culture in the minds of the people so as to

make Indian Islam a form of worship, one of the numerous creeds of the country all of which are bound together by general loyalty to Indian life and ideals. It was not impossible. The story of China and Indonesia, where Islam too has been nationalised, could be repeated in India. The proverbial power of assimilation of the Hindu society, the national society of India, should have been strengthened and reinforced for the purpose.

But the Congress followed quite the opposite policy. It played the game of the British rulers who were interested in keeping Muslim separatism alive. So it not only failed to build up a strong Indian nationalism on its ancient roots but, what is worse, weakened it. It reinforced Muslim separatism to the chagrin of all nationalists including Indianised Muslims. Partition of the country on the basis of two-nation theory came as the inevitable result of this policy.

## Indian Nationalism Since Partition

The partition of India in 1947—to which the Congress was a party—on the acceptance of Indian Muslims' claim to be a separate nation was the tragic finale of the Indian Nationalism as conceived and preached by the Indian National Congress. It demonstrated the futility of building up a nation merely on the negative basis of anti-Britishism and such temporary considerations as common habitation and common economic interests. It proved to the hilt that nations are not made by bargains, by appeals to common economic interests, by appeasement of anti-national forces. Such methods can only weaken the will to be a nation. They cannot strengthen it. It became evident that national solidarity was impossible without such binding ties as common loyalties which could resist and overcome the forces of division such as differences of caste, creed and language and economic interests and political affiliations which do exist in India as in other countries of the world.

Partition of India was done according to the plan announced by Lord Mountbatten, the last British Governor-General of India, on June 3, 1947. According to it contiguous Muslim majority areas in the East and West of British India were to constitute the dominion of Pakistan. As regards the

princely States, the plan gave their rulers option to accede to Pakistan or truncated India keeping in view the considerations of geographical contiguity of their respective states.

On the basis of this plan, the whole of Sindh, Baluchistan, and Pakhtoonistan (N.W.F.P.) were allotted to would-be Pakistan and a notional division of the Punjab and Bengal on the basis of the majority of Hindu or Muslim population in different districts was ordered pending the award of the boundary commission, which was set up under the chairmanship of Mr. Radcliffe. The Radcliffe Award which was announced on August 16, 1947 made some changes in the notional division. It gave Sylhet district of Assam to East Pakistan and exchanged Khulna district, which had a Hindu majority with Murshidabad district which had a Muslim majority. On the Western side, it gave Gurdaspur and Pathankot to India and left Lahore with Pakistan even though it should have come to India on the basis of the criteria laid down for the guidance of the Radcliffe Commission. Nagar-Parkar area of Sindh which was contiguous to Kutch and had overwhelming Hindu majority should have been allotted to India on the same basis on which Sylhet was given to Pakistan. But the failure of Congress leadership to put up the claim for this vast area of Sindh allowed Nagar-Parkar to go to Pakistan by default. Had Nagar-Parkar come to India, it could have become the nucleus of a small Sindh province within India and there would have been no occasion for the so-called Kutch 'dispute' to arise.



Even though over ninety per cent Muslims all over India including non-seceding areas and excluding Pakhtoonistan area, which ethnically and geographically is a part of Afghanistan, had voted for Pakistan<sup>1</sup> in the general elections of 1946, which had clinched the issue of partition, nearly ten million Hindus including Sikhs were left behind in West Pakistan and fifteen million Hindus and Buddhists were left behind in East Pakistan. Unlike Muslims all these Hindus and Buddhists had opposed partition of the country to a man.

According to the two-nation theory as propounded by the Muslim League and tacitly accepted by the Congress, Hindus and Muslims had nothing in common and they could not live together. The Muslim League wanted Pakistan to be the national homeland of all the Indian Muslims. So it visualised migration of all the Muslims left in India to Pakistan once it was created. This was explicitly stated by Mr. Jinnah, when a foreign Press correspondent asked him how the creation of Pakistan would solve Hindu-Muslim problem because they were living together virtually in every town, village and street of India. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the great jurist and first Law Minister of India after independence, had also pointed out in his famous book "Thoughts on Pakistan" that exchange of Hindu and Muslim populations left behind in the two new dominions was the logical corollary of partition. He pointed out how about twenty million Christians and Muslims had been exchanged between Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria after the first world war to solve a similar

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1. 'Political Mind of India' by Ashoka Mehta.

problem and gave a detailed scheme for bringing about such an exchange of population between India and Pakistan in an orderly way.

The Congress leadership of India accepted the partition but refused to accept its logical corollary. It tried to deceive itself and the people that partition will not make any difference to the Hindu and Muslim minorities left behind in the two dominions. The Congress leaders went all out in assuring the Hindus left in Pakistan who had consistently and unanimously opposed partition that their life, honour and property would be safeguarded and they would be given equal treatment in the new state of Pakistan.

But the Muslim League leadership kept mum on the issue. Its mind was, however, revealed in a number of booklets published by different Muslim organizations campaigning for Pakistan before 1947, which said that Hindus will be allowed to live in Pakistan just as chicken and sheep are allowed to live in the houses to be eaten up at will. The massacre of non-Muslims in Rawalpindi and Noakhali areas of West and East Pakistan on the eve of partition had given to Hindus a foretaste of what was in store for them in Pakistan.

Therefore Punjabis with their well-known commonsense could not be taken in by the assurances of the Congress leaders. They decided to quit their hearths and homes and migrate to India. Thus virtual exchange of population did take place between East Punjab and West Punjab. Had it been brought about in a planned way as suggested by Dr. Ambedkar, the unprecedented bloodshed, loot, rape and arson that

accompanied the exodus on both sides could have been avoided.

After this forced exchange of population in Punjab, the fate of the remaining Hindus in N.W.F.P. and Sindh was sealed. They began to be squeezed out almost simultaneously till whole of West Pakistan was cleared of almost every Hindu. West Pakistan, therefore, became a homogeneous Muslim state with no minority problem left.

After having cleared West Pakistan of all the Hindus, the Muslim League rulers of Pakistan turned their attention to East Pakistan. Through a systematic policy of blood and terror, they have been able to annihilate or squeeze out almost all the vocal and politically conscious Hindus left in East Pakistan. The Hindu population there has since been reduced to 9.3 million (1961 census) though it should have gone up to about 25 million according to the normal rate of increase of population in India and Pakistan. These nine million are dying by inches. It is clear as Dr. R.C. Majumdar, the noted historian and ex-Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University, has pointed out<sup>1</sup> that unless they are exchanged for Muslims left in West Bengal, they will be forced to become Muslims to save themselves and will then become the most bitter enemies of Hindus and India.

The Muslims left behind in India who had almost unanimously supported and contributed to the creation of Pakistan were naturally unnerved by the turn of events. Their emotional commitment to Pakistan was total. They had forfeited all moral or legal right

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1. "Organiser" dated 19-10-68.

to be treated as Indian citizens. Naturally therefore almost all Muslims in the central services, defence forces and even prisoners opted for Pakistan when these were divided between India and Pakistan. Most of the students and staff of Aligarh Muslim University which had played a leading role in bringing about partition of the country also migrated to Pakistan. Had the Government of India and the Congress leadership adopted a realistic policy, most of the active protagonists of Pakistan, the Maulanas and the Aligarh trained intelligentsia and politicians who had been most vociferous in the campaign for partition, would have migrated to Pakistan. That would have eased the situation and made it possible for nationalist India to reclaim the remaining Muslims and make them an integral part of the Indian nation.

But that demanded rethinking and reappraisal of their policies by the Congress leaders who had been put in power in truncated India. It was then expected by all thinking people that they would ponder over the lesson of partition, realise the fallacy in their conception of Indian nationalism and reorientate their outlook and policies to help the growth of a healthy and strong nationalism to safeguard the new born freedom and consolidate the unity of residual India.

### **Lessons of Partition**

The need for such re-orientation and reconsideration had become all the more pressing in view of the birth of Pakistan as a hostile state on the borders of truncated India, and the claim it could make on the loyalty of Indian Muslims almost all of whom

had voted for it.

The one supposed or real obstacle to such orientation, the British rule, had happily disappeared. Congress leaders had become full masters of the situation and they could afford to go ahead with the task of discovering the correct basis and adopting the right policies for building up a strong nationalism in India unshackled by any kind of inhibitions or obstacles.

Past experience pointed to three-fold action :

In the first place it was essential to abolish separate electorates and weightages for Muslims and other religious groups which had been introduced by the British to keep such groups away from the main body of the Indian Nation.

Secondly, the situation demanded that immediate and effective steps should be taken to wean the Indian Muslims from the influence of Mullahs, Maulanas and the perverted intelligentsia of Aligarh, who had been the spearhead of Muslim separatism and were mainly responsible for destroying the work of centuries of adjustment and assimilation of the ordinary Muslim—generally a Hindu convert—with the national life and ideals. This was essential from the point of view of national security as well because, according to Muslim law, India—or Hindu India as Pakistanis now prefer to call her—is a *Dar-ul-Harab*, an enemy country against which every true Muslim must fight as a matter of religious duty. The Maulanas as custodians of Muslim law are duty-bound to preach this gospel. History of Muslims in all non-Muslim countries bears this out. The Maulanas of Pakistan who can speak out their mind more frankly never make any secret about the correct position

according to Muslim law as would be clear from the following evidence given by some of them before the Anti-Ahmediya Riots Commission appointed by Pakistan Government as reported in *Hindustan Times* dated 6.5.54.

When the court asked Syed Ata-Ullah Shah Bukhari (one of the top-most Muslim divines of Pakistan and a close collaborator of Congress during the Khilafat movement) whether a Mussalman was bound to obey the orders of a Kafir (non-Muslim) Government, his answer was that it was not possible for a Muslim to be a faithful citizen of a non-Muslim Government. Asked specially whether the four crore Indian Muslims could be faithful citizens of their state, his answer was "No".

Asked what would be the duty of Indian Muslims in case of war with Pakistan, another Maulana replied, "Their duty is obvious, namely, to side with us and not to fight against us on behalf of India".

And thirdly, the situation demanded that the faith and confidence of the nationalist India in India's destiny, in her fundamental unity, in her age-old nationalism which had been rudely shaken by the partition should be restored. This demanded a realistic reconsideration of Indian Nationalism, a clear appreciation of the mainsprings of India's vitality as a nation, and concrete steps for making the Hindu society, the national society of the country, conscious of its age-old national life and culture. The assimilation of such elements as had been behaving as aliens, or who had been only incompletely Indianised could not be possible without the consolidation of the

national society and development of proper attitude towards the national culture, ideals and history.

As regards the first, the Constituent Assembly of India took a correct decision. It abolished separate electorates and weightages for Muslims and other religious groups in spite of the protests of the Maulanas within and outside Congress. It was a step in the right direction and might have proved an effective anti-dote to the poison injected by the British with the connivance of the Congress in the body politic of the country and helped in the development of correct nationalism in post-partition India, had the Congress leaders supplemented it by correct policies in respect of the other two aspects of the question.

In that, unfortunately, the Congress leaders have miserably failed.

The task of nationalising the outlook of Indian Muslims, to make them shed their separatism and extra-territorialism is of primary importance. It is no easy task. But a realistic approach and tactful handling immediately after partition would have yielded sure results. Partition, with all the misery that resulted from it, had delivered a rude shock to the common Mussalman left behind in India. He had begun to realise that the heaven that Pakistan had been pictured to him was not for him. At the same time he found his position in his Indian homeland very much undermined by the anti-national part he had played in supporting the creation of Pakistan. His faith in the Muslim League leadership, in the Mullahs and Maulanas, who had undermined his loyalty to India, was badly shaken. He was disillusion-

ed. The situation was therefore ripe for weaning him away from the influence of Mullahs and Aligarh-trained intelligentsia and bringing him within the national fold. It was then easy to convince him that separatism would not pay him any longer and that his future security and prosperity lay in adjustment and assimilation with the national Hindu society. His outlook could have been nationalised.

The builders of free India could have undertaken all this with clear conscience. If Kamal Pasha could take drastic steps to isolate the Mullahs in Turkey and nationalise and secularise Turkish Islam, and Raza Shah Pehlvi could make a similar attempt in Iran without being called anti-Muslim, India, which had such experience of the sinister influence of Mullahs and orthodox Islam could, and should, surely have undertaken the task without any kind of mental or moral reservation or misgivings.

### **Failure of Congress**

But the Congress leaders adopted quite the opposite policy. They forced Indian Muslims back into the lap of Mullahs and erstwhile Muslim Leaguers by giving them official recognition and patronage as spokesmen and leaders of Muslims. Not only the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, an organisation of Mullahs and Maulanas came to be recognised as the mouth-piece of Indian Muslims but also the Muslim League was allowed to raise its ugly head once again in Kerala from where it has since extended its activities to other parts of the country as well.

The Jamiat-ul-Ulema in its turn, in order to secure and perpetuate its leadership, began to fan the



separatist and communal sentiments of Muslims once again. The fact that Jamiat leaders had direct access to the Government through Maulana Azad raised their stock with the Muslims once again.

What was worse, the Congress leaders themselves once again started encouraging this separatism among Muslims. In order to prevent Muslims joining other political parties and to secure their votes in elections they deliberately encouraged them to continue to think and behave as Muslims and not as Indians and look to Congress support against the main body of the Indian Nation with which they should have been taught to adapt and adjust themselves in their own interest as also in the interest of the country as a whole. This renewed policy of appeasement now began to be presented and defended as "secularism".

### **What is Secularism ?**

It began to be asserted that since India was a secular state, it was common property of all people living in it including those Muslims who had voted for Pakistan and had made no secret of their emotional and physical attachment with that state. To make this acceptable to the people new cliches and catch-words like secular, composite nationalism and secular democracy were given currency and the entire propaganda machinery at the command of the government was pressed into service to force these new fangled notions down the throats of gullible and simple hearted people of India. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who himself, being part individualist and part internationalist, was mortally afraid of Indian nationalism, put his full

weight behind this new approach. As a clever politician in passionate love with power, he used it to win the bloc votes of the Muslims for the Congress. This approach suited the communists also in their bid to further disrupt India. They now developed the theory that residual India was a multi-cultural and multi-national composite state. They too looked upon Pt. Nehru as their patron saint and used him well for forcing this disruptive ideology down the throats of Anglicized Indian intelligentsia which was almost hypnotised by Pt. Nehru.

As a result of this irrational, unrealistic and pseudo-national approach, the centres and symbols of Muslim separation like the Aligarh Muslim University, Jama Milia Islamia, Delhi Jamiat-ul-Ulema, and Urdu got a new boost. In view of the sinister role of Aligarh Muslim University in injecting the poison of separatism among Indian Muslims, it should have been closed down immediately after independence. This task was rendered easy and feasible because of flight of most of its staff and students to Pakistan. It was then suggested that the Aligarh Muslim University Campus be exchanged with the campus of D.A.V. educational institutions in Lahore. That campus was bigger than the campus of Aligarh Muslim University. But instead of accepting this practical and patriotic suggestion, steps began to be taken to revive and revitalise this den of Muslim separatism with public funds. More than twenty crores of public money have been poured into this university during the last twenty years without doing anything to change its communal character. Even the three degree colleges of Aligarh

city have not so far been affiliated to it. Can there be any greater proof of the real character of Nehruite secularism ? As if one Aligarh was not enough, steps were taken to rebuild the miniature Aligarh in Delhi. Jamia Milia Islamia has been given four crores of public money during the same period without even changing its constitution under which it has to function strictly as a Muslim institution.

Muslim leadership was quick to take advantage of this situation. Even though secularism is as foreign to Islam as theocracy is to Hindus, these champions of Muslim Shariat and separatism now became the most vociferous devotees of secularism of Congress-communist brand which became a cover for the old policy of Muslim appeasement that had directly led to the partition of the country in 1947.

The nationalist opinion was flabbergasted by this chorus of secularism sung with gusto by Nehruite Congress and its communist and communalist allies.

To the common people of India this was a new word and new concept. They did not know the genesis and meaning of this term and took Pt. Nehru at his words.

But the time has come when true meaning of this word is spelled out in clear terms to put an end to the harm that is being done to the growth of Indian Nationalism under the cloak of this word.

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, word secular means "concerned with the affairs of this world, worldly, not sacred, not monastic, not ecclesiastical, temporal, profane, lay ; sceptical of religious truth or opposed to religious education, etc."

This word came in vogue in Europe after the renaiss-

sance when distinction began to be drawn between the church and the state. Till then all Christian states in Europe like the Muslim states in West Asia were theocratic. It meant that religion of the king was to be the religion of the state and the citizens and those not conforming with the religion of the state were prosecuted as heretics. Since religion and church dominated the state and the society, every aspect of people's life and their activities were coloured by religion. Even architecture, music and art was mainly *ecclesiastical* as distinct from temporal. When a distinction began to be drawn between the church and the state and temporal literature, art and music began to grow, it came to be defined as secular and the state which, being governed by temporal laws, ceased to impose any particular religion on the people came to be called secular state.

Most of the European states have since become secular in the sense that they don't make distinction between a citizen and a citizen on the basis of his or her religion, or way of worship though many of them continue to have a state religion. Some of the Muslim states too are now tending to be secular. But there is greater resistance from Islam to secularism. So most of them still continue to be theocratic. Pakistan, for example, is a theocratic state. It still makes distinction between its Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. Non-Muslims in Pakistan are treated as *Zimmies*—inferior citizens whose life, honour, property and religious places are at the mercy of the Muslims who have the state backing in anything they do against their non-Muslim citizens. Even a man of the calibre of Ch.

Zafarullah Khan could not be tolerated as Foreign Minister of Pakistan because he happened to be an Ahmediya. The only difference between the Muslims and Ahmediyas, who claim to be devout Muslims, is that they do not accept Mohammed to be the last prophet.

### **Hindu State is Always Secular**

India is the one ancient country of the world where theocracy, except during the period of Muslim rule, has never been the rule. The Hindu State has all through the ages been essentially a secular state in the sense that Hindu rulers have never tried to impose their religious views on their subjects. Religious tolerance has been the rule in Bharat all through the Hindu history. *Even kings like Shivaji and Ranjit Singh who fought against Muslim theocracy all their lives never made their own states theocratic. Neither Shivaji nor Ranjit Singh ever tried to force his religion on his subjects ; nor did they make any distinction between their subjects on the basis of religion in matter of official appointments or other matters of state. Some of the highest officers of Shivaji were Muslims and he gave jagirs to mosques as he gave to temples. The Foreign Minister and one of the closest confidants of Ranjit Singh, was a Muslim—Faqir Azizdin.*

The only exception to this rule in the history of free India is provided by *Asoka*. He was the one Indian ruler of note who tried to impose his religious views on his subjects through Dharma Maha-Matras. He expended the treasures of the State recklessly for the benefit of the Buddhist Church. This created a

reaction in the minds of his non-Buddhist subjects which, according to competent historians like *Ray-Chaudhry*, *R.C. Mazumdar* and *K. Dutta* became one of the major causes of the downfall of Mauryan empire after his death.

It is however a wrong notion that a secular state is an irreligious state or that no state which claims to be secular can or should have a state religion. *Britain is a secular state and people of various creeds live there in freedom. But it has a State Church of England and no one there objects to special religious services according to Anglican rites on all occasions of national importance.* Nor does secularism stand in the way of state patronage to national culture, festivals and customs, which in the case of England are essentially Christian or Anglo-Saxon in origin and inspiration. Monogamy is the Christian law about marriage and it applies to Muslims living in England as much as to Christians. All citizens of Britain, whatever their religion are called Britons.

### **Secularism Reduced Ad Absurdum**

But here in India secularism has been made the cover to concede the separatist demands of Muslims and other incompletely Indianised elements in the country and to denounce everything Hindu. The Muslim demand for recognition of Urdu as second official language in U.P., Bihar and Delhi—even though it is spoken by a small minority in few cities—is supported, while demand for ban on cow-slaughter which is a national demand of the whole country is opposed in the name of secularism. Interference in

Hindu religious law is justified in the name of secularism but Muslims are exempted from the law about monogamy on the ground that their religious law permits polygamy.

A natural result of it is that the national culture and interests of the national society—the Hindu society—are being neglected and the springs of pure age-old Indian nationalism are being sapped.

The most important part in the growth of national consciousness, as explained in earlier chapters, is played by the loyalty to the country as a whole, the physical basis of the nation, and its culture. But the very notion of India as a country has been vitiated by its description as a “Union of States” and by the most irrational opposition to the very idea of re-unification of the country. The growing linguism and provincialism is the result of the failure of the rulers of free India to emphasise the fundamental geographical and cultural unity of the country. While German nationalism demands unification of Germany, and Irish nationalism has been intensified by the demand for unification of Ireland, the monopolists of India’s nationalism condemn even the talk of India’s unification as something communal and anti-national.

Their attitude towards national festivals and great men is no different. The national festivals like Vasant, Holi and Vijaya Dashmi which can become the best means for national consolidation are being neglected and deprived of State patronage because Indian Muslims do not yet consider them as their own. The same is true of the attitude adopted towards great men and heroes of the country like Rama and Krishna, Vyas

and Valmiki, who symbolise national culture and ideals. The names of heroes like Pratap and Shivaji who carried on the struggle for independence in a most difficult situation were also taboo till Chinese invasion of 1962 and Pakistan invasion of 1965 forced the Indian secularists to grudgingly own them to enthuse the people to resist the aggressors.

What is even more inexplicable and indefensible is that the very word "Hindu" has become taboo. It stinks in the nostrils of custodians of Congress nationalism. It is an anathema to them. The reason given is that it is a communal name. This betrays both their ignorance of India's past and their unwillingness to learn from her history. It is also a manifestation of their mental slavery of the British who deliberately gave a narrow connotation to the term "Hindu" in furtherance of their policy of divide and rule.

### **Reds Fishing in Troubled Waters**

The net result of this wrong approach to the question of Indian nationalism and continuation of the old policy of keeping Muslim masses away from the main body of the nation is that the forces of nationalism, of unity and integrity, are getting weaker and weaker every day. Consequently fissiparous tendencies have begun to raise their ugly head in so many ways.

The resultant situation is favourable for the interplay of all sorts of disruptive forces of which communism which, like Islam, is another monolithic religion, drawing its inspiration from Moscow and Peking, is



today the most powerful. It is making common cause with other disruptive forces and incompletely nationalised elements in the country, to create disruption and chaos. *In Kashmir it was the ally of separatist Abdullah and is now encouraging the secessionists. In U.P. and Bihar communists are encouraging Muslim separatism in all possible ways. In Kerala there is an open alliance between C.P.I. and the Muslim League. The alliance between Pakistan and communist China has brought communists and Pro-Pak elements close all over the country. They are working together to disrupt the unity of India and prepare ground for Sino-Pak aggression.*

Thus Indian nationalism as conceived and preached by the Congress and its allies today is the very negation of nationalism. Instead of strengthening the forces of unity it is weakening them. It has given a new lease of life to Muslim separatism, casteism and provincialism. It has still failed to draw inspiration and sustenance from the ancient roots of Indian national life which have stood the test of time. It is neither national nor secular. It is based on compromises with separatism and communalism which it seeks to employ for the political gain of the Congress. But in doing so it is cutting at the roots of Indian nationalism. It is un-Indian, un-Hindu and a-Bharatiya.

## The Conclusions

The foregoing study of nationalism as the dominant group sentiment in the present-day world, the forces and factors that give rise to it and its evolution in India since the remote past to the present day, points to certain conclusions which need to be dispassionately pondered over by all those who aspire to see Indian nationalism become an effective force for national unity and solidarity which was so shockingly destroyed in 1947, and which is being threatened once again by disruptive forces that are raising their ugly head in different parts of the country.

The basic fact about Indian nationalism which has been very much ignored for some time past to the great detriment of the national interest is that India is an ancient nation possessing all the unities, physical as well as cultural, which contribute towards the birth and growth of national consciousness in a people, and not a new nation in the making. It is not a mere congeries of castes and communities with no elements of cohesion. Our whole history is an eloquent testimony to the fact of India's growth as a nation with a distinct culture and life-pattern, history and traditions. But at the same time it is true that forces of division have also been quite active, particularly during the periods of our decadence. At times they had the better of the forces of cohesion and unity. The problem of Indian nationalism is how to revive, emphasise and reinforce the forces of unity—love of the common

motherland and her age-old culture and traditions—so as to make them stronger than forces of division and disruption. To ignore these cohesive forces in an effort to build up a hotch-potch unity based on negative or ephemeral basis has proved, and will continue to prove, suicidal. It will encourage separatist and fissiparous tendencies and weaken the forces of unity.

The second fact to be noted and digested is that "Hindu" is the national geographical name of the people of India derived from her great river, Sindhu. It is exact Persian and Sanskrit equivalent of the Greek word Indian which is derived from Indus, the Greek name for Sindhu. It is nowhere found in ancient Indian literature in the narrow sense of a religious community. That connotation was given to it by the British with the political purpose of weakening the national society. Even Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who, as a partisan politician, was so much against the use of the word "Hindu Rashtra" to denote Indian Nation, had to record, as a student of history, in his *Discovery of India* that "word Hindu does not occur at all in our ancient literature. The first reference is, I am told, in a Tantric work of the 8th century A.D. where "Hindu" means a people and not the followers of a particular religion."

This word has had the same meaning for the outside world. Mr. T. E. Lawrence in his famous book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* describes the population of Mecca, the religious centre of Islam, as consisting of "Arabs, Turks, Egyptians and Hindus." By Hindus he meant Indian Muslims of course. All over South-East Asia, including China and Japan Indians are called Indoos.

It is therefore wrong to talk of Hinduism as a religion in the sense in which Islam and Christianity are religions. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, "Hinduism is a way of life and not a form of thought. It is a movement not a position, a process not a result, a growing tradition, not a fixed revelation. Its past history encourages us to believe that it will be found equal to any emergency that the future may throw up whether in the field of thought or of history." In another context late Dr. K.N. Katju wrote : "We have established a secular state, but I am convinced that this establishment was possible only in India, where the Hindus had the dominant voice in framing the Constitution. This was possible due to the most liberal nature of Hinduism. The other countries being mostly monoreligious, secularism may be professed, but no occasion really arises for putting it into practice."<sup>1</sup>

It is the Hinduness or Hindutva of a man which makes him a national of India. Hinduism is not a very happy expression because it creates confusion in the people's mind about the word Hindu. It creates the impression of its being a creed or religion, a particular dogma and form of worship, *which it is not*. It comprehends within itself all the forms of worship prevalent in India which do not interfere with the worshipper's loyalty to India, her culture and tradition, history and great men.

All Indians are therefore Hindus as they are all Bharatiyas. These three words are synonymous. They all refer to the nationals of India. It is therefore really

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1. (Organiser dated 25-10-54).

strange that people who take pride in calling themselves Indians,—the Greek form of Hindu,—feel ashamed of being called Hindus. It is like an Englishman feeling ashamed of being called English while taking pride in being called “Farangi” or “Angrez”, the names used by Indians for them. It betrays the mental slavery of Anglicized Indians which they must shed.

At the same time there is no sense in making a fetish of the word Hindu. Instead of forcing it on those who do not like it today, it should be popularised as a synonym of “Bharatiya” in writing and speaking. But that can be possible only when the enthusiasts of this word themselves grasp the broad national content of this and stop talking of Hindu religion and Hindu community which lowers it to the position of Islam or Christianity. Christians and Muslims living in India are also Hindus if India and Indian culture command their first and foremost allegiance. They all form part of Hindu Rashtra or the Indian Nation.

This consciousness is today lacking in most Muslims and some Christians of India. The most urgent problem of Indian nationalism today, therefore, is to Indianise or Hinduise such people, and to develop in them national consciousness which may transcend their group consciousness as members of different religious communities.

This is not an easy task particularly in so far as Muslims are concerned, because of the exclusive and separatist character of Islam. It came to India as an alien and denationalising creed and has continued to be such. The opportunities to nationalise it were not

availed of by the Hindu society in the past. During the last hundred years the British policy and the Congress approach to the Muslim problem have further emphasised and encouraged the exclusiveness of Indian Muslims by stopping the process of their Indianisation, and made them foreigners in their outlook and loyalties in the land of their birth. The creation of Pakistan has provided them with an external prop. The ruling class of Pakistan has a vested interest in keeping Indian Muslims alienated from India.

The only way to correct this situation is to make Muslims and other separatist groups to realise that separatism will not pay, that their own interests, as also the wider national interests, demand their complete identification with India, her history and culture. India existed long before the birth of Islam or Christianity. Indian heroes like Rama and Krishna and epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have not ceased to be their heroes and epics respectively simply because they, or their forefathers, changed their religion under some pressure, political or economic. They must learn to take pride in India's past which is their past as well. They must adopt Indian names just as the Indonesian or Chinese Muslims have Indonesian or Chinese names. In short they must adopt the Indian attitude—the national attitude—towards their religion which must cease to colour their loyalties towards the main-springs of Indian nationalism. All talk of separate Muslim or Christian or for that matter of Sikh or Jain culture must stop. India is one country and it has but one culture. It is a rich and variegated culture to which the people of different parts of the

country as also the foreign elements that have been assimilated by India in the course of her history have contributed something. But their contributions have become indistinguishable part and parcel of the main current of Indian culture. And all those who owe first and foremost allegiance to this one and indivisible country and her culture are Hindus, Indians or *Bharatiyas* whatever their religion, or province may be.

It is the national duty of the architects of free India, her leaders of thought and public opinion, to create conditions for the growth of sound nationalism in the country. A complete reorientation of the outlook and approach of the men in power towards this vital question is the first prerequisite for the purpose. They must give such a turn to their politics as may contribute towards the creation of an all-India outlook in the people in general and Indianisation of the Muslims and Christians in particular. A slight departure from the correct line in the field of politics can, and does, create most unfortunate results in all spheres of national life because "what cuts deep in politics cuts deep all round."

What is even more important is that the question of Indian nationalism should not be looked at from party angles. Indian nationalism cannot and should not mean different things to different political parties. There are bound to remain differences in the people about economic and social matters. Nationalism should help to subordinate those differences to national good. It should unite all nationalist parties for national good in times of emergency and isolate anti-national and disruptive forces and organisations.

But if there continue to exist differences on the basic question of Indian nationalism, national unity and solidarity will continue to be threatened by fissiparous tendencies which are being directly or indirectly fostered and encouraged by anti-national forces from within and outside the country.

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