

Politics and Society

Volume II : 1997-98
Special Number
in commemoration of
FIFTY YEARS OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE



Department of Political Science with Rural Administration
Vidyasagar University
Midnapore

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POLITICS AND SOCIETY

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Vidyasagar University, Midnapore

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In lieu of editorial

AGENDA FOR INDIA

Resolution adopted by the Lok Sabha in the special session of Parliament on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Independence held from 26 August - 1 September 1997

We, the Members of Lok Sabha, meeting in a specially convened Golden Jubilee Session of both Houses of Parliament, to commemorate the completion of half a century of freedom;

Having remembered with gratitude the great sacrifices made and the salutary service rendered by our freedom fighters;

Having recalled with deep satisfaction and pride the maturity of our people in vigilantly preserving democracy and safeguarding the unity of the nation and the valour of our soldiers, sailors and airmen, including ex-servicemen in service to the country;

Having reflected upon the state of the nation with the Preamble to the Constitution as the guide;

Having then, specifically deliberated upon matters concerning our current political life, state of democracy in the country, our economy, infrastructure, science, technology and human development;

Do now solemnly affirm our joint and unanimous commitment to the issues hereinafter mentioned, and we also do solemnly resolve and direct that they be adopted as minimum tasks, constituting our "Agenda for India" on this historic occasion ;

That meaningful electoral reforms be carried out so that our Parliament and other legislative bodies be balanced and effective instruments of democracy; and further that political life and processes be free of the adverse impact, on governance of undesirable extraneous factors including criminalisation;

That continuous and proactive efforts be launched for ensuring greater transparency, probity and accountability in public life so that the freedom, authority and dignity of the Parliament and other legislative bodies are ensured and enhanced; that more especially, all political parties shall undertake all such steps as will attain the objective of ridding our polity of criminalisation or its influence;

That the prestige of the Parliament be preserved and enhanced, also by conscious and dignified conformity to the entire regime of Rules of Procedure

and Conduct of Business of the Houses and Directions of the Presiding Officers relating to orderly conduct of business, more especially by

- maintaining the inviolability of the Question Hour,
- refraining from transgressing into the official areas of the House, or from any shouting of slogans, and,
- invariably desisting from any efforts at interruptions or interference with the address of the President of the Republic;

That a vigorous national campaign be launched by all political parties to combat economically unsustainable growth of population, recognising that such growth lies at the root of most of our human, social and economic problems;

That education at all levels be made employment-relevant, special attention being given to quality; that achievement of the Constitutional mandate of universalisation of elementary education be closely monitored; and that universal primary education be achieved by A.D. 2005;

That the national economy be prudently managed, with emphasis on

- efficient use of resources and avoidance of wastes;
- priority attention to development of infrastructure;
- generation of wealth as a sustainable means of achieving full, freely chosen and productive employment, of elimination of poverty and of securing equity and social justice; and
- balanced regional development.

That continuous efforts be made for achieving, in a time bound manner, marked improvement in the quality of life of all citizens of our country with special emphasis on provision of our minimum needs, food, nutrition and health security at the house-hold level; potable water; sanitation and shelter;

That gender justice be established in the spirit of the Declaration and Platform for Action of the U. N. Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and be practised as a way of life, with particular emphasis on education of the girl child;

That constant efforts be made in terms of inculcation of values and adjustment of the life and working styles of our people to secure protection of environment and preservation of ecology and bio-diversity;

That science and technology be primarily anchored in the creation of a scientific temper, be developed by promotion of governmental as well as non-governmental efforts and be pressed into service not merely for economic development but human development in all its dimensions;

That, finally, the essence of participatory democracy be seen in the inculcation of our national spirit of self-reliance, in which our citizens are equal partners in all spheres of our national endeavour, and not simply the beneficiaries of governmental initiatives.

Ideology of Hindu Communalism and the Contemporary Indian Politics

NIMAI PRAMANIK

*Know then thyself, presume
not God to scan;
The proper study of Mankind
is Man.*

Alexander Pope

It is generally thought that the origin of religion lies in the ignorance of man. But this is not true. If it is true, with the development of science and technology religion would wither away. But the fact is that in spite of tremendous development of science and technology religion pervades the mind of man, even in the West. The reason behind this has been explained, perhaps in a better way, by Seneca (106 B.C.), the great Roman philosopher, when he said, "Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false and by the rulers as useful." Even in his *Rassiar Chithi* Rabindranath Tagore remarks that it has been seen so far that the king who wants to make his subjects slave has done so with the help of religion which makes the people blind. Tagore compares that type of religion with the venomous woman who attracts man and ultimately kills him.¹ If we analyse the socio-political landscape of contemporary India, the observations of these two great thinkers of two different countries are found very much true to the letter.

I

After independence India establishes herself as a secular state. But the Indian concept of secularism differs from that of the West. The Western secularism is based mainly upon the principle of separating politics from religion. Pandit Nehru was an ardent supporter of this type of secularism. But Gandhi's idea was quite opposite to that of Nehru. However, India's secularism may be described as a mixture of Nehruvian secularism (total separation of politics from religion, and both religious toleration by the state and religious disengagement of the state) and Gandhian secularism (

retention and abolition of the religious category simultaneously; equality of all religious identities and equal treatment to all religions, i.e., *sarva dharma samabhava*). It has often been claimed that the character and content of secularism in India are tailored by India's specific problems and needs. As India is the home of many religions, sects and castes, there was no other alternative but to accept the principle of *sarva dharma samabhava*. This is also in tune with the history and tradition of India. Explaining the nature of Indian secularism Dr Radhakrishnan writes in his *Recovery of Faith* :

When India is said to be a secular state, it does not mean that we reject the reality of an unseen spirit or the relevance of religion to life or that we exalt irreligion. ... Though faith in the Supreme is the basic principle of the Indian tradition, the Indian state will not identify itself with or be controlled by any particular religion. ... No group of citizens shall arrogate to itself rights and privileges which it denies to others. No person should suffer any form of disability or discrimination because of his religion.²

K.M.Panikkar is of opinion that the Indian state by becoming secular has not become irreligious. "Its secularism is negative in the sense of not permitting religious considerations to enter into the principles of state action, this arises basically from a desire to be just to the members of all religious communities inhabiting India."³ Participating in the debate of the Constituent Assembly, Ananthasayanam Ayyangar remarked :

We are pledged to make the State a secular one. I do not by the word "secular" mean that we do not believe in any religion, and that we have nothing to do with it in our day-to-day life. It only means that the State or the Government cannot aid one religion or give preference to one religion as against another. Therefore, it is obliged to be absolutely secular in character.⁴

Thus, secularism in India means (a) rejection of a theocratic or quasi-theocratic form of State which is by nature a non-religion based democratic State; (b) religion as a matter of individual or group concern or it specifies that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of religion ; (c) citizens' right to religion, to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practise and propagate religion subject only to public order, morality and health ; (d) unity and equality of all citizens irrespective of religion or caste; (e) no grounds for confrontation between different religious communities as all religions are by nature humanist, and (f) *sarva dharma samabhava* (equal respect to all religions), and threefold duty of the State in fulfilling the individual's material, spiritual and cultural needs. Thus religion is inex-

trically associated with the Indian type of secularism. This had been done purposefully by our national leaders for preserving their own class interest. As Professor Randhir Singh very correctly points out :

The Indian ruling classes have always found religion, religiosity or *dharmikta* most useful for reinforcing their hegemony, their ideological dominance and social control over the common people, making easier the latter's continued acceptance of an unjust and iniquitous social order. This usefulness has been well-secured through the typically Indian concept of secularism, defined as *sarva dharma sambhava* (equal respect for all religions), which is in fact no secularism at all — it is far more a celebration of all kinds of religion and religiosity, ignorance, obscurantism and social oppression.⁵

II

If we analyse the political history of India, it would be found that here religion always served politics and politics in its turn has often served religion.⁶ T.R. Sharma opines that

religion was never able to fully extricate itself from politics nor could politics ever rid itself fully of religion. Thus, one finds politicisation of religion in some manifest or latent form at all stages of our history.⁷

In ancient India *dharma* was used to legitimize the political authority of the *kshatriyas* and the latter in their turn patronized the *brahmins*, especially the *purohits* so that they could enjoy special privileges and status in the social structure. The main object of such alliance between the *brahmins* and the *kshatriyas* was to dominate over the *vaishyas* and the *sudras*. As Beni Prasad very rightly observes that in ancient India though politics was recognized as a science, 'it could never make itself completely independent of religion and ethics.'⁸ The nexus between religion and politics was clearly manifested during the reign of Asoka when the propaganda of *dharma* became the duty of the state. During the medieval period the non-Hindu rulers also followed the path shown by the Hindu rulers for the survival of their political position. In this context T.R.Sharma writes:

In short, from the beginning of the eleventh century to the end of the fourteenth century the Muslim rulers used their religious identity to muster support in order to maintain their political power. The very fact that they vanquished Hindu rulers in bloody battles alien-

ated a large segment of their Hindu population from political power. Some of these battles were projected as *Jehads* (holy wars) against the infidels. This was done to win unqualified support of the muslim nobility and the rank and file of muslim population.

...Islam continued as the state religion and these states were little less than theocracies....During the whole of this period politics and religion were so intimately converted that the two were virtually indistinguishable.⁹

During the sixteenth century a powerful Muslim empire was founded by Babar. The Muslim rulers did the same thing. Only Akbar and Dara Suko were the glittering exceptions. Akbar, for the first time since the advent of Muslims in India, tried to free politics from the clutches of religion. He introduced *Din-i-Illahi*, a new religion combining the major elements of Hinduism and Islam. But since the time of his successor, Jehangir, again unholy alliance was formed between religion and politics.

During the anti-imperialist struggle the leaders of the Indian National Congress like Tilak, Aurobindo and Gandhi mixed up politics with religion. The extremist politics is popularly known as the 'politics of Hindu revivalism.' They used religious slogans and symbols to mobilize the masses against the imperialist rulers. Even the heart of the Gandhian politics was religion. In all Gandhi's propoganda the preaching of Hinduism and his religious conception and preaching of the general political aims were inextricably mixed. Even when he, as the supreme leader of the united nationalist movement of both the Hindus and the Muslims, launched the NCO movement (1920-22), he proclaimed himself 'a Sanatani Hindu,' because he believed in the Hindu scriptures like the *Upanishads*, the *Puranas*, etc., and in the *avatars* and re-birth. Besides, his faith in the *varnashram dharma*, the cow protection and idol-worship also made him a *Sanatani Hindu*. Moreover, when he appealed for Hindu-Muslim unity, he used 'we' and 'they' to denote the Hindus and Muslims respectively. But in spite of their religion-based politics the nationalist leaders including Gandhi were not at all communalists. They did not preach the gospel of communal hatred and animosity. The object of their politics was the achievement of *swaraj* or independence as the case might be. Indeed Gandhi, in spite of his Hindu religion-based politics, earnestly believed that the Hindus and Muslims were '*bhai bhai*' (brothers) and without their joint endeavour *swaraj* (later *purna swaraj*) could never be achieved. His *Ramdhun* song is a clear manifestation of his faith in the principle of *sarva dharma samabhava*, the Indian type of secularism.

III

After independence the Indian National Congress which proclaims

itself as the secular political party utilizes religion for the fulfilment of its political object. For instance, we can cite a few actions of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who was also the then President of the INC(I). He wanted to win elections by using religion since the mid-80s. Due to the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Sahobanoo Case(23 January 1985) the Muslim communal forces became angry and tried to whip up the religious sentiment of the Muslim community by raising the slogan that in India the Islam was in danger. By passing the Muslim Women's(Protection) Law Mr Gandhi wanted to please the Muslim fundamentalists. At the same time, by unlocking the disputed Babri mosque of Ayodhya he wanted to use Ram, the Hindu Hero of the epic *Ramayana*, as the 'trump card' for securing the Hindu votes in the ensuing election. Arun Nehru, the then Minister of State for Home Affairs and one of the close associates of Mr Rajiv Gandhi, later told the reporter of *The Statesman*:

In early 1986 the Muslim Women's Bill was passed to play the Muslim card; and then came the decision on Ayodhya to play the Hindu card. It was supposed to be a package deal. I knew it was a dangerous thing to do and I did not agree. ... When I asked Mr Rajiv Gandhi who is [sic!] showing the worship in the disputed shrine at Ayodhya on Doordarshan two days after it was unlocked, he did not reply; he merely smiled and observed [that] it was a tit for tat for the 'Muslim Women's Bill.'¹⁰

Thus politicization of religion was and has been a general trend of the Indian society and polity albeit at intervals. But the communalization of politics—another dangerous phenomenon—has become prominent since the 1980s. The process of communalization of politics was initiated by both the Hindu and the Muslim fundamentalists, and communal parties and organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS) in the 1920s, and the Muslim League in the late 1930s. V.D. Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, M.S.Golwalkar, the second *Sarasanghachalak* of the RSS and Md. Ali Jinnah, the supremo of the Muslim League, tried their best to communalize the Indian politics for the fulfilment of their political object through the Two Nation Theory. The Hindu Two Nation Theory gave birth to majoritarian communalism and the Muslim Two Nation Theory led to separatism.¹¹

IV

Communalism vs. secularism has become the topic of the day in the Indian subcontinent mainly since the 1980s. It is interesting to note that every individual, every group, every organization and every political party claims to be not only anti-communal, but also to be hundred per cent secu-

lar. The Indian National Congress (I), the left and democratic parties of India, especially the CPI and the CPI(M), the Samajwadi Party, the Janata Dal, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, etc. call the BJP and other members of the *Sangh Parivar*, (i.e., VHP, Bajrang Dal, etc.) communalists. Even the RSS and the members of its family have been trying their best to prove that they themselves are true secularists and their critics are 'pseudo-secularists.' They claim that their ideas of *Hindutva* and *Hindu Rashtra* are the manifestations of their secular outlook. In this respect observations of some ideologues of the said *Parivar* are worth mentioning. According to Murli Manohar Joshi, "Hindutva is not a communal concept as alleged by pseudo-secularists."¹² Dr M.M.Sankhdher, another theoretician of the *Parivar* writes:

I am convinced that Hinduism being a *dharma*—a way of life—and not a mere religion, is an anti-communal creed. ...However, in self-defence and when pushed to the wall, they do retaliate.... The Muslims should be grateful for the Hindus' gift of secularism to them.¹³

Even L.K.Advani, the topmost leader of the BJP and the present Home Minister of India, went to the extent of demanding a 'national debate on the meaning of secularism' in the first meeting of the National Integration Council after his party assumed power, held in April 1990. In his opinion, the BJP and its allied Hindu organizations are 'secular', whereas the Islamic organizations are by nature 'communal'. So under the present circumstances struggle against communalism means struggle against Islamic communalism. Thus, according to the *Sangh Parivar*, the ideas and ideals of *Hindutva*, *Hindu Rashtra* and *Hindu Sanskriti* are by nature secular.

But if we analyse the nature of *Hindutva*, *Hindu Rashtra* and *Hindu Sanskriti*, it would be crystal clear that the members of the *Sangh Parivar* have been communalizing the Indian politics with a view to capturing political power of the country since independence. Of course due to Nehru and his party, and also due to the leftists who were strongly opposed to the communalists and stood for defending secular ethos of Indian polity, the *Sangh Parivar* could not succeed in achieving their political object at least up to the 1980s. On the contrary, the Indian people began to treat the RSS and its political wing, the Jana Sangh* (the political ancestor of the BJP) as the communalists, especially after the assassination of Gandhi on 30 January 1948 by Nathuram Godse, an active member of Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS.¹⁴ Since then both the RSS and the Jana Sangh had to face the challenges of the Congress secularists like Pandit Nehru and his daughter, Mrs Indira Gandhi. In 1975 (June) emergency was declared by Mrs Gandhi and several organizations including the RSS were banned. Besides, on her initiatives the words, 'SECULAR' and 'SOCIALIST' were inserted into the

* The Jana Sangh was founded on 21 October 1951.

Preamble to the Constitution of India in 1976 by the 42nd Amendment Act. Under the circumstances the first and foremost duty of the RSS and the Jana Sangh was to defeat Mrs Gandhi and her party for preserving their own existence. The movement of J P against the 'authoritarian rule' of Mrs Gandhi gave them an opportunity to make their mission fulfilled and the leaders of the Jana Sangh like Atal Behari Vajpayee and L. K. Advani fully utilized the same by becoming a partner of the newly formed Janata Party which took charge of the Government at the Centre defeating the Congress in the general elections of 1977. But owing to the communal attitude and activities of the Jana Sangh leaders and also due to their close relations with the RSS there arose serious resentment inside the Janata Government headed by Morarji Desai. That was one of the important reasons for the fall of the Desai Government in 1979. In that opportune time with a view to removing the stink of communalism from its own body the leaders of the Jana Sangh changed the name of their party. Thus emerged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in April 1980. Since then the process of communalization of politics has been going on in full swing at the party's behest. The BJP and its organizational allies want to consolidate the Hindus by whipping up their religious sentiment for a non-religious purpose, i.e., capture of political power. They have revived the Ram Janambhumi-Babri Masjid issue purposefully. The BJP in its election manifestos categorically and unequivocally declares its intention to construct a *Ram Mandir* at the site of the Babri *Masjid*. Besides, they promise to build a *Ram Rajya* in India on the basis of *Hindutva* if they come to power.¹⁵ In their 1991 Election Manifesto it had been said :

BJP firmly believes that construction of Sri Ram Mandir at Janmasthan is a symbol of the vindication of our cultural heritage and national self-respect. For BJP it is purely a national issue and it will not allow any vested interests to give it a sectarian and communal colour. Hence party is committed to build Sri Ram Mandir at Janmasthan by relocating superimposed Babri structure with due respect.¹⁶

In the said manifesto the BJP also described itself as 'the party of Nationalism, Holism and Integral Humanism'.¹⁷

In the 1996 Election Manifesto of the BJP *Hindutva* had been identified with 'the cultural nationalism' which 'shall be the rainbow' for bridging 'our present to our glorious past and paving the way for an equally glorious future.'¹⁸ In the words of the Manifesto :

The BJP is committed to the concept of one nation, one people, one culture....From this belief flows our faith in 'Cultural Nationalism' which is the core of *Hindutva*.

...Hindutva is a unifying principle which alone can preserve the unity and integrity of our nation.

On coming to power, the BJP Government will facilitate the construction of a magnificent Sri Ram Mandir at Janmasthan in Ayodhya which will be a tribute to *Bharat Mata*. This dream moves millions of people in our land; the concept of Rama lies at the core of their consciousness.¹⁹

Again in its Election Manifesto of 1998 the BJP unequivocally declared its commitments to the concept of 'One Nation, One People and One Culture.' Besides, like the previous manifestos it also described 'the cultural nationalism of India' as 'the core of Hindutva,' and depicted *Hindutva* as 'being consistent with the true meaning and definition of secularism.'²⁰ The Manifesto also assured the Hindus that 'a magnificent Sri Ram Mandir at Ram Janambhumi in Ayodhya' would be constructed.²¹ Among other things, the BJP's Election Manifestos also lay emphasis on the abrogation of Art. 370 of the Indian Constitution, imposition of a total ban on the slaughter of cows and cowprogeny including bulls and bullocks, and prohibition of all trades including export (state as well as private) in beef and formulation of a uniform Civil Code.

Thus the BJP not only politicizes religion, but also communalizes the politics of contemporary India through *Hindutva*, *Hindu Rashtra* and *Hindu Sanskriti*. As Professor Bipan Chandra, the eminent historian of our time, very rightly remarks :

...there have been three common themes in the continuous Hindu communal ideological offensive during the last 14 years or so.

One has been the successful effort to join communalism to religious appeal through the Ram Janambhoomi agitation since 1984 (after the fiasco to do so in 1980 through the *ekatmata yatra*, carrying Ganges water to different parts of the country, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad being formed for the purpose). Second has been the attack on secularism as "minorityism" and "pseudo-secularism." Third has been the portrayal of communalism as nationalism.²²

In all these cases the *Sangh Parivar* has tried its best to form a false consciousness among the Hindus by whipping up their religious sentiments. And in doing so they not only distort history, but also invoke the names of Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Tilak, Bhagat Singh and even Gandhi in their convenient way. For achieving success in their mission they began to invest huge money for the publication of books, leaflets, journals, newspapers, etc. The ideologues of the *Sangh Parivar* like Balasaheb Deoras, Sita Ram

Goel, H.V. Seshadri, K.R. Malkani, Ram Swarup, M.M. Sankhdher, Prafulla Goradia, Girilal Jain, Murli Manohar Joshi and others have taken the responsibility of proving that their ideology is 'cultural nationalism', not communalism. They have done so because they have come to realize it very well that direct religious and communal appeals cannot bring them to the power in the vast and diverse Indian society. So they have been trying to give their communal ideology 'a nationalist garb',²³ and to prove themselves as 'true secular'. Side by side, they do not forget to remind the Hindus that the Islam stands in the way of success of their nationalism. Hence they described the Ram Janambhoomi movement as a movement 'to keep India united against all odds and challenges of Islamization of India.' And as such, according to Brahma Datta Bharti, the Hindus must fight 'for their survival and glory against the forces of Pan-Islamism, anti-nationalism and treachery.'²⁴ Ashok Singhal, the General Secretary of the VHP, opined in the same vein that migration of Muslims from Bangladesh, migration of Hindus from Kashmir, inflow of foreign funds, and so on were all 'part of the Muslim scheme of Islamization of Bharat.'²⁵ Expressing the same attitude Ram Swarup in an article published on 30 June 1991 in the *Organiser* launched a fierce attack on Islam. In this connexion he referred to the medieval Indian history and wrote that the Hindus had to fight the Muslims for eight hundred years. In his opinion, 'our problem is not Muslims but Islam' because it is 'not a religion', but 'a political ideology'.²⁶ To counteract Islam, therefore, according to the *Sangh Parivar*, capture of political power was necessary. In this respect Moropant Pingle, a senior RSS leader, categorically stated in June 1991 that 'Hindu society must attain absolute control over the political power structure of the country.'²⁷ The theoreticians and ideologues of the *Sangh Parivar* are not thus ready to accept Hindus as a community. In their eyes Hindus are 'a nation, a culture,[and] a civilization'.²⁸

V

In this way for the first time since independence hatred and animosity towards other religious communities are openly propagated by the Hindu communalists in the name of nation, nationalism and nationalist culture. Commenting on this aspect Bipan Chandra rightly observes that Hindu nationalism is 'basically anti-nationalism or opposite to nationalism' because the so-called Hindu nationalists oppose secularism tooth and nail whereas secularism is 'one of the strongest pillars of the nation-state not only in India and in multi-religious societies but in all modern states.'²⁹ Besides, the *Sangh Parivar* refuses to accept not only the cultural diversity of India, and the co-existence and integration of different linguistic, religious and cultural strands, but they also ridicule those who talk of building India on the basis of a 'composite culture,' as 'sons of Macaulay'.³⁰ This is perfectly in consonance with the teachings of V.D. Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar, the

ideological *gurus* of the Hindu communalists. According to Savarkar,

A Hindu...is he who looks upon the land that extends from the Indus to the seas, as the land of his forefathers, he who inherits the blood of that race whose first discernible source could be traced to the Vedic[sic!] and which on its onward march assimilating much that was incorporated and ennobling much that was assimilated, who has inherited and claims as his own the culture of that race, as expressed chiefly in their common classic language and represented by a common history, a common literature, art, architecture, law and jurisprudence, rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments, fairs and festivals, and who, above all, addresses this land as his Holyland and the land of his prophets and seers, of his godmen and guru, the land of piety and pilgrimage. These are the essentials of Hindutva...³¹

Savarkar believes that the Muslims or the Christians, even those who are converted, though shared with the Hindus a common culture and a common homeland, could not be treated as Hindus because in spite of considering Hindustan as their fatherland, they are not ready to accept it as their holyland. Their holyland is, Savarkar thinks, far off in Arabia or Palestine. Even their love for India is also divided.³² Savarkar opines that if the Mussalmans are to live in India, 'they must live here taking for granted Hindustan as the land of the Hindus, and no one else.'³³ With a view to consolidating the Hindus he raised the slogan, 'Hinduise politics and militarise Hindudom.'³⁴ Establishment of 'one state, one nation and one culture' was his battle cry against the Muslims' demand for Pakistan. It is very interesting to note that though Savarkar 'himself was not a believer of God',³⁵ he utilized religion for communal end. Thus Savarkar who started his political career as an active freedom fighter, ultimately turned into a theoretician of Hindu communalism.³⁶ Like Savarkar of the Hindu Mahasabha, 'Guru' Golwalkar also propagated the ideology of racial superiority of the Hindus in his *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (1939) and *Bunch of Thoughts*(1980). He opines that only the Hindus are the sons of the soil in Hindustan.³⁷ Following the path shown by his 'Guru', Balaraj Madhok, the former President of the Jana Sangh writes:

...the Vedic Aryans were the original inhabitants of the area described as Sapt-Sindhawa, Punjab, Kashmir and the Eastern Afghanistan was the region in which the Vedic Aryans originally lived and from where they spread to the rest of India, Iran, Central Asia and Europe in course of time.³⁸

Golwalkar not only glorified the Hindu religion and culture, but also castigated the Muslims for 'their attitudes of intolerance and ungrate-

fulness towards this land [India] and its age-long traditions.³⁹ He, again, writes in his *Bunch of Thoughts* :

History has recorded that their (Muslims'-NP) antagonism was not merely political. Had it been so, they could have been won over in a very short time. But it was so deep-rooted that whatever we believed in, the Muslim was wholly hostile to it. If we worship in the temple, he would desecrate it. If we carry on *bhajans* and car festivals, that would irritate him. If we worship cow, he would like to eat it. If we glorify woman as a symbol of sacred motherhood, he would like to molest her. He was tooth and nail opposed to our way of life in all respects—religious, cultural, social, etc.⁴⁰

Golwalkar therefore wanted the Indian Muslims to be subordinated to the Hindu nation and Hindu religion 'claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment - not even citizen's rights.'⁴¹ Almost in the same spirit one of the ideologues of the *Sangh Parivar* writes:

Muslims and other minorities who are not prepared to abjure their separate identities should be declared foreigners and they should be declared divested of the right to franchise. When the Muslims of Iran feel proud of linking themselves with pre-Islam entities of Iran... here is no reason why the Muslims in India, 98 per cent of whom are progenies of their Hindu ancestors should not link themselves with Ram, greatest son of Hindustan.⁴²

The anti-Muslim attitude of the Hindu communalists ultimately led them to raise such slogans as *Mussalman ko dono sthan, Pakistan aur Kabarsthan; jab jab Hindu jaga hai, desh se moulla bhaga hai ; jo rokhe mandir nirman, usko bhejo Pakistan*, etc. They did not stop here; in action they demolished the controversial structure of the Babri mosque on 6 December 1992. Centering this heinous incident a number of communal riots had taken place in different parts of India. In this way, the *Sangh Parivar* not only destroyed the Indian heritage of 'composite culture', but also betrayed no faith at all in liberal democracy, not to speak of socialist one. Golwalkar writes :

The concept of Democracy as being 'by the people' and 'of the people', meaning that all are equal sharers in the political administration, is, to a very large extent, only a myth in practice.

Communism, too, has completely failed to realise any of its declared concept of equality.

. . . To raise always the slogan of revolution is to encourage and

invite armed strifes, anarchy and murder of peace.⁴³

The *Sangh Parivar* also does not support the existing federal system of government in India. They consider our federal structure as 'a poisonous seed'. According to Golwalkar,

...[that] the framers of our present Constitution ...were not firmly rooted in the conviction of a single homogeneous nationhood is evident from the federal structure of our Constitution. ...In fact, it was the fragmentation of our single national life in the past into so many exclusive political units that sowed the seeds of national disintegration and defeat.⁴⁴

'The Basic Cure', as the 'Guruji' prescribes, is to 'build a strong, well-organised, self-conscious and self-sustaining national life.'⁴⁵

VI

It is evident that by decrying secularism, democracy, federalism, etc. the *Sangh Parivar* is determined to establish a reactionary Hindu fascist state in India⁴⁶ to politicise religion and communalise politics. A letter of Jawaharlal Nehru is worth-remembering here :

I agree that there is Muslim communalism in India and I would also probably agree that Muslim communalism is much worse and stronger among Muslims, than Hindu communalism. But Muslim communalism cannot dominate Indian society and introduce fascism. That only Hindu communalism can. Therefore, we have got to be very chary and very aware and to struggle against Hindu communalism above all.⁴⁷

By way of explanation he said on 5 January 1961, 'When the minority communities are communal, you can see that and understand it. But the communalism of the majority community is apt to be taken for nationalism.'⁴⁸

Thus in the garb of 'cultural nationalism' the *Sangh Parivar* tends to be determined to convert the liberal democratic state of India into a fascist one.

Under the circumstances for the defeat of the ideology of Hindu communalism the unity of the left and democratic forces of India is a historical necessity. Only these forces by explaining 'the source of faith and religion among the masses in a materialist way' could be able to combat communalism and fundamentalism. But 'the combating of religion', as has been observed by V. I. Lenin,

cannot be confined to abstract ideological preaching, and it must

not be reduced to such preaching. It must be linked up with the concrete practice of the class movement, which aims at eliminating the social roots of religion.⁴⁹

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Language Syndrome in Post-independence India : A Note on the Communist Discourse in the Sixties

DEBNARAYAN MODAK

Language is not only a means of communication, it also reflects the culture and character of a people. Each people speaking different languages possesses a complex of distinctive linguistic and cultural heritage. It is generally admitted that the history of a language is inevitably linked up with the history of the cultural life of the people speaking that language. The view is even applicable to those who are found at a backward stage of social and cultural development. Thus the language problem is a complex and many-sided one, particularly in those countries having a multiplicity of languages representing varying stages of its development. Again, the issue of language is closely associated with the nation-building process because the existence of a common language for interaction is an essential precondition for the development of a nation.

In a multilingual country like ours, language has been one of the most controversial issues due to several reasons. It was particularly due to the absence of any consensus in regard to the acceptance of a common language which can be used as a means of interaction between and among the peoples speaking different languages. It is worth mentioning here that during the British rule in India, English was used as the language of communication between the government and the people of different provinces although a microscopic minority of the population was able to understand it. As a result, the people at large did not have the opportunity to participate in the affairs of government or to effectively communicate with each other. Even the provinces were not linguistically homogenous as a result of which the same problems were faced by the people in their respective areas too.

With the progress of the struggle for independence, particularly during the period since 1920s, however, the issue of language came to the fore and it acquired an important place in the political agenda of the Indian National Congress (INC). It was, in fact, an imperative for the leaders of the INC to take up the issue of language so that their propaganda could reach the masses. The INC, in its Nagpur session in 1920, while accepting the principle of linguistic reorganisation of the British Indian provinces, resolved to reorganize its party structure accordingly. In 1926, the INC passed

a resolution at its annual conference in Kanpur to the effect that the language of the Congress organization should be *Hindustani*, not English. One of the most important supporters of *Hindustani* was Mahatma Gandhi who regarded it as the common language of both the Hindus and Muslims. In 1927, the INC appointed an All Parties Committee with Pandit Motilal Nehru as its President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as its General Secretary. The Committee was very categorical in its opinion that it was essential 'to conduct the business and politics of a country in a language which is understood by the masses.' It favoured *Hindustani* as the common language of the whole of India besides giving due importance to provincial languages of the respective areas. Between 1928 and 1947, the INC reaffirmed its adherence to the linguistic principles on at least three occasions : viz, (i) at its Calcutta session held in October 1937; (ii) at Wardha in July 1938; and (iii) in its Election Manifesto of 1945-46.¹ Thus, as a part of the movement for national liberation, the demand for linguistic reorganization of provinces and also of replacing English by Indian languages gained notable advance during pre-independence days.

But the British authorities did not pay any heed to those demands as their aim was only to perpetuate their rule in India. It not only imposed their own language in the sphere of administration, but also in the field of education at the cost of development of Indian languages. To ignore the demands of the Indian people in this regard, they consistently propagandised that India was a babel of tongues and whatever unity it possessed was owing to the unifying role of English as the lingua franca of India. It resorted to the fantastic exaggeration of the difficulties for any solution of the language problem by taking a clue from the fact of multiplicity of Indian languages with varying degrees of development. It was often propagated that there were "hundreds of languages" in India, which could make the problem very complex indeed. The idea originated in the 1921 Census, which named 222 languages; the figure was repeated in the Simon Commission Report that spoke of the difficulties of the Government in this regard.

The figure, however, resulted from a confusion between languages and dialects; it also did not make any distinction between languages spoken by small groups and those which belongs to the whole civilization of India. R.P. Dutt, one of the renowned leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain, attempted an analysis of the linguistic composition of India ; tried to unveil the 'mythology of 222 separate languages,' and concluded that the problem of languages in India was 'in practice a problem of some twelve or thirteen languages.'² This view was also vindicated by the first Indian Census during post-independence days which showed that nearly 92 per cent of the Indian people spoke one of the fourteen Indian languages mentioned in the Constitution (Schedule VIII).³

This does not mean, however, that the language problem in India was confined to the languages spoken by the major linguistic communities

as mentioned above. It was natural that with the passage of time more and more hitherto backward and less developed linguistic groups, being conscious of their rights, would come forward to exert themselves for the recognition of their own languages to avoid victimization of assimilation with the majority groups and to ensure their development in different spheres of life. This was also true in respect of the languages/dialects spoken by different tribal communities. Hence, the complexities of our language problem need no elaboration. The basic point here is that the British rulers took this as an excuse to pursue their own ends and hence did not show any respect to the demand of the Indians in this regard. So, it was expected that in free India the aspirations of different linguistic communities to have due recognition of their own languages would be given proper attention and the problems relating to it would be reasonably solved.

II

Accordingly, the issue of language gained prominence in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly which came into being on December 1946. Although the issue engaged the attention of the Assembly from the very beginning, the nature of the debate changed afterwards when it became known that the country was going to be divided on religious lines. The Assembly was generally agreed on the aim of replacing English as the lingua franca of the country, but no single one of the regional Indian languages had an undisputed claim to this status. The language debate at the initial sessions, however, reflected the 'pursuasiveness' of *Hindustani* of which both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were strong supporters. But this 'pursuasiveness' was virtually lost by the time the fourth Assembly session met in July 1947 under the ominous shadow of Partition. It was from this time that a concerted move was made by the Orthodox Hindi supporters to dislodge *Hindustani* and to install Hindi in its place. To them, *Hindustani* was a symbol of appeasement of the Muslim concern for Urdu. Even if there was reason to concede the Gandhian sentiment before early 1947, once the prospect of Partition was certain, they found no reason for any such concession.⁴

The Constituent Assembly was overwhelmingly dominated by the Congress members among which the supporters of Hindi enjoyed a very strong position. They demonstrated their strength during the crucial language debate in the Assembly when the Hindi supporters won by 78 against 77 votes cast for *Hindustani*. On the demand of recounting of votes by the *Hindustani* block, it resulted in a tie due to the absence of a Hindi supporter during recounting. Ultimately, a compromise was reached on the basis of what became known as the 'Munshi-Ayyangar Formula'. This formula did not provide for a national language. It used the term "Official Language of the Union" and provided that this language would be Hindi written in the

Devnagari script. It indicated that in spite of many concessions on details, the Hindi block was successful in getting its major demands accepted by the framers of the Constitution.⁵

Coming to the specific constitutional provisions relating to language, we could discern the kind of compromise that was reached in the Constituent Assembly. Those are complicated, occasionally ambiguous, and sometimes undoubtedly confusing. However, the makers of the Constitution were aware of the importance of English in independent India. That is why although they accorded 'Hindi in Devnagari Script', the status of the 'Official Language of the Union', provisions were also made for the continuation of English for 'all the official purposes of the Union' for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution (Art. 343). The Constitution further empowers the Parliament to make law to provide for the use of English even after the aforesaid period of fifteen years, in pursuance of which the Official Language Act 1963 was enacted. Provision has also been made to appoint a Commission to make recommendations regarding, among other things, the progressive use of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union and restrictions on the use of English for all or any of the official purposes of the Union (Art. 344). The first Official Language Commission submitted its recommendations in 1956.

Article 345, on the other hand, permits the legislature of a State to "adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State". As regards the official language for communication between one state and another, or between a state and the Union, Article 346 states that the "language for the time-being authorized for use in the Union for official purposes shall be the official language for communication..." It, however, insists the use of Hindi as means of communication between such states that mutually agree to that effect, Article 347 authorizes the President to direct the use of a particular language to be also 'officially recognised' throughout a particular state or a part of it for such purposes as he may specify on being satisfied "that a substantial proportion of the population of a state desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by that state".

Among other important provisions of the Constitution relating to language, what is worth mentioning here is the inclusion of the Eighth Schedule which originally incorporated fourteen important Indian languages. Subsequently Sind was included in the list in 1967, and the other three—Manipuri, Nepali and Konkani — were added in 1992. Although about 90 per cent of the Indian population speak the languages incorporated in the Eighth Schedule, no clearcut rationale for their inclusion is spelt out in the Constitution. It thus tends to pave the way for developing a sense of deception among some other linguistic groups whose languages are left out and the demands are accordingly still being raised for their inclusion.

A close study of the constitutional provisions relating to language issue would reveal that, in spite of so many compromises, it could not be given final shape and much of it were of a tentative nature. Therefore the adoption of the Constitution could not solve the language problem and apprehensions mounted up in different quarters as regards the intention of the government in matters of policy on languages and the fate of different languages.

III

Although the communist attitude towards language issue began to be unfolded since early forties as an integral part of their overall perception of the Indian national question, the Communist Party of India (CPI) did not pay much attention to the specific issues involved in it before India achieved independence. Even in the Constituent Assembly, it did not have ample opportunity to air its views on the language question as the only Communist member to the Assembly, Somnath Lahiri, who was elected from Bengal, had to vacate his seat due to the Partition of the country. In the *Draft Resolution for the Constituent Assembly*, presented by Lahiri before the Assembly in 1946, language issue was figured only indirectly when he referred to the burning issues of the national question of India prevalent in those days. It mentioned *Hindustani* as one of the homelands of linguistically and culturally homogenous people.⁶ However, an elaborate treatment of the language question found expression in the communist circle only in the late forties when the Constituent Assembly was debating the issue of the national/ official language for India.

During this period, the CPI backed *Hindustani* as the language of the *Hindustani nation*. This was obviously associated with the attempt to explain historically the growth of a *Hindustani nation*. from marxist point of view. A draft thus prepared by a subcommittee of the Central Cultural Commission of the Party, and presented by its Convener, Sardar Jafri, for discussion, offered a detailed analysis of the formation of *Hindustani nation* and the problems of its national language. The draft, however, admitted that "the problems as to who, precisely, and in what areas, constitute the *Hindustani* people and how their national language is to be developed and consolidated are far from settled." It emphasized the need for the national unification of the homeland of the *Hindustani* people irrespective of their religion, and development of *Hindustani* as their national language. It refused to hold the view that Hindi and Urdu were basically different languages and believed that the gulf between them, particularly in regard to their vocabulary and script, could be bridged through the united efforts of all concerned. The draft also held the view that the process of such unification was hampered due to the policy of national oppression, the policy of divide and rule followed by the British rulers. It also warned the Congress leaders

that they "should not be given a chance of dividing the people on the language question."⁷

However, the advocacy of *Hindustani* by the Indian Communists suffered a jolt due to several reasons. The Hindu-Muslim antagonism affected the mutual relationship between the two communities. Added to this was the traumatic experience of the Partition which exerted new pressures on the CPI stand. To sum up, as Prakash Karat wrote : *Hindustani* had become a dead proposition but the party stuck to its guns and in the process a serious inner-party controversy developed. There were pro-Hindi elements which rejected the claims of Urdu and considered it to be a dialect of Hindi; there were the Urdu protagonists who claimed Urdu as a distinct literary form of the *Hindustani* nationality, Hindi being the other. The Party steered a middle course by advocating *Hindustani* which it thought was the natural synthesis of these two literary forms as mentioned above.⁸

Although there were both pro- and anti-Hindi factions within the CPI during the early years of independence, by the end of 1949, the dominant sentiment in the party was one of vehement opposition to the promotion of Hindi as the national language, either official or unofficial.⁹ This was evident from the views expressed by the Party on different occasions. In the *Manifesto of the Central Committee on the New Constitution*, the Party observed :

The Constitution denies equality of all languages and imposes English and Hindi as the state languages. This monstrous attack is a weapon of perpetuating backwardness and denying culture and education to the people of those regions; it is a weapon of creating a solid basis for Marwari-Gujrati domination because such domination stands endangered if people develop their own languages and culture .¹⁰

A pamphlet of the Communist-led All India Students' Federation also held: "The policy of imposing Hindi is not only part of the policy of protecting the economic and political dominance of Birla and Co., it is equally a policy of suppressing all other languages and culture."¹¹

One of the most vocal exponents of the anti-Hindi stand of the Party, Ram Bilas Sharma, held the view that the "Hindi -Urdu question" had served as "the most important cultural weapon in the hands of the upper classes to divert the attention of the masses from the burning social issues." Reflecting on the issue of accepting Hindi as the common language for India, he categorically declared that "it is not possible to have a single language for the whole of the country..." He was, however, of the opinion that in the distant future, "India may have fewer languages and ultimately one common language, but then the common language will be very much different from Hindi or any other modern Indian language." He cited the example of the

then Soviet Union and said that although the Russian language was very widely understood throughout the country, no attempt was made to impose it upon the non-Russian nations. He categorically stated that 'a language should not be imposed on any nation against its will.' In his view the imposition of Hindi as the common language would help the Indian big bourgeoisie 'to consolidate the Indian market as a whole in its own interest and oust the bourgeoisie of other nation.' He even went to the extent of criticizing his comrade, Mohan Manjhi, who held in an article (published in *Janashakti*, 10 December 1948) that Hindi might become an all-India language in a natural way. To Sharma, the 'natural way' was 'only a mask for covering opportunist concession to great-national chauvinism.'¹²

Elsewhere Sharma referred to the decision of the Constituent Assembly relating to the continuance of English for fifteen years after the commencement of the Constitution and criticized it as "a natural consequence of the policy of servile collaboration with imperialism...", and regarded it as the suppression of the languages and cultures of the various nationalities. Again, he observed that as the Nehru-Patel Government realised that the people would not tolerate such imposition of English for long "the Indian bourgeoisie keeps an alternative in the form of Hindi."¹³

It is interesting to note that the contemporary Soviet indologists took keen interest in the language problem of our country, which ultimately influenced the Indian Communists at that time. In fact they were against the imposition of Hindi as the official language of India . Thus writing early in 1949, Dyakov opined that the promotion of Hindi as an official language constituted a violation of equality among the various nationalities in the Indian Union.¹⁴ In the next year, another indologist T. Yershov condemned the new Constitution for failing to recognize the 'equality of languages'.¹⁵ A year later, Madam N. Sosina, a soviet scholar, in her monograph held the view that the promotion of Hindi as a national language was a 'reactionary' policy prompted by "the desire of the ruling elements of the bourgeoisie to strengthen their control over the Indian market". Thus far, her interpretation corresponded to Sharma's. But elsewhere in the monograph, she appeared to concede the possibility that Hindi might eventually assume the role of a national language in future. "The common language, whether it be Hindi or some other, will be promoted by the practice of life itself," she wrote.¹⁵

All these indicate that although there were differences in attitude among the party ranks toward the language problem, the anti-Hindi faction obviously predominated in the CPI during the early years of independence. This was very much evident from its pronouncement in the 1951 *Programme* which stated :

In the name of a united country, the language of a part of the country, namely Hindi, was declared an obligatory State language for all nationalities and states to the detriment of their own national languages.¹⁷

As regards the practical tasks of the Party in respect of its language policy, the Programme provided for;

Right of the people to receive instruction in their mother-tongue in educational institutions; the use of the national language of the particular state in all its public and state institutions; provision for the use of the language of a minority, or a region, where necessary in addition to the national language. *Use of Hindi as an all-India State language will not be obligatory.* In Hindustani speaking areas, safeguard and protection to Urdu and Devnagari Scripts and the right of the people to use either of the two scripts.¹⁸

But the differences among the Party ranks were not resolved with the adoption of the Programme. On the contrary, some new factors were added to the existing controversy. The publication of an essay, *Concerning Marxism in Linguistics* in 1950, authored by Joseph Stalin added a new dimension to the language debate among the Indian Communists. In his article, Stalin argued that the various national languages would result in the displacement of the weaker languages and a single language would remain as the national one. Thus, to him, some languages would emerge as victorious in the process of cultural accommodation, enriched by the partial absorption of those tongues which would be displaced.¹⁹ Commenting on it S.N. Mazumder, one of the leading Indian marxist theoreticians on the language question, wrote that it opened up "quite new possibilities for the study of linguistics and other related problems" in India.²⁰

Accordingly new thoughts were coming up in the Indian communist circle which seemed to reduce the anti-Hindi fervours in their outlook. Overstreet and Windmiller wrote that the application of Stalin's formulations to the Indian linguistic problem "might appear to lay the theoretical basis for the expectation that one of the regional languages (presumably Hindi) would eventually assume the status of an all-India language." It might do so either through 'crossing' of languages under a non-socialist regime, or through the emergence of a 'zonal language' under a socialist regime, they commented.²¹

Again, the changed political climate in the international arena, particularly the relationship between the Soviet Union and the Nehru Government, also might have contributed towards re-evaluation of the CPI stand. "As the international communist community revised its view of the Nehru government, it (CPI) had to moderate its attitude towards the language policy of that government," observed Overstreet and Windmiller.²² Prakash Karat also held the same view: "The toning down of the C. P. I's anti-Hindi-imposition stance coincided with the Soviet Union's decision to approve Nehru's foreign policy and limited support to his road to 'Socialism'; this required that the unity of India be emphasized."²³

IV

Against the backdrop of these factors the CPI's position on the language question was reviewed in the Third Congress held at Madurai in December-January 1953-54. The Congress amended the Party Programme and decided that while no compulsory state language should be introduced, Hindi is to be encouraged as a means of intercourse between governments and peoples of different states.²⁴ Elaborating it Ajoy Ghosh, the General Secretary of the Party emphasized the unity of the country both for the defence of freedom and for the rapid economic, political and social development. To him, it necessitated the building of close relationship between the nationalities that live in India, and, therefore, there arose the need for a language for intercommunication.²⁵

With the changed attitude toward Hindi, the Party, however, reiterated its earlier stand on national languages and stated that "in non-Hindi areas, the national languages must not be suppressed but made the medium for education and for all works of the Government."²⁶ The Party continued to oppose forcible introduction of Hindi in all spheres of our life at the cost of national/regional languages.²⁷ It advocated Hindi only for the limited purpose of inter-communication without being given any privileged status and without discriminating in any manner against other Indian languages. Such a decision was taken by the Party in its Third Congress vis-a-vis two quite opposite trends prevalent on the issue. On the one extreme, wrote S. N. Mazumder, there were "fanatic enthusiasts for Hindi" who would like to impose Hindi at the expense of regional languages; and those others who would deny the necessity of any federal language. The Party adopted a moderate line on the language question in which "there is not and should not be any conflict between the federal language and regional languages."²⁸

The new line found expression in the Party's role in Maharashtra when the Government of Bombay attempted to impose Hindi as the medium of instruction for colleges and universities instead of the regional languages in early 1954. The Maharashtra Provincial Committee of the Party vehemently opposed the move and demanded introduction of regional languages as medium of instruction at all levels. S. S. Mirajkar, the Secretary of the Provincial Committee, in a press statement, categorically stated that the acceptance of the demand would in no way reduce the importance of Hindi. To him, "Hindi will be willingly accepted as compulsory second language in all educational institutes throughout India only if the regional languages come into their own."²⁹

The changing position of the Party on the language question was even reflected in the writings of Sharma who was very much known for his anti-Hindi attitude. This time he identified the importance of Hindi for a limited purpose of intercommunication. He, however, was very strong in his conviction that Hindi should not be imposed on any non-Hindi-speaking

nationality at the cost of its own language. Even in the sphere of limited purpose of Hindi for intercommunication, he felt:

The Constitution makes it binding on the various states to communicate with one another or with the Union in either English or Hindi. Thus, if Bengal wishes to communicate with Assam in Bengali or if Tamil Nad wishes to communicate with Kerala in Tamil, the Constitution would not permit them to do so.... Such an attitude is not calculated to foster feelings of friendship and goodwill among the different nationalities in India.³⁰

V

The first Official Language Commission, formed under Art. 344 of the Constitution, submitted its report in 1956, and it was presented before the Parliament in 1957 and examined by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. Although the Commission held the view that there need be no rigid dateline for the changeover from English to Hindi, it recommended the introduction of Hindi as the principal official language of the Union after 1965 while providing for continuance of English as the subsidiary official language.³¹ There was, however, no consensus among the members of the Commission in this regard. Dr Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay from West Bengal and Dr P.Subbanarayan from Madras appended special notes of dissent to the report in which they observed that the changeover from English to Hindi in a hurried manner would be a retrograde step and it would be tantamount to the imposition of Hindi on the non-Hindi-speaking people. They favoured continuation of English till Hindi could develop itself as an official language to a considerable extent. They further were of opinion that the choice of language for intercommunication between the states or with the Union and a state, should be left with the concerned states. In the Joint Parliamentary Committee too, bitter controversies took place, particularly over the proposal to frame a 'firm time-table' for the switch-over from English to Hindi by January 1965, the date as mentioned in the Constitution. The proposal was defeated by one vote, and the last "no" counted was that of a Communist member, S.A. Dange. However, the Chairman preferred to abstain from voting.³²

Reviewing the report of the Commission, the Central Committee of the CPI criticized the basic approach of the Commission, as it was divorced from "the context of the general cultural and linguistic problems facing the country." Explaining the decision of the Party, Ajoy Ghosh, the General Secretary, wrote:

The primay and almost the only purpose for which the Commission was appointed was to make recommendations facilitating 'the pro-

gressive use of Hindi for the official purposes of the Union.' Only a sort of warning was issued that in making their recommendations, certain other factors also should be taken into account.³³

It was due to this 'wrong approach', according to him, although many of the recommendations were correct, the whole report had been vitiated and it became a "confused and bewildering document—full of equivocation, contradictory statements and makeshift proposals which arise out of the desire to press the claim of Hindi not merely in opposition to English, but also to all other languages while simultaneously trying to balance the claims of other languages and also English, against Hindi." He alleged that "some members of the Commission had only one objective in view - how to ensure not only that Hindi becomes with the utmost rapidity the official language of the Union but also replaces English in as many spheres as possible." He also criticized the dissenting notes submitted by Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and Dr Subbanarayan and observed that "while making some correct points", they were "obsessed by fears of 'Hindi-imperialism' and refuses to recognize that a foreign language like English, understood only by a microscopic minority of Indians, cannot continue indefinitely to be the official language of the Indian Union and the language of inter-state communication."³⁴

He mentioned the following as the basic task of the Party in the cultural sphere:

- Liquidation of illiteracy;
- Expansion of higher education among the people on the basis of the language spoken by them;
- Rapid development of Indian languages and the creation of adequate literature in them;
- Conducting administrative, legislative and judicial work in every state in the language spoken and understood by them;
- The formation of linguistic states to facilitate all these;
- The imparting of a minimum amount of knowledge of one Indian language to people in all parts of the country so that the language can become, as rapidly as possible, the official language of the Union as well as the means of communication between peoples of different regions. Being the language which is spoken and understood by a large number of people than any other language of India, Hindi can be such a language.³⁵

In another article too, Ghosh elaborated the broad principles which formed the basic approach of the Central Committee and emphasized the need to view the problem from the perspective of strengthening the unity of India on the basis of the equality and fraternity of all our linguistic groups.

He also urged to consider it "from the standpoint of further broadbasing our democratic institutions, for bringing the administration closer to the masses, of bringing about the actual participation of the masses in government." He was of the view that it was only on the basis of the development and empowerment of the regional languages in their respective fields "that Hindi itself will gradually come to be accepted as the language of inter-state communication." He further stressed the need for taking measures "to safeguard the interests of linguistic minorities within each region" including the rights of the Urdu-speaking people. Again, to him, "total abjuring of English can only be detrimental to the intellectual and scientific advancement of India." So he favoured the teaching of English as a language for *comprehension* instead of teaching it as *literature* or a language of *communication*.³⁶

VI

With the submission of the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, however, a bitter controversy erupted in the country. Serious opposition to its recommendation engulfed particularly the Southern states where many felt that if Hindi would become the official language then that would put the South Indians at a serious disadvantage particularly in so far as the Union Services were concerned. In view of this intense opposition from the South, in the Gouhati Session of the INC, Nehru pleaded for moderation on the language question and for the adoption of a policy of gradualism for changing over from English to Hindi. Accordingly in Lok Sabha, on 6 August 1959 Nehru had given a categorical assurance that there would be no time-limit and that the non-Hindi speaking areas would themselves decide when to switchover to Hindi.³⁷ Following the debate in Parliament and in pursuance of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee, the President issued an Order on 27 April 1960, containing directions by way of implementing its recommendations. The CPI expressed its reservations on the Presidential Order as they thought that it did not specifically mention the assurances given by the Prime Minister and convey the President's determination to carry them out. The Tamil Nadu State Secretariat of the Party dissented from the Order and demanded amendment of it "to provide for an alternative media for examination for recruitment to all-India services." The Party, however, distanced itself from the movement proposed to be launched by the DMK against the Presidential Order by taking up a general stand against Hindi itself which, according to it, "will only disrupt the unity" of the people of our country.³⁸

Though not directly related to the Presidential Order, we may mention here a different kind of language-rivalry that took place in Assam over the question of her state language. The CPI demanded the acceptance of Assamese as the official language of Assam with free choice of language to the Autonomous Hill state and unconditional recognition of Bengali for the

district administration of Cachar together with other rights to the minorities guaranteed by the Constitution. It was opposed to the provision of Hindi together with Assamese as the state language. Here, again, the Party distanced itself from the demands of the Sangram Parishad, which had adopted the programme to make Assam a multi-lingual state through a non-co-operation movement.³⁹ In the turmoil of Punjab during the sixties also, the Party was very categorical in its opinion that "Punjabi should have the same status which the other regional languages have in their regions without making Punjabi compulsory in the Hindi-speaking region."⁴⁰

VII

In view of the widespread unrest over the issue of language in different parts of the country during this period, the Government of India convened a National Integration Conference which was held in New Delhi from 28 September to 1 October 1961, under the Chairmanship of Nehru. On the eve of the Conference, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, a renowned Communist leader, demanded radical change in government's attitude toward language problem. While arguing in favour of replacing English by Hindi as language of inter-state communication, he strongly advocated for "giving a due and honourable place for regional language as the medium of instruction as well as the vehicle of administration up to, and including the state-level." He also admitted the importance of English as an international language and emphasized its necessity "to keep abreast of international developments in all fields, particularly science and technology," and advocated its teaching to serve this purpose.⁴¹ Ajoy Ghosh, the General Secretary of the Party, also echoed the same views very forcefully in his speech in the Conference.⁴²

Curiously the views of the communists in regard to the language policy during this period was very close to the position taken by Nehru. Even the 63rd Session of the INC resolved to recommend the continued use of English as the official language beyond 1965 until the whole of India voluntarily would adopt Hindi, and the latter would come up to the required standard. It stressed that Hindi ought to be introduced gradually and that care must be taken to ensure that the rights of the other languages used in the states were in no way infringed upon.⁴³ In tune with this spirit the Communist Party was repeatedly insisting on the implementation of the assurances given by Nehru in Parliament in this regard by giving them a statutory form. But it was due to the fact that there was no unanimity on this issue within the INC and as a large number of Congressmen were divided along linguistic lines, the Government of India resorted to vacillations which only contributed to the aggravation of the problem.

This is evident from the incidents that took place when the Parliament debated the Official Language Bill in April and May 1963. The Bill

provided for the introduction of Hindi as the official language of the Union and for English to continue as the associate official language even after 1965. Although the provision for continuation of English for official use as a subsidiary language was there, the manner in which the Government decided to introduce Hindi, without effectively developing either Hindi or regional languages for use in the administration, the courts and in education, led to serious misgivings arising in the minds of large sections of the non-Hindi-speaking people. For, those people thought that for the government policy regional languages would be adversely affected and that imposition of Hindi on them would be detrimental to their lingual interests. This led to fresh agitations in different parts of the country, particularly in the South.

Thus the period approaching 26 January 1965 - the dateline for change-over in the Constitution - and beyond, witnessed acrimonious controversies on the language issue. One may discern three major trends in those controversies, each pretending to work for the unity of the country. The first trend was represented by the eminent Congressman, C. Rajagopalachari, who later left Congress and became the founder-leader of Swatantra Party, Frank Anthony, the Anglo-Indian leader, and C. N. Annadurai, the DMK leader, whose major plank was "Hindi Never, English Ever". The basic argument of the second group represented mainly by 'Guru' Golwalkar of the Rashtriya Sawang Sevak Sangha, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, General Secretary of Jana Sangh, Morarji Desai and other Hindi leaders - was to throw out English and instal Hindi straightway. Their voice resembled the slogan of "Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan." The third trend, claimed to be based on "national unity, democratic development and cultural awakening", was represented by the communists. They favoured simultaneous adhering to the twin principle, viz., equal development of all the regional languages and their equality besides the recognition of Hindi as the official link language for essential all-India purposes by common consent. To them, overemphasis on the latter at the expense of the former or vice versa, could only lead to complications and suspicions resulting in the weakening of national unity.

In this connexion it should be mentioned here that the CPI headed for a split in 1964 as a consequence of a prolonged ideological battle within the party and a new party under the name, Communist Party of India (Marxist) came into being. After the split, the CPI adopted its new *Programme* in its Seventh Party Congress, held in Bombay in December 1964, in which, while identifying the tasks of the 'National Democratic Government', it declared its policy on languages which was as follows:

... It will ensure that English as the medium of administration and instruction is replaced by Indian languages. Every state shall use its own language for its internal administrative purpose in all government departments, public institutions and in the law courts.

It will also be the medium of instruction at all levels.

English will be gradually replaced by Hindi as the medium of communication between different state governments and between the Centre and the state governments.

In Parliament and State legislatures, a member will have the right to use his mother-tongue. Simultaneous translation of parliamentary proceedings will be provided for in all the state languages.

Urdu language and script will be protected in states and areas where it has been in traditional use. Sindhi language shall be included in the Schedule VIII of the Constitution. Provision will also be made for large linguistic minorities in different states to receive education in their mother tongue. All competitive examinations for all-India services will be conducted in all languages listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution.⁴⁴

The CPI (M) also held its Seventh Congress at Calcutta from 31 October to 7 November 1964, and adopted its own *Programme*. The language problem was dealt with in a bit more elaborate manner in the programme and it also contained a brief evaluation of the linguistic scenario in the country. The *Programme* stated:

The language problem is not solved satisfactorily. The language of the different states are yet to be enshrined as the language of administration and courts and as the medium of instruction. English continues to hold the field in our administration and education. Even before the regional languages have come to occupy their rightful place in the administrative and educational spheres and even while refusing to give practical effect to their equal status in parliament and in the central administration; attempts are being made to impose Hindi in place of English on the non-Hindi-speaking people. This gives rise to the fear that their languages would be denied their rightful place and suppressed.⁴⁵

While proclaiming the 'Programme of People's Democracy', it elaborately stated its language policy. The *Programme* declared:

... Equality of all national languages in Parliament and Central administration shall be recognised. Members of Parliament will have the right to speak in any national language and simultaneous translation will have to be provided in all other national languages. All

Acts, Government Orders and resolutions shall be made available in all national languages. *The use of Hindi as the Official language shall not be made obligatory.* In the course of growing economic, social and intellectual intercourse, the people of different states of India will develop in practice the language of intercommunications most suitable to their needs. The use of English, in the field of administration, legislation, judiciary and as the medium of instruction in education shall be discarded, replacing it with the national languages. Right of people to receive instruction in their mother-tongue in educational institutions, the use of the national language of the particular linguistic state as the language of administration in all its public and state institutions, as well as its use as the medium of education in the state up to the highest standard; provision for the use of the language of a minority or minorities or of a region when necessary in addition to the language of the state shall be implemented. The Urdu language and its script shall be protected.⁴⁶

Although the two Communist parties in their post-split period held almost similar views on the language question, we may, however, locate one major difference in their respective programmatic formulations. While the CPI favoured Hindi as the language of intercommunication between Centre and the states and between different states, the CPI(M) preferred to leave the matter to practice.

VIII

The basic approach of the Indian communists thus taken in the sixties was reflected in all subsequent developments relating to the language problem in India. From the foregoing analysis one may, however, identify some basic factors on which the communists develop their understanding of the language question. First, the communist attitude toward language problem was based on their overall perception of the Indian national question. Hence it can properly be understood only with reference to their understanding of the specificities of the Indian national problems, such as, the multi-national character of the Indian state, the uneven development of different nationalities and other factors relating to the stages of social development. Second, the identification of some extra-linguistic factors like the (i) remnants of a colonial order; (ii) the desire of the big bourgeoisie to establish and consolidate its domination over the Indian market; (iii) the conflict of interest between big bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of different linguistic groups; (iv) the conflict of interest between and among the bourgeois of different linguistic groups themselves in their bid to extend the sphere of influence; (v) the belated awakening of some tribal nationalities; and (vi) lastly, the efforts of some extreme national elements trying to disrupt na-

tional unity—also contributed much towards the development of the communist approach in this regard.⁴⁷ Third, the communists in India were very much inspired not only by the basic theoretical formulations of 'Marxism-Leninism', but also guided to a large extent by the experiences of the then Soviet Union in solving their language problem. At times, they were even eager to imitate the example of the erstwhile Soviet Union regardless of the specificities of Indian situation.

Keeping in view the complexities, and also the uniqueness of the language problems in India, it may be said that the Indian communists, despite some of their weaknesses, could offer a democratic approach toward the solution of it. But they failed to make any decisive or even considerable impact either on the government at the Centre or on the public opinion on the question. The center-stage of politics in this regard was always captured either by the overzealous protagonists of Hindi on the one hand, and the bitter opponents of it on the other, cutting across different political parties. The mishandling of the matter by the government only contributed to make the situation more complicated. As a result, the solution to the problems was sought to be made by the Official Language Act 1963, and also by the subsequent efforts which were of tentative nature. All those only revealed the absence of a clearcut language policy of our State. Even after fifty-years of our Independence, India is still without a basic language policy. Hence, the language question has all the potentialities of being a major factor in Indian politics even today, and the Indian communists too are yet to come out with proper initiative to popularize their stand that may pave the way for solving the problem.

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Terrorism and National Integration in India : Some Observations

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The purpose of the present article is two-fold : (a) to delineate the theoretical dimensions of terrorism, namely, terrorism against the State, terrorism by the State, and transborder or international terrorism; and (b) to make some observations on the larger issue of national integration vis-a-vis terrorism in India.

Terrorism against the State

Terrorism is generally taken to mean the use of terror against the State by a group of people with organization, weapons, funds, sponsorship and above all, zeal or determination to use such resources, irrespective of its social consequences, for the redressal of a grievance or the achievement of a goal, dear to the group. Terrorists are different from the protesting agitationists in not having any faith in the efficacy of agitating methods of protest. They are different from the revolutionists in not having the requisite mass base to overthrow an existing regime. In fighting against a State the terrorists engage themselves in an unequal fight against an overwhelmingly superior power with legitimate force at its command. Law is the instrumentality in the hands of the State through which the State exercises its authority and force is the ultimate sanction the State uses for enforcing its authority through law.

When the terrorists strike against a State, they do at once the following things :

(a) With a view to realizing a demand or any change, mostly political but not always or necessarily so, they challenge the authority of the State by taking law into their own hands .

(b) As the vastly inferior opponent of the State, they purposefully use means so violent as to be demonstratively shocking to one and all by its thoroughly dehumanizing effect. It is dehumanizing because it is indiscriminate murder, maiming and menacing of the innocent. It is just not force but terror with a view to administering shock and inspire an all-round environment of fear.

In making the innocent people the target of their violence and by demonstrating the destructive effect of such violence (carried to the world at large by the electronic media), the terrorists seek to achieve two objectives. First, they seek to administer a message to the real target of their demand—the State and its government—that unless the latter concede their demand, the acts such as resorted to will be repeated at some other place at some other time. Secondly, they seek to draw the attention of the world to their demand, and to that extent their action amounts to what is called propaganda by deed. Thus viewed, terrorism is the demonstrative use of force by a determined and organized group against the State, which is different from the traditional modes of violence in this that there is no congruence between its target of violence, target of demand and target of attention. It hits 'A' to teach 'B' a lesson and draws the attention of 'C' to what it demands of 'B'.

State Terrorism

The use of terror, however, does not always come from a group hostile to the State. The State itself could be the perpetrator of counter-terror against a terror-striking group or be the initiator of a reign of terror against its dissenting citizens, apparently in the name of upholding law and order but really for suppressing or stamping out all genuine expressions of dissent against the authority of the State. Terrorism, that is to say, need not necessarily be against the establishment, it could very well be the use of terror by the establishment against dissenting individuals and groups. From the time immemorial to the modern times there have indeed been numerous instances of State terror. Some amount of relativity of perception is therefore inevitable in questions concerning threat, stability and integration. What an authoritarian regime perceives as threat to its stability and integration may be perceived as fight for a right cause or a noble end against injustice and oppression by the so-called rebels against the authority of the State.

In the ultimate analysis, the whole issue boils down to what is called in the classical parlance of Political Science as the 'central' issue of the authority of the State versus the liberty of the individual. Legitimacy is the most important intervening variable between authority and liberty. The greater the societal legitimacy of the authority of the State the lesser the need for the State to appeal to force as a means of enforcing its authority. Conversely, the lesser the societal legitimacy of the authority of the State the greater the need and efforts of the State to maintain itself in power through force, even terror.

Legitimacy being the means of reconciliation of authority and liberty, the classical thinkers of Political Science placed *man* at the centre of things, holding the rights of man as sacred and regarding the end of the State as the promotion of welfare of man (both in the materialistic sense of

an adequate life and in the spiritual sense of a good or virtuous life) and judging all State policies and actions in the light of the end it was duty-bound to serve. A State which deviates from its end makes, therefore, the illegitimate use of power and authority which man-in-society places at the hands of the State and by virtue of such illegitimacy the State becomes what Aristotle called a perverted or distorted State. All terrorism, so to say, be that of anti-establishment or establishment brand, is perverted as long as it makes a mockery of the rights of man by its senseless use of the tactics of terror, generating thereby an all-round milieu of fear in society.

International Terrorism

Some concessions, however, have to be made for the situational constraints under which the States subjected to international or transborder terrorism, operate. Take, for example, the case of India. In the context of State response in the form of legislative measures such as Terrorist and Disruptive Activities [Prevention] Act (TADA), the Armed Forces Special Powers Act or the Disturbed Areas Act, some amount of violation of human rights or even the death of innocent civilians in what is described as crossfire might become unavoidable. This is what General Shankar Roy Choudhury, the Army Chief of Staff of India (since retired), also pointed out (*The Statesman*, 23 November 1996) when he observed that the army could not stand idly by when motivated fundamentalist *mujaheddins* flaunted their supremacy of sophisticated weapons or the surrogates covertly armed and trained by hostile outside forces waged a proxy war against the State. General Roy Choudhury reminded the human rights activists that in crying hoarse over the alleged Army "excesses", they should also take up the cases of hundreds of widows and children of those army men who sacrificed their lives or were maimed in the course of fighting for the integrity of their country.

My purpose in making a reference to the point made by General Roy Choudhury is not to say that the violations of human rights in counter-terrorist operations are condonable. All that I mean to say is that while such violations of human rights are morally condemnable, the time has come for realization also that they might become regretfully unavoidable on occasions, especially in cases where transborder States and groups continue to sponsor, finance and supply arms to surrogate-terrorists within a targeted State.

II

Kashmir

Kashmir provides a typical example of the international or transborder dimension of terrorism. True that there were disgruntled elements in Kashmir

who refused to accept from the very beginning the accession of the State to India, true also that their number swelled as India mismanaged the political situation in the Valley, but all the same the fact remains that but for the Pakistani fishing in the troubled waters of Kashmir in the form of arms, funds, training and shelter to the Kashmiri terrorists, terrorism in Kashmir would not have been what it is today.

North- East

As far as the North-east is concerned, there are similarities as well striking differences in the manifested causes of terrorism in the seven North-eastern States of India. That Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is active in the North-eastern states of India, that money from the outside world is pumped into these states in the name of religion, that the external States provide 'sanctuary' to terrorists and other insurgents operating in these States are the common factors in the ongoing disruptive activities in these States. That there is an ethnicity factor too behind violence in these States is also true, but for that it should never be taken to mean that the mainspring of terroristic violence in Tripura is the same as that in Nagaland or Mizoram.

Tripura

In Tripura, it is not so much a question of refusing to accept the State's accession to India as it has been the case with some elements in Nagaland and Mizoram who refused to accept from the very beginning of the independence of India the accession of their States to the Union of India. Terrorism in Tripura is more a social than a political thing. It is in the nature of an alarm bell indicating fire along the line of tribal-non-tribal divide in the population of the State. Tripura is the only State in India where the tribals — who as late as 1947 constituted a 56 per cent majority of the population of the State— have been reduced in the course of the next fifty years to a minority of about thirty per cent of the population, the influx of the Bengali non-tribals from across the border being the single most important factor behind such radical change in the demography of the State. Being vastly outnumbered, being manipulated out of the area and land reserved for the tribals, having little education to back up, despite reservation, their claims to government jobs, having little industry in the State to take care of the growing problem of unemployment of the tribal youths, the tribals of Tripura live in fear of losing their identity and even their existence in their own homeland. Thus, terrorism in Tripura is the overall result of the deprivation, discontent and anger of the tribals. The feeling that everything is controlled by clever and manipulating Bengali non-tribals has created the fear of submergence of tribal culture within the dominant Bengali culture.

Tribalness

Since terrorism represents the symptom of a deeper social malaise in Tripura, the problem has to be tackled at its social roots. And for that we have to appreciate the specific value systems of the indigenous (*adivasi*) tribal groups including their primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation and aversion to contact which make them very sensitive to things such as infiltration by non-tribals into "their lands", the administrative failure to appreciate the deeper causes of their 'wounds' and the overzealous attempts to integrate them with non-tribals that goes by the euphemistic name of national integration. Tribalness works at once in two ways. It creates oneness among the members of a tribe by virtue of a common pedigree, a common language, a common culture and a common territory and at the same time the 'in-group' cohesiveness makes them highly suspicious, almost xenophobic towards the outsiders. Such ingrained feeling of inclusiveness resulting in exclusiveness towards all outsiders is responsible at once for inter-tribal rivalry (Nagas versus Kukis, for example) and anti-establishment feelings in the North-east.

National Integration

Indeed, the whole concept of national integration has been on trial in the North-east. Should national integration mean the subordination of tribal culture, meaning thereby, for all practical purposes, the culture of the dominant group, a policy sweetly referred to as assimilationist or should it mean the genuine ideal of unity and diversity, that is , political unity and cultural diversity ? Should it (integration) be, that is, imposed from above or be allowed to develop on its own from below, that is, from its indigenous base ? The policy followed so far has been in its practical result mutually exclusive. The dominant social groups with their tendency to treat political loyalties and cultural loyalties as indistinguishable have made efforts towards absorbing the ethnic minorities into the dominant culture and then call it national integration. The tribals with their ingrained disbelief and suspicion towards all "out" groups inevitably react towards such approach to national integration with hostility, rejecting it and rebelling against it mainly as a means of protecting what they perceive to be their identity.

Nehru's Approach

Nehru understood this problem in its correct perspective. The keynote of the State policy that he formulated with regard to the tribal areas of the North-east was: the maximum possible preservation of the identity of the tribal people. The concept of 'tribal Panchsheel', the five fundamental

principles of State policy with regard to tribal development as enunciated by Nehru were:

- (a) letting tribal people develop along the lines of their own genius without any imposition whatsoever on them;
- (b) respect for tribal rights in land and forest;
- (c) training and building up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development;
- (d) working through and not in rivalry to the tribals' own social and cultural institutions and avoiding the overadministering of the tribal areas or the overwhelming of them with a multiplicity of schemes;
- (e) judging the results of development in tribal areas by the quality of character evolved and not by statistics or the quantum of funds spent.

Had the State in India adhered faithfully to Nehru's approach to national integration as reflected in the tenets of his tribal Panchsheel, the North-east might not have been the tension-filled terrorism-infected entity that it is today.

Present policy

Unfortunately, ever since Nehru's departure from the scene, India's policy planners and intelligence agencies have been haunted so much by security concerns of the State that there has not been a well-rounded perception of the ground realities prevailing in the North-eastern states of India. The military and paramilitary forces alone could not bring about a resolution of conflicts in the North-east. A lavish grant of funds could not do it either, because in the absence of honest and adequate supervision, funds have a tendency to reach the wrong hands. Apart from encouraging corruption, the selectivity involved in the choice of beneficiaries in the rural development programmes has tended to frustrate a disproportionately vast number of aspirants, many of whom, in the fullness of time, swell the ranks of rebels. This is not to discount economic development as a means of conflict resolution but to stress that such development must be even-handed and that the fruits of development must reach the place and segments for whom it is intended. Otherwise, it will be self-defeating.

Alongside the development on the economic front, positive steps have to be taken towards meeting the socio-cultural aspirations of the tribal people, towards protecting especially their cultural identity.

Needed Approach

The problem of the North-east is indeed a complex one and the least that this challenge to the stability and integrity of India demands is its imaginative handling by the policy-makers of India. What is surely needed is a synthesis of New Delhi's strategic and national interests in the North-east with the economic, social and cultural aspirations of the people. This is equally true of Kashmir. The main thing is to win back the confidence of the people and New Delhi must do it in Kashmir by satisfying the long-standing Kashmiri aspirations for greater autonomy of the State, first by means of a vertical devolution of powers from the Centre to the State and next, by overseeing the horizontal dispersion of devolved powers among the three areas of the State, namely, the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh. This latter course, that is, the horizontal dispersion of powers is necessary in order to give the people of Jammu and Ladakh a feeling of 'equality' with the people of the Kashmir Valley.

Terrorism cannot sustain itself without people's support. Winning people over, therefore, must be the most important component of a grand policy towards combating terrorism and fostering national integration.

The Communist Movement in Post-independence India : An Overview

AMITABHA CHANDRA

I

The independence of India on 15 August 1947, which came in the form of the transfer of power from the British imperialist rulers to the Indian ruling class, set a new perspective for the communist movement of India. Fifty years have already passed since the attainment of Indian independence. During this period many major events have taken place both in national and international spheres. As a result manifold major issues have emerged, which on various occasions have thrown serious challenges to the communist movement of India. During the post-independence period the undivided Communist Party of India was first bifurcated, and then trifurcated, and at present it has got split into many communist parties. Thus in order to face the challenges posed by different national and international events, the one-time undivided communist party of India, which experienced the first major split in 1964, and then the CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML), which have constituted the three major streams of the communist movement, and various other minor communist parties and groups of the present era, which are the products of the process of splitting that started since 1964, have to keep on changing their lines repeatedly and to continue their attempts to explore the proper path. Such attempts have not always yielded tangible results. The endeavour to rectify one mistake has often given birth to another mistake. But the efforts to make searches for the proper path have always continued. The present article attempts to make an overview of the communist movement in post-independence India. Instead of entering into the detailed description of the events relating to the communist movement, this article has striven to make an evaluation of it. Moreover, as this article has restricted its scope only to an evaluative discussion of the communist movement, the parliamentary activities of the communists and their roles in different governments naturally remain outside the present discussion.

Any student of the communist movement in India, whether during

the pre-independence period or in the post-independence phase, finds himself confronted with a special problem of analysis, for every communist party always functions in two separate, but interrelated, environments. It is an element of a national political communism and at the same time an element of the international communist community. It is supposed to interact with both of these contexts, and it thus gets itself entangled in the exceedingly complex web of influences. The present study seeks to relate the communist movement in post-independence India to its dual environment.

II

The Second World War continued for long six years and ultimately came to its conclusion in the year of 1945. The end of the World War II, which could accomplish the complete defeat of Fascism and Nazism, brought about a qualitative change in international politics once again and thus changed the whole scenario. The collapse of Fascism and Nazism led the Anglo-American imperialists to consider the Soviet Union as their sworn enemy once more. The conclusion of the Second World War led the Communist Party of India (CPI) to change its line once again. At the Central Committee (CC) meeting held in December 1945 the CPI formally renounced its 'no strike, no struggle' line of the 'People's War' period, commonly known as its 'People's War' line, and adopted the line of the last and final struggle against British imperialism. The CPI energetically participated in the post-war anti-imperialist struggles, initial hesitation giving place to subsequent enthusiasm. Through its participation in such struggles, the CPI gradually acquired the militant spirit.

The CPI took an active part in different post-war anti-imperialist struggles. It also actively participated in, and in some cases organized and led the post-war working class and peasant struggles. Thus the CPI organized and led the peasant struggles in Tebhaga of Bengal and Telengana of Andhra Pradesh during this period. The Party also actively participated in and led the struggle in Punnapra -Vayalar of Kerala. In addition to such peasant struggles, the communists were also in the forefront in leading various working class strikes and struggles. They also got involved in the students' struggles that took place during the post-war period. As a result of their active participation in the post-war anti-imperialist mass struggles, the communists could gradually come from the back seat to the front row of such struggles.

During this phase of the communist movement the political line of the CPI was gradually changing from 'moderation' to 'militancy'. But this change of political line was never an easy affair. Hesitation and internal tensions were closely associated with this change of line. During this pe-

riod actually a struggle of two lines, the struggle between 'moderation' and 'militancy', had been going on within the CPI. The Second Congress of the CPI ultimately recognized and formally pronounced the 'militant' political line and was thus a turning point in the history of the Party.

On 15 August 1947 national independence came in the form of the transfer of power along with the tragic partition of the country. In independent India the CPI started its journey by according support to the Congress government of Nehru, which, in its eyes, was the government of 'national advance'. The Second Congress of the CPI was held at the Muhammad Ali Park in Calcutta from 28 February to 6 March 1948. Both the leadership and political line of the CPI changed at this Congress. The change of the political line was by no means sudden and unexpected. The political resolution adopted by the Central Committee (CC) of the CPI in August 1946, entitled, *For the Final Assault : Tasks of the Indian People in the Present Phase of Indian Revolution*,¹ showed the first tilt towards 'militancy' and made an indication of the change of line, as it gave the stirring call for the final struggle for the seizure of political power by overthrowing British imperialism. But it was only an indication and the half-hearted beginning. This resolution was rather a compromise between 'moderation' and 'militancy'. The *Resurgent India at the Crossroads : 1946 in Review*² (January 1947), which was written by Gangadhar Adhikari, was also an expression of 'militant' politics. The *Mountbatten Award and After*,³ which was the June 1947 CC resolution of the CPI, held a mixed attitude towards the 'Mountbatten Award'. This resolution stated that although this transfer of power would initiate the progress of the country and the people could use it as an instrument for further progress, the 'Mountbatten Award' would not give India real independence. The statement undoubtedly contained the seeds of the assessment - *Ei Azadi Jhuta Hai* (this independence is fake independence) - of the subsequent period. Thus the June 1947 CC resolution gave 'militancy' a further boost, although 'moderation' ultimately prevailed, as a result of which the CPI provided support to the Nehru government at the time of, and immediately after, independence.

An important meeting of the CC of the CPI was held in Bombay from 7 to 16 December 1947. It adopted two important political resolutions, entitled, *For the Struggle for Full Independence and People's Democracy*⁴ and *On the Present Policy and Tasks of the Communist Party of India*.⁵ These two December 1947 CC resolutions go down in history of the communist movement of India as the first embodiment of the 'militant' line. The change of the political line of the Party, which could actually be traced back to these two CC resolutions, was given a concrete shape at the Second Congress of the CPI.

III

The issue of the change of leadership was intimately associated

with the issue of the change of political line. The leadership of the CPI also changed at this Second Congress of the Party. Although the formal leadership of P.C. Joshi, the General Secretary of the Party, still continued while the CC of the CPI met in December 1947, i.e., on the eve of the Second Party Congress, by that time the political and organizational initiative already slipped out of his grip. At this Congress Joshi, who continued to be the General Secretary of the Party for more than a decade, was branded as a 'reformist' and severely criticized for his role, and was also removed from his office. In his place B.T. Ranadive, who was known for his 'militant' line, was elected as the General Secretary of the Party at this Congress. This Congress also elected a new CC under Ranadive's leadership. Along with the change of leadership, the political line of the Party also changed at this Congress. It completely reversed its earlier 'reformist' stance and firmly rejected its former characterization of the Nehru government as one of 'national advance'. Instead the CPI launched a vituperative attack on the Nehru government at this Congress. The new 'militant' line of the Party was given a concrete shape in the *Political Thesis* adopted at its Second Congress. At this historic Congress the CPI declared :

We characterize here the National Government as the Government of national surrender, of collaborators, a Government of national compromise. Thus in place of our former wrong characterization about the Government as one of an advance, with whom we should have a joint front, we have now the characterization that it is a Government of national surrender and collaboration; the conclusion that follows, therefore, is that it is the basic policy of the working class and its Party to oppose this Government, and this is what we have sharply underlined.⁷

The 'militant' line adopted by the CPI at its Second Congress led it to give the call for an 'armed insurrection' against the Congress government which now became 'the Government of national surrender, of collaborators, a Government of national compromise'. This belligerent mood of the Party found its reflection in all the reports and resolutions adopted at the Congress. At the end of the Party Congress the open Party meeting at the Calcutta Maidan proclaimed : *Telanganar Path Amader Path* (Telengana's path is our path).

On 26 March 1948, i.e., on the twentieth day after the conclusion of the Second Party Congress, the then Congress government of West Bengal under the leadership of Bidhan Chandra Roy declared the CPI illegal in this state. In colonial India the CPI remained completely illegal for a long period of eight years. Now the CPI was banned in West Bengal — one of

the states of independent India. From the dawn of that very day widespread arrests started. The offices of the CPI were sealed everywhere in West Bengal. The office of the *Swadhinata*, the Bengali daily organ of the CPI, was also sealed. Many communist leaders and workers were incarcerated and continued to be incarcerated everywhere in the State.

The line of the CPI as adopted at the Second Congress was that of the revolutionary armed insurrection all over the country—it was the line of the seizure of the state power by means of the armed struggle. But the objective conditions did not favour the implementation of such a strategy.

The CPI, however, remained unperturbed and spiritedly stuck to its 'militant' line. Under its leadership the militant peasant struggles acquired a new dimension. The peasant struggles in Tebhaga, Telengana, Kakdwip, Bada Kamalapur, Dubirbheri and Agradwip, led by the communists, became the epitome of the revolutionary spirit and death-defying courage. Chandanpinri, Bhangar, Nandigram, Bishnupur, Hantal and Masila also became the storm-centres of the rebellious peasant movement.

During this period the communist movement faced severe repression unleashed by the government. On 27 April 1949 the streets of Calcutta witnessed the police firing. Latika, Pratibha, Amiya and Geeta became the martyrs. There were indiscriminate lathicharges in the Alipore Jail and police firings in the Presidency and Dum Dum Jails. As a result many communist political prisoners were left wounded and some of them embraced death.

The history of the next two years following the Second Congress of the CPI was undoubtedly one of repression and torture let loose on the communists by the Congress governments of Nehru and Bidhan Roy. But at the same time it was also the history of the extremely 'left-sectarian' Party line and excessive 'bureaucratism', of the Party leadership. Extreme 'reformism' of the Joshi leadership was reversed by dogmatic 'sectarianism' and 'left-adventurism' of the Ranadive leadership. As an opposite reaction to the excessive dependence on the Congress leadership and eulogization of Nehru now came the call for the seizure of the state power through the revolutionary armed insurrection all over the country, for which there was neither any groundwork, nor any preparation. Moreover, the objective conditions of the immediate post-independence period did not favour the implementation of any such insurrectionary line. The CPI also lacked the requisite strength in order to make such an attempt successful. Meanwhile sharp differences between the party politbureau and the Andhra Party leadership with regard to the present stage of the impending revolution in India and its concomitant strategies and tactics came to light. That was the last year of the forties.

The editorial article, entitled, 'Mighty Advance of the National Liberation Movement in the Colonial and Dependent Countries,'⁸ which was published in the *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, the organ of the 'Cominform', changed the whole scenario once again. The successful Chinese revolution under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung (Mao Ze-dong) also prompted this change. The intense inner-party struggle started as a reaction to these two phenomena. The adverse criticism of the Party leadership was coupled with self-criticism. By the middle of the first year of the fifties changes once more took place in the party leadership and party line. In place of B.T. Ranadive, C. Rajeshwar Rao became the General Secretary of the Party. It implied the victory of the Andhra Line. In the political resolution it was stated that the national liberation struggle of India would move forward following the Chinese path.

The year of 1951 started with the lifting of the ban so long imposed on the CPI. The Party decided to take part in the first general election announced by the Nehru government. In May 1951 the Party leadership and line changed once again. C. Rajeshwar Rao was replaced by Ajoy Kumar Ghosh as the General Secretary of the Party. By means of its decision to participate in the general election, the Communist Party returned to the constitutional path once more. It was the beginning of 'constitutional communism'⁹ once again.

V

During the fifties 'constitutional communism', which started its fresh journey by the beginning of the decade, could have its roots firmly established and thus became almost a permanent phenomenon. On the other hand the decade also witnessed a series of widespread mass movements, almost in all of which the communists, along with other left forces opposed to the Congress, took part and to which the communists and other leftists provided the required leadership. Such mass movements often acquired the character of the 'barricade warfare'. The communists hand in glove with other leftists played frontal role in such 'barricade warfare'. 'constitutional communism' on the one hand, and the mass movements with the communist participation in them on the other, continued also in the sixties. The valiant role of the communists in the mass movements organized on the basis of the genuine demands of the people, which often took the form of the 'barricade warfare', helped the CPI to extend its support base and to increase its strength in parliamentary politics. Thus these mass movements of the fifties and sixties with the communist participation and leadership provided a great boost to 'constitutional communism' which could expand further and attain more strength.

The mass movements of the fifties, which were led by the communists and other left forces, started in 1951. In that year protest movements took place against the reckless lathi-charges and firings resorted to by the police on the hunger march in the town of Coochbihar. In 1953 massive protest movements occurred against the one-pice hike in the tram fare, which was put into effect by the then British tram company of Calcutta. This mass movement of 1953 could attain historic significance and set the path for all subsequent mass movements. The year of 1954 witnessed the memorable movement of the teachers, the first of its kind in post-independence India. In 1955 the Goa liberation struggle started for the elimination of the Portugese imperialist rule. The CPI and all other leftist parties actively and energetically supported the struggle, and sent their workers for participation in this liberation struggle. In 1956 the mass movement took place in protest against the proposed merger of West Bengal and Bihar into a single state which would be named 'Purba Pradesh'. This protest movement took a mighty turn and could ultimately force the authorities to withdraw the proposal.

All these mass movements of the fifties were jointly led by the communists and other left forces, although differences and tensions persisted among them. Such movements helped the communists and other leftists to come closer to the people and thus to increase their strength. The communists were able to enjoy the dividends of such mass movements in electoral terms. Thus they could successfully combine their parliamentary politics with such extra-parliamentary struggles. Such extra-parliamentary struggles actually helped 'constitutional communism' to thrive more.

The communists could make their presence viably felt both in the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) which were constituted after the first general election held in January 1952 on the basis of the universal adult suffrage following the Constitution of India, although they were only a marginal parliamentary force as compared to the ruling Congress. They could however increase their strength both in the Lok Sabha and the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha which were formed after the second general election held in March 1957. This was undoubtedly due to their role in different mass movements, which led the people to repose greater confidence in them. The second general election of March 1957 even helped the communists to come to power in Kerala. Thus after the election the first CPI-led government was formed in Kerala. E.M.S. Namboodiripad became the Chief Minister of this first ever communist state government in post-independence India. The Namboodiripad government announced land reforms and attempted to introduce certain radical changes in the existing land relations. It further declared that the police forces would not be used to crush any democratic

movement.

The Namboodiripad government was not, however, allowed to stay in power. Agitated by the radical measures adopted by this government, the vested interests started their movement in order to remove it from power. The movement, which was known as the 'Vimochana' movement, was spear-headed by Indira Gandhi who was the Congress President at that time. The Congress government at the Centre, which was headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, succumbed to the pressure of the movement. On 31 July 1959 the first communist government of Kerala led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad was toppled in the most undemocratic way and the President's rule was imposed on that state.

The protests were raised in different parts of India against this undemocratic ouster of the Kerala government from power. The whole of West Bengal also burst into vociferous protests. The communists received support from many intellectuals and different sections of the society in their protests against this action of the Central government.

In the year of 1959 the CPI and all other leftist political parties jointly led the historic food movement which is considered to be a landmark in the history of communism and democratic struggles in post-independence India.

The sixties started with the further acceleration of the mass movements. The decade also witnessed the further expansion of 'constitutional communism.' In the third general election held in February 1962 the communists could marginally increase their strength in the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha, while their seats in the Lok Sabha remained the same. Along with the other left forces, the communists contested this election with the call for the formation of the 'alternative government' and expected better results. The communist expectations were, however, belied. For the formation of the 'alternative government' in West Bengal, the communists and other left forces opposed to the Congress, had to wait until the next general election.

VI

The undivided Communist Party of India faced the first major split in the year of 1964. But the seeds of the split were already there inside the Party even in the fifties. Thus any discussion of the causes of the split should start from the fifties.

Although the Communist Party remained undivided in the fifties, the unity in the Party was only formal and apparent. There were sharp differences and divergences within the CPI. The severe ideological struggle also began inside the Party. Such differences and divergences emerged with regard to various national and international issues and items. The

inner-party ideological struggle continued on the basis of them.

On 5 March 1953 Joseph Stalin breathed his last. At the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) held in 1956, the then post-Stalin Nikita Khrushchov leadership of the Soviet Union initiated the process of de-Stalinization. At the same time in the Twentieth Congress in 1956, the Nikita Khrushchov leadership introduced a new 'Thesis' in the international communist movement, known as the 'Three Ps Thesis'. The 'Three Ps Thesis' included 1) Peaceful Transition to Socialism, 2) Peaceful Co-existence with the Capitalist-Imperialist States. The de-Stalinization campaign and 'Three Ps Thesis' created a stormy flutter in the international communist circle. The revolutionary section of the international communist movement openly and directly rejected the de-Stalinization campaign and 'Three Ps Thesis'. The Communist Party of China (CPC) under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung (Mao Ze-dong) opposed the 'Three Ps Thesis' and de-Stalinization campaign, and denounced the Khrushchov leadership of the Soviet Union as the 'revisionist', 'reformist', 'capitulating to capitalism', etc. In retaliation the then Soviet leadership also started the smear campaign against the Mao leadership of China. Thus began the Sino-Soviet ideological struggle from the early sixties, which has been known in the international communist movement as the 'Great Theoretical Debate.'

The Sino-Soviet ideological struggle created its impact on the communist movement of India. Since the Nikita Khrushchov leadership initiated the de-Stalinization process, and introduced the 'Three Ps Thesis' at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956, debates started inside the CPI in regard to such issues. Such debates attained a new dimension and became more severe after the Mao leadership of China had rejected and opposed this process and 'Thesis'. One section of the CPI wholeheartedly followed the Soviet path, while the other section came closer to the Chinese position, although it did not fully endorse the Chinese line. Generally with regard to the international issues one section of the CPI was identified as the 'pro-Soviet', while the other section came to be known as the 'pro-Chinese'. Moreover, the 'pro-Soviet' communists were considered to be the 'rightist' and the 'pro-Chinese' communists were, in general, known as the 'leftists'.

The Sino-Indian border conflict that had started from 20 October 1962 made the polarization between the 'rightists' and 'leftists' near complete and the split in the Party inevitable.

The inner-party struggle also commenced as a result of the differences and divergences inside the Party on the national issues. In fact the inner-party struggle on the national issues preceded such a struggle on the international issues.

The national issues which created differences and divergences

within the CPI included the attitudes towards the Indian state and the Indian ruling class in general. By the middle of the fifties two distinct camps came into existence inside the CPI, which held attitudes quite different from each other, towards the ruling Nehru government and the Congress, the formation of the democratic front necessary for the democratic revolution in India and such other issues. Both these camps expressed completely different opinions as regards the composition and character of the would-be democratic front. While one camp inside the CPI was known as the National Democratic Front (NDF) while the other, as the People's Democratic Front (PDF).

The NDF camp held the opinion that the would-be National Democratic Front (NDF) should consist of four classes, viz., the working class, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. In their opinion the solid unity between the working class and the peasantry would be the basis of this Front, and it would function under the composite leadership of the afore-mentioned four classes, and especially under the joint leadership of the working class and the national bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the PDF camp also agreed on this issue that the would-be People's Democratic Front (PDF) would consist of the working class, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie, and would be based on the solid unity between the working class and the peasantry, but it emphatically stuck to its argument that the PDF would function only under the leadership of the working class, i.e., the four-class PDF should be constituted under the singular leadership of the working class. The PDF camp firmly rejected any theory of the composite leadership.

The NDF camp believed that the communists could and should form a joint front with the progressive and democratic section of the Congress against imperialism, feudalism and the rightist and reactionary forces. This camp held a soft attitude towards the Nehru leadership of the Congress as Nehru, in its eyes, was opposed to the rightist and reactionary forces. On the other hand, the PDF camp resolutely stuck to its anti-Congress position and did not hold any such soft attitude towards the Nehru leadership of the Congress as was held by the other camp.

Inside the CPI the proponents of the NDF were generally known as the 'rightists', while the exponents of the PDF in general, as the 'leftists'. Those who were the 'pro-Soviet' on the international issues were commonly the defenders of the NDF and those who were the 'pro-Chinese' were generally the advocates of the PDF. When the CPI faced the first major split in 1964, those who were commonly known as the 'rightists' stayed in the CPI and the 'leftists' in general formed the CPI (M).

After the demise of Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, the then General Secretary of the CPI, on 13 January 1962, the split in the Party almost became a foregone conclusion. After his death a new post of the Chairman of the Party was however created in order to avoid the impending split. In order to reach a compromise between the 'rightists' and the 'leftists', S.A. Dange, who was a very important leader of the 'rightist' camp, was made the Chairman of the Party, and E.M.S. Namboodiripad, a very important leader of the 'leftist' camp, was made the General Secretary. Thus the Party split could be avoided for two more years.

From 20 October 1962 started the Sino-Indian border conflict. The border conflict let loose violent nationalism and jingoism throughout India. The whole of India became replete with strong anti-China passions. Rabid anti-China mentality pervaded the whole country. The 'rightist' section of the CPI branded China as the aggressor and provided the whole-hearted support to the Nehru government in the interests of national defence. The 'leftists' within the CPI refused to succumb to ultra-nationalism which engulfed the whole of India and were hence denounced as the 'traitors'. They became subjected to widespread attacks and humiliation. There were large-scale arrests of the communists all over the country. Mainly the 'pro-Chinese' communists were arrested, but even some 'pro-Soviet' communists were not spared, as the government followed the policy of indiscriminate arrests of the communists. Although the Sino-Indian war did not last even for one month, the communists who had been imprisoned, were not released before December 1963.

VIII

In the year of 1964 the so long undivided Communist Party of India was split into two communist parties. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the CPI(M) came into existence as the second Communist Party of India.

When the National Conference of the undivided CPI met in New Delhi on 9 April 1964, severe differences took place between the 'leftists' and the 'rightists' of the Party. As a result of such sharp differences on the international, national and even some personal issues, thirty-two 'leftist' members of the National Council left the meeting on 11 April 1964 and issued a separate statement. At the call of them a Convention met at Tenali in Andhra Pradesh from 7 to 11 July 1964. The decision to form a separate communist party was adopted at the Tenali Convention. Those who formed this separate Communist Party, however, claimed themselves to be belonging to the original Communist Party of India and pronounced their party to be the continuation of the original Communist Party. Following

the decision of the Tenali Convention, the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party was held at the Tyagraj Hall in Calcutta from 31 October to 7 November 1964. It was actually the First Congress of the newly-formed Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the CPI(M). But in order to maintain the continuity with the previous Congresses of the undivided Communist Party of India, the CPI(M) continues to consider this Congress as the Seventh Congress of the Party.

The Seventh Congress unanimously elected P. Sundarayya as the General Secretary of the CPI(M). Jyoti Basu and E.M.S. Namboodiripad were elected both to the Central Committee and Politbureau of the party. Since then Jyoti Basu has been continuing to be a member of both the Central Committee and Politbureau of the CPI(M). In the seventies E.M.S. Namboodiripad became the General Secretary of the CPI(M). Since then he continued to lead the party for quite a long time as the General Secretary. On 7 November 1964 the first open meeting of the newly-formed CPI(M) was held at the Monument Maidan in Calcutta.

The CPI(M) proclaimed its commitment to the people's Democratic Revolution and adopted its own *Programme*¹⁰ which was the embodiment of its commitment. At the same time the party declared its reliance on the peaceful and parliamentary path. It also pronounced that it would maintain the equal distance from both the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China and would follow its own line.

The CPI(M) radicals led by Charu Mazumdar, Sushital Roy Chowdhury and others were not, however, happy with this *Programme*. They were rather in favour of adopting a *Programme* which would ensure the seizure of the state power by means of the revolutionary armed insurrection. As a result of their commitment to this line, they were subsequently expelled from the CPI(M). After their expulsion they formed the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) or the CPI(ML), which was the third Communist Party of India.

IX

Since the middle of the sixties, discontent against the Congress misrule had gradually been mounting on in West Bengal and also in other parts of India. The people were longing for a change. In 1966 the historic food movement rocked the city of Calcutta and many other parts of West Bengal. Both the CPI and CPI(M) and all other left forces jointly led the food movement which has been inscribed in the history of mass movements in golden letters. On the one hand, the food movement sufficiently discredited the Congress government which was in power in West Bengal and on the other, it prepared the ground for the forces opposed to the Congress to come to power in the state in the next year.

In the Fourth general election held in February 1967 the strength of the Congress decreased much in the Lok Sabha, although it could form the government at the Centre. In West Bengal the Congress was for the first time removed from the seat of power after twenty years since the attainment of independence.

On 2 March 1967 the first non-Congress United Front government came to power in West Bengal amidst much enthusiasm and fanfare. The CPI(M), CPI, Bangla Congress, a breakaway group from the Congress with centrist tendencies, and eleven other leftist and centrist parties were the constituents of the first United Front government. Ajoy Mukhopadhyay, the leader of the Bangla Congress, became the Chief Minister. Jyoti Basu, the leader of the CPI(M), became the Deputy Chief Minister and held the portfolios of finance and transport. This undoubtedly implied an advancement of 'constitutional communism'.

The first United Front government was, however, not allowed to stay in power for a long period. This government actually lasted only for nine months. Conspiracies and instigation led to the defection. The Governor took advantage of the situation and dissolved the first United Front government. It was replaced by the PDF-Congress coalition government against which the protest movements could become massive in character and ultimately led to the resignation of this government.

In the first mid-term election held in West Bengal in February 1969 the United Front emerged as victorious. On 25 February 1969 the second United Front government came to power. Ajoy Mukhopadhyay again became the Chief Minister of this government. Jyoti Basu became the Deputy Chief Minister. He was also the Home Minister of this government.

Conspiracies and instigation against the second United Front government continued unabated, but the rivalries and clashes among the United Front partners themselves rendered the government weak and handicapped from the very beginning. Such clashes among the United Front constituents were escalating and ultimately brought about the downfall of the second United Front government.

X

The Fifth general election was held in March 1971. In the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha election, the CPI(M) could obtain the maximum number of seats, but the CPI(M)-led Front failed to secure the majority. The CPI(M)-led Front was not, however, invited to form the government. The Democratic Coalition government consisting of the Congress led by Indira Gandhi, Bangla Congress and a number of other parties was formed in West Bengal. The CPI, which then became the arch-enemy of the CPI(M), supported this government from outside. This government, however, continued for less than three months.

During the whole of 1970-71 West Bengal became the hotbed of rampant political clashes and murders. The clashes took place between the Congress and the CPI (M), the Congress and the Naxalites, the police and the Naxalites, the CPI (M) and the Naxalites, the CPI (M) and other left forces, and so on and so forth. The murders became a part of the everyday life in West Bengal. The Congress took full advantage of the clashes between the CPI(M) and the Naxalites and also between the CPI(M) and other left forces, and could fully utilize the situation in its own favour. The ground was being prepared for the establishment of the almost fascist rule of the Congress.

On 11 March 1972 the second mid-term election took place in West Bengal. It was a Black Day in the history of parliamentary democracy in West Bengal as well as in India. The CPI was an ally of the Congress in the election. The election was known for massive rigging resorted to and abundant terror unleashed by the Congress. The Congress made the widespread use of anti-social and lumpen elements in that election in order to terrorize and suppress its political opponents. In that rigged election the Left Front led by the CPI(M) was forced to swallow defeat. Even Jyoti Basu was forced to be defeated in his own constituency. Thus there was a break in his political life inside the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, that had spanned over more than twenty five years.

On 21 March 1972 the Congress government once again came back to power in West Bengal. Siddhartha Shankar Roy became the Chief Minister. The CPI supported this Congress government too. During the rule of this government fascist terror continued in West Bengal for the next five years.

XI

In May 1967 Naxalbari, an almost obscure spot in the northern part of West Bengal, suddenly attracted widespread attention, both national and international, with an armed peasant uprising led by the pro-Mao communist revolutionaries who were till then active members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The Naxalbari uprising was very soon followed by a militant movement, commonly known as the Naxalite movement, which could stretch itself in different parts of India. The militant members of the CPI(M), who either participated in the Naxalbari peasant uprising or actively supported it, were expelled from the Party as the CPI(M) leadership disowned Naxalbari uprising. Many other dissident members also left the Party. These dissident and expelled members later formed their separate Party, the third Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) or the CPI(ML), on 22 April 1969, although all the members who had broken away from the CPI(M) did not join this new Party. It is interesting to note that no political party in India generated so

much interest and controversy within a brief span of its existence as the CPI(ML). The politics of the CPI(ML), or the Naxalite politics, to use the common parlance, has been known to be the most radical and militant stream of left politics in India in general, and communist politics in particular, since 1967.

The Naxalbari peasants' uprising that took place in May 1967 was however preceded by the Srikakulam movement being organized by the Andhra section of the CPI(M) since the mid-sixties. During 1968 extensive revolutionary activities had been continuing in different parts of India — Telengana and Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, Mushahari in Bihar and Lakhimpur in Uttar Pradesh, which, in addition to Naxalbari, were then the flaming fields of India.

On 22 April 1969, the Communist Party of India (Marsixt-Leninist), India's third Communist Party, was born. On 1 May 1969, at a huge May Day meeting, attended by more than 10,000 people, at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument (now Shahid Minar), Kanu Sanyal, a prominent leader of the CPI(ML), formally announced the formation of the new party whose supremo was Charu Mazumder. In its broadcast on 2 July 1969, the Peking Radio greeted the formation of the CPI(ML). It implied that the CPI(ML) received the Chinese recognition.

The First Party Congress of the CPI(ML) was secretly held in Calcutta on 15 and 16 May 1970, which the Party called the "Eighth Congress of the CPI(ML)—the First Party Congress after Naxalbari in order to maintain the continuity with the seven Congresses prior to Naxalbari and the formation of the CPI(ML). The Congress witnessed serious differences among the leaders of CPI(ML) on different issues.

The Naxalbari movement, in spite of all its mistakes, no doubt, posed a serious challenge to the Indian political system. The ruling authorities resorted to undreamt-of brutality to crush the Naxalites of all shades. These 'communist revolutionaries', popularly known as the Naxalites, had to bear the brunt of the 'Fascist' offensive let loose by the reactionary rulers of India. This was largely due to the fact that the Naxalites firmly rejected the parliamentary path, the path of coming to power by winning elections, which became and has become the be-all and end-all of both the communist parties and all other left parties of India, and attempted armed struggle instead. The attempt was, no doubt, sporadic, and ultimately it was reduced to scattered terrorist activities, but it was enough to invite the white terror of the state. Even the established communist parties of India, for which the armed struggle almost appeared to be a taboo, joined the reactionary chorus to denounce the Naxalites in no uncertain terms.

The Naxalbari movement has, however, put forward an alternative approach to the understanding of the nature of the state and revolution in India as well as the path of the Indian revolution, which, inspite of all its limitations and shortcomings, has some significance. The great contribu-

tion of Naxalbari is that like its predecessor, Telengana, and later, Srikakulam, it has (1) upheld before the masses the battle for the capture of the state power through the armed struggle, and (2) taken revolutionary politics to the remote villages so that it can reach the millions of peasants.

The CPI(ML) rejected the parliamentary path and laid the singular emphasis upon the seizure of the state power only through the armed struggle, but it did so at the cost of all mass movements and democratic movements. While Naxalbari, which was the continuation of Telengana and Srikakulam, decisively showed the way towards the armed agrarian revolution, its teachings were largely forgotten by the CPI(ML) which totally neglected the necessity of the mass movements and mass organizations, did never seriously undertake any concrete agrarian programme, and instead relied too heavily on 'individual annihilation' which led the party to blind alley of terrorism.

Moreover, although the *Programme of the C.P.I.(ML)* considered the working class as 'the most revolutionary class and the most organised advanced detachment of our people', the Party, in practice, almost ignored the vanguard role of the working class in the revolution. The working class remained indifferent to the CPI(ML) activities and the Party too did not make any attempt to draw the workers. Although the CPI(ML), like the 'Neo-Left', never held that the students should play the vanguard role instead of the workers, still it was found to be laying emphasis on the students' power, of course, along with the revolutionary role of the peasants.

At present the original CPI(ML) has been split into numerous communist revolutionary parties and groups. Some of them have already denounced the CPI(ML) as a terrorist party since its creation and have been striving to form a genuine Communist Party. Some other parties and groups stress that the mistakes committed by the CPI(ML) should be corrected, and they further claim that they have actually corrected those mistakes and are the continuation of the original CPI(ML). Some others still stick to the original 'annihilation' line of the CPI(ML). Most of them have, however, embraced the path of mass movements and democratic movements. At present the Naxalites have been able to muster some strength and exert palpable influence in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, but in West Bengal they have only very marginal strength and influence.¹¹

The Naxalbari movement could be crushed, but the spirit of the Naxalbari cannot be crushed. The Naxalbari spirit continues and will continue to reverberate through generations to come. The glorious saga of the death-defying courage and heroism of the Naxalite youths, in spite of all the drawbacks and terroristic deviations of this movement, will always be remembered and will inspire the revolutionaries of the future generations.

XII

In May 1974 the historic railways strike took place in the whole of India. The striking railways staff became subjected to the widespread state terror and repression.

By the year of 1974 Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, completed all the preparations for the establishment of the authoritarian and despotic rule in the whole country. Jai Prakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya leader, gave the call for the 'total revolution' and countrywide mass struggle against the autocratic rule of Indira Gandhi. On 26 June 1975 the internal national emergency was imposed all over India in order to suppress all the differing opinions and dissenting voices. Widespread arrests immediately ensued throughout the country. Jai Prakash Narayan and all other leaders opposed to Indira authoritarianism were imprisoned. During the emergency the top-ranking leaders of the CPI(M), with the exception of only two, were not arrested. Jyotirmoy Basu and Jaipal Singh were the only two important CPI(M) leaders who were arrested. While the CPI supported the emergency, the CPI(M) opposed it. In spite of its opposition, the CPI(M) could not organize any viable anti-emergency movement. It did not even make any such attempt. The anti-emergency movement remained more or less restricted to the organization of a number of meetings in defence of the civil liberties. The CPI(M) leaders and workers participated in such meetings and also took the initiative in organizing them. Although the Naxalite had either been killed or put behind bars, still those who could evade arrest attempted to carry on some underground anti-emergency activities. Such attempts were not, however, much successful.

XIII

In the Lok Sabha election held in March 1977 the Congress was defeated. Even Indira Gandhi had to face defeat. The Janata government came to power at the Centre. The CPI(M)-led Left Front, which was an electoral ally of the Janata Party, supported the Janata government at the Centre. In the West Bengal Vidhan Sabha election held in June 1977 the CPI(M)-led Left Front emerged as victorious with the overwhelming majority. Jyoti Basu came back to the Vidhan Sabha after a gap of five years.

The Indira- Siddhartha authoritarian rule came to its end. The CPI(M)-led Left Front government came to power in West Bengal. On 21 June 1977 Jyoti Basu became the first communist Chief Minister of the state.

The CPI(M)-led Left Front has repeated its feat on all the four

subsequent occasions - 1982, 1987, 1991 and 1996. Jyoti Basu, the octogenarian leader of the CPI(M), has been continuing as the Chief Minister of West Bengal from 21 June 1977 till today.

The CPI(M)-led Left Front government of West Bengal is undoubtedly the product of the development and continuity of the communist movement. But it is more a product of the development and success of the democratic movement as the yearnings of the people of West Bengal for the elimination of the authoritarian Congress rule and the establishment of democracy have found their expression in the installation of the CPI(M)-led Left Front government in the state.

The continuation of the CPI(M)-led Left Front government in power in West Bengal and also in Tripura and Kerala is an achievement on the part of 'constitutional communism' in India.

XIV

But does it really mean any genuine advancement of the communist movement in post-independence India? The answer must be in the negative. The continuation of the CPI(M)-led Left Front government in power in West Bengal for more than twenty years and also that government in Tripura and Kerala for quite a long time has not made any tangible contribution to the progress of the communist movement in the country. Rather the communist movement has faced stagnation at present. Such stagnation started in the eighties and now in the nineties this has become more acute. The communist movement has not spread outside the three states of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, and moreover, in these three states too the issue of the government takes precedence over the issue of the movement. The attitudes of both the established communist parties - CPI(M) and CPI - have become almost entirely 'government-centric' and 'Parliament-centric', which have taken a heavy toll of the communist movement. Social revolution is supposed to be the chief aim of any Communist Party, but in India the established communist parties have been gradually moving far away from this supposed aim. And as a result social revolution is nowhere around the corner at present. The communist parties are only to blame themselves for this tragic situation.

The communists must always combine two types of struggle. One of them is the 'Parliamentary struggle' and the other is the 'Extra-Parliamentary struggle'. The two established communist parties of our country stick only to the former, while the latter is being perpetually neglected. The issue of the 'Extra-Parliamentary Struggle' finds its place in the articles of the Party *Programmes* and in the party literature. This is also being pronounced in the speeches of the party leaders and discussed in different party conferences and conventions. But in reality this is not being prac-

tised and that also does not concern the party leaders much. The 'Parliamentary Cretinism', which was severely criticized and denounced by Lenin, has been going to engulf both the established communist parties of our country and also the communist movement at the same time. There is neither any immediate, nor even distant, possibility of the 'seizure of the state power by means of the revolutionary armed insurrection', and the attempts are never made to create any such possibility. The Naxalite movement had been crushed long ago. Moreover, factionalism is rampant among the present Naxalite endeavours, the influence of the Naxalities is only very marginal and restricted to certain small regions. The Naxalite attempts cannot create any impact on Indian politics as a whole. Moreover, Naxalite politics often suffers from adventurism and terroristic deviations.

The communist movement of India has been regularly facing several crises. It has been continually confronting with new dangers, new problems and new challenges. Consumerist mentality has been gradually swallowing the whole of our society. Neo-colonial exploitation has been taking new and more sophisticated forms. The policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization have been creating the opportunities for the multi-national corporations to carry on uninterrupted plunder. Their exploitation has become more subtle in character. Consumerism and decadence have been acquiring greater strength. On the other hand saffron fascism has been getting powerful day by day and creating the possibilities to be established. The saffron forces, in alliance with other forces, have already come to the central power. Such saffron forces have been penetrating into the civil society and attempting to saffronize it entirely. They have been striving to saffronize the consciousness of the people. This will help them to stay in power and to control all state apparatuses ultimately. The established communist parties of India often appear to be helpless in the face of such dangers, crises and challenges. Such dangers and crises regularly expose the weaknesses inherent in the communist movement of India.

What should the communists of our country do now? In which way is the advancement of the communist movement possible? The 'seizure of the state power by means of the revolutionary armed insurrection' is a far distant phenomenon; there is not the least immediate possibility. To take part in the Parliamentary and Assembly elections and also to participate in the government are not as such objectionable, and such strategies and tactics should always be followed by the communists. But the 'parliament-centric' and 'government-centric' mentality is undoubtedly objectionable. Such a mentality has almost become an incurable disease of the communist movement of our country. Following the theoretical analyses of Antonio Gramsci, the famous Italian Marxist, and Louis Althusser, the well-known French Marxist, the tasks before the communists and the present communist movement of India can be discussed.

XV

Following the Marxist theoretical analysis, Louis Althusser has drawn a distinction between the State Power and the State Apparatus. It is comparatively easier to capture the State Power, but it is far more difficult to capture the State Apparatus and to establish its own control over it. The capture of the State Power does not necessarily imply the capture of the State Apparatus. It has also been recognized in the writings of Lenin. After the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917, Lenin had to face the same problem. Thus after the capture of the State Power, the communists should carry on the conscious efforts to capture the State Apparatus and to eliminate the bourgeoisie completely from the control of the State Apparatus. Althusser has once again referred to two types of State Apparatus-- (1) Repressive State Apparatus and (2) Ideological State Apparatus. It means that it is not sufficient to capture the Repressive State Apparatus alone; at the same time the Ideological State Apparatus should also be captured. The second task is, however, far more difficult.¹² In order to capture the Ideological State Apparatus, it is required to expand ideology in the civil society-it is required to establish hegemony in the civil society. Herein lies the relevance of the theory of Antonio Gramsci.

Antonio Gramsci has made a distinction between Russia under the control of the Tsar on the one hand and Italy, which was his own country, and the countries like Italy on the other, and has held the view that in the countries like Italy the state is not everything, and a strong civil society, which is the outcome of the democratic traditions inherent in those countries, exists there. In the opinion of Gramsci in the western capitalist countries like Italy the ruling class rules not only with the help of force, but also with the help of the expansion of hegemony. As a result only the struggle against force exercised by the ruling class is not enough. What is additionally required is to fight against the hegemony of the ruling class and also to liquidate it, for which it is essential to expand and establish counter hegemony in the civil society. Following the theory of Gramsci, as a result of this, the nature of the revolution in the western capitalist countries like Italy will be different from the nature of the Bolshevik Revolution of Russia. Revolution will take place in such countries through the expansion and establishment of counter hegemony in the civil society. By nature it will be a prolonged struggle. Antonio Gramsci has characterized such a struggle as the 'War of Position'. On the contrary the Bolshevik Revolution was considered by Gramsci to be the 'War of Manoeuvre', which would be applicable to the countries like Russia, where the state was everything and all-pervasive and the civil society did not exist separately.¹³

XVI

Following the theory of Gramsci, the communists of India should proceed. In India as a result of the existence and development of bourgeois democracy, in spite of all its degeneration and distortions, the state is not everything and all-pervasive, and a powerful civil society exists. In this country the ruling class rules not only with the help of force, but also with the help of the expansion of hegemony in the civil society. In India the communists should have to fight both against force and hegemony of the ruling class. The communists must continue the 'War of Position' here and for this they should expand and establish counter-hegemony in the civil society. Following the theory of Gramsci, the communist party would become the symbol and institutional form of the 'national popular collective will' of the civil society. So the communists should become worthy of that. The communists should expand and establish counter-hegemony in the civil society and should thus liquidate the hegemony of the ruling class. Hence they must firmly and resolutely carry on the revolutionary 'War of Position'. In the opinion of Antonio Gramsci, this 'War of Position', implies the prolonged 'reciprocal siege', for which the 'unprecedented concentration of hegemony' is essential.¹⁴ The communist movement of India can advance and acquire success only in this way.

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Book Review

Yogendra K. Malik & Ashok Kapur (eds.), *India : Fifty Years of Democracy and Development*, APH Publishing Corporation, New Delhi 1998, pp. (i-xli) and 1-489, Rs 1000.

An anniversary usually is an occasion to celebrate as well as to take stock of the past. More so if it is a golden one, either in the life of an individual or a nation. The Indian nation-state has passed through half-century of independent nationhood. During the last several months, the country has been celebrating its fiftieth birthday in many ways and with much fanfare. A cross-section of the society including the academia have been involved in the process. Pages and volumes have been written—including both journalistic and scholarly works—to celebrate the occasion.

Most of this, however, are eulogistic and few serious attempts at proper analysis and evaluation of the nation at work. The volume under review is one such a serious endeavour. It has been published at a time when the clamour of the anniversary celebrations are behind us and as such it may gain the hearing of a more attentive audience.

The volume is the result of collective efforts of the scholars who participated in the Round Table in May 1996 hosted by the Department of Political Science, University of Akron, Ohio, Canada to discuss the various dimensions of fifty years of India's democracy and development. The contributors to the volume are not committed to any particular political ideology, although they tend to analyse their respective topics on the premise of India being a representative democracy and a liberal state. The central theme is that, India is changing, and different aspects of the Indian state, economy, and society are responding to changing pressures, issues and opportunities. As we have entered the last phase of this century and move into the next millennium, India appears to be in the throes of a series of changes in both the structure and the culture of political power. The last fifty years in the life of our nation encompass both a blossoming of the democratic enterprise that the country had set its heart on, and its gradual erosion and decline. What was achieved by the political leadership in India in the early decades of independence was by no means inconsiderable. This period is commonly referred to as the 'Nehru Era' and is often remembered as the 'golden age' of the post-colonial state in India—more so in the present times of disorder

and incoherence. The most significant achievement of this era was the construction of a viable structure of the nation-state. Alongside the construction of the new edifice of the state was the forging of a political process for mobilizing support for state policy. This process was primarily built around, to quote Rajni Kothari, the 'Congress System', consisting of a differentiated structure of the party organization from the central to the local levels and accommodating different class and group interests within the ruling political formation. The project of modernization of Indian society was taken up seriously by the first generation of political elites who sought to bring about rapid change in economic and social institutions through the legal and administrative powers of the state. The legitimizing principle for state intervention in a wide range of economic and social areas was provided by the ideology of development. The nation-state penetrated into the domain of social activity previously untouched by the state and into the lives of virtually all sections of the people of India. The complexities of this process subsequently produced several contradictory tendencies, gradually leading to the political crisis and tensions of the present.

The edited work under review attempts to assess the evolution and the multi-dimensional nature of Indian democracy and development. The contributors view Indian democracy not simply as a political phenomenon. They emphasize also its social, economic and strategic contents. The papers can be grouped into four broad categories—political, social, economic and strategic. The 'political' ones discuss the administrative structure of India, the federal system, political parties and electoral politics. A comprehensive analysis of the state of India's Public Sector at the end of the century is basically 'economic' in character. The 'social' category deals with such issues as fifty years of 'Dalit' politics, the Indian State and its muslim minorities, and the reaction of political culture to different stresses and strains caused by social mobilization. Three different contributions on Indian foreign policy, India's policies in Asia, and India's dilemmas about enmities constitute the 'strategic' papers. Two other very important papers—one on India's search for technological self-reliance, and the other on India's fifty years of planning in environmental protection—however, stand apart from the above grouping.

In a comprehensive introductory essay, the editors argue that the Indian democratic experience does not fit completely into any particular Western model or theory. Rather, it is an exercise in a peaceful synthesis of diverse and competitive sub-cultures and interests in India, as well as in the adoption of attitudes and policies that blend diverse international experiences which are relevant to Indian circumstances and priorities. Following this argument, the essays in the volume take a middle of the road approach. Though not celebratory, they are critical scholarship which is free of ideological baggage or rigid orthodoxy. The contributions are balanced in tone and provide a concise appraisal of the achievements and challenges, the

difficulties and failures in India since Independence. As a whole, the book reflects different aspects of India's pursuit of pluralism, accommodation of competing interests and values in state and society, and development of economic and military strength as well as political participation by traditionally disempowered groups. Generally speaking, it covers India's fifty years of experimentation with representative democracy and its impact on India's developmental policies.

While the 'political' chapters stress different angles, they share a common theme, viz., the continuing growth of participation by formerly disempowered or weak segments of state and society, and the challenge they pose to the older political elites. The 'strategy' papers make the point that Indian political, economic and social development issues and choices are affected by international influences and pressures, and it is a mistake to compartmentalize domestic politics and public policy and strategic affairs. Foreign policy should be seen as an interaction between domestic and external forces. The paper entitled 'Turning the Tide ...' offers a historical and critical account of India's environmental planning efforts over the past fifty years. The author rightly takes note of the fact that while the waning signals came early enough, it was not until 25 years ago that India awoke to the harsh realities of environmental destruction. To its credit, it immediately launched a massive effort in environmental restoration. A quarter of a century later, however, the situation is still grim. The author argues that the paradox of the Indian environmental policy lies in its outcome and not the output. Environmental planning efforts so far have resulted in a 'patpourri of outputs rather than a string of measurable outcomes.' India faces a difficult challenge in environmental planning. While the problems are clear, the solutions are anything but clear. Economic growth is perceived to be both - the source and the solution - to environmental problems.

In the early 1960s, Selig Harrison predicted India's democratic failure and territorial disintegration. However, as is evident, his dire prediction never materialised. Despite its many deficiencies and drawbacks, the democratic institutional structure in India has persisted withstanding many crises. The ongoing debate, for instance, over the meanings of national identity, secularism, the nature of the state and the political authority, can be taken as a sign of the vitality of a democratic India. The volume ends with a note of optimism. It takes note of the fact that India's experiment of a state-centred approach to modernization and development is presently undergoing radical transformation. Similarly, the interaction between the state and the cultural multiplicity of the society is gradually transforming the character of its democracy. Democracy is no longer being treated as an instrument of power management only, it is also being used as a means of transforming a highly stratified society. The central theme of the book - that of a changing India - finds an echo in one of the recent analysis of "The Democratic Experiment" in India by the noted

political scientist Rajni Kothari. Kothari states, that despite steady erosion of both the institutions and the values that were cherished in the early decades after independence, much of what had started then is still part of our national consciousness. The peculiar blend of creative nationalism and persisting pluralism of indigenous society that produced India's democratic culture is still with us. These characteristics will continue to inform the emerging future of democracy in India, even though the key actors and their social bases, together with their ideological moorings, will be changing in some basic ways.

Ambarish Mukhopadhyay

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