TOWARDS UNDERSTRANDING COMMUNALISM

PRAMOD KUMAR (ed.)

About the Volume

This volume is an effort to understand and counter communalism & communal violence in India. The phenomenon has been understood in the context of specificities of historical experience and the nature of social, economic, political, cultural and religious formations. It has contributions of scholars and experts subscribing to competing theoretical frameworks of knowledge. It has pooled specialist knowledge on the subject and also consequences of growing communalism for secularism and democracy.

An important area which has been covered in this volume is related to the weakening of secular strands in the functioning of polity. The increasing use of communalism as a political weapon with dangerous implications for Indian state and society have been analysed. Is it possible to have democracy in a situation where communalism is becoming a pervasive reality? The answer to this question is resounding no and the contributors have explained, why.

The venture has also raised a fundamental question, why and how religion becomes basis of communal mobilisations? Further the demand for a separate nation having its basis in communalism has been critically examined. The mere fact this demand has been articulated on the basis of communalism does not establish the truth of that ideology or politics. The need to look at the historical role of culture, religion, language in the formation or breaking up of identities has been reinforced. The need to reflect the federal character of Indian social reality into operative politics, revival of democratic institutions and secular norms has been stressed.

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Edited by
PRAMOD KUMAR

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The contributions in this volume have been made by experts coming from diverse disciplines, subscribing to competing theoretical framework and with different concerns. This has enriched the existing knowledge on the subject in more than one way.

The support and help rendered by the CRRID faculty involved in understanding and analyzing the problem of communalism and communal violence for the last one decade or so was invaluable. Our thanks are also due to those friends who have put a tremendous pressure both academic and non-academic to expedite the publication of this work.

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PROLOGUE

I do not think I have much to say. The human heart has a sense of matriculated uneasiness and if you believe in God then God has given us human beings an instrument for investigating that sense of unease and disquiet which one's heart feels. It is this combination of constant questioning, introspection, which to me at any rate marks out a person, who calls himself a human being, in the animal kingdom which exists on earth. It all depends on how we wish to regard ourselves.

For many in India today, the heart articulates unease, disquiet and concern about the state of our country. The question, according to me, is, is there a problem of nation-building in India? Is it appropriate to describe what we are doing as a process of nation-building? I have heard many scholars say that the word 'nation' is inappropriate in its application to us, whatever its appropriateness might have been in, let us say, Europe where the nation states emerged for the first time between the 18th and 19th centuries. In reality, the entire Third World in Africa and Asia is still engaged in that process of nation-building.

Why should we have a modern nation state? Only yesterday I was asking my colleagues at the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, why cannot we give up this travail and trauma of building a nation state? Why cannot we, in the territory of India, not merely have Pakistan as a sovereign state and Bangladesh as a sovereign state, but also 22 or 23 or 50 other sovereign states? Why not? Europe, even Western Europe, which represents a very small segment of this earth, harbours within itself ten or eleven sovereign states. Some are very small, such as little Belgium, Denmark, Holland, and there are Norway, Sweden, France, Germany. If you take Central Europe, you have Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and so on. Why then should we not have something like this? This question awaits an answer. As far as I am concerned, my answer is simply this: whether a modern nation state of India, comprising its existing territories after partition, hangs together or hangs separately, it has to cope with and live and work and realise its dreams in the real world of today. I often say politics can change, geography does not change. Then 23, 24, 25 states within India will have as its geographical neighbor the changing, fast changing, large, very large and populous country, China, extending over 2,700 miles along our frontier provided we can call "India Our's".

China is seeking to become a great power. One should not blame the Chinese. It is their vision; it is what they want to do. They might commit errors, but that vision is there enshrined, one way or another, for china to emerge as a great power. They have already acquired the symbol of that power, the nuclear weapon. China is a nuclear weapon power. It is trying to build an economic power. Like us, the Chinese are trying to overcome centuries of backwardness. Since power has a calculus of its own, even if it is expressed in ideological terms, how will the territory of India, housing within itself a large number of sovereign states, cope with such a neighbouring power? How will you cope with another neighbor, which is obviously a super power called the Soviet Union, which has all the paraphernalia of power including economic power? Make no mistake, despite whatever might be the propaganda about it, the Soviet Union is a great power. Today, the effect of geography on human affairs has been made more proximate by modern science and technology. The East India Company took months to get to Surat and Vasco da Gama took a longer time to exert the reality of naval power on the subcontinental part of India.

If you are living in the world of today and are not enmeshed in your fancied glories of the past, how would you deal with this fact of power, even of a country so far away as the United States? The US may be far away but it exerts its power and influence right here. How would you deal with it? Can you deal with it by organizing yourselves as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras? It is this compulsion which makes us think of ways and means of being together. After all, if you take the 16th century, there was a basic uniformity in the world. India was under the Moghuls and even the whole of India was not subsumed under a single dynastic structure. The Chinese were under the Ming dynasty. The Russians were under the Romanov dynasty. The French were under the Bourdon dynasty; the English under the Tudor dynasty. The Germany of today was not there. It was enmeshed in a large number of principalities headed by princes, monarchs and so on. Prussia was one; Bavaria was another; there was the free city of Hanover. There was hardly a united Germany as we know it today; it did not emerge till 1871. If we are interested in the historical process of nation-building, it is of interest to learn that such a Germany emerged through a process of evolution.

Hence I would put in a plea that whatever you do in your social science research, please see every aspect of social reality in its historical evolution. Otherwise you will miss things; you will rationalize the glories of Indian civilization. I am not denying that we have done great things in this area called India, trans-Sindhu-Indus area. But those glories do not answer our today's problems. Many of our social structures inherited from an ancient past constitute a visible impediment to any vision you might have or any design you might have of building a modern

India, integrated, united. I am of course assuming that in the building of such a nation you have an appropriate economic policy, an appropriate educational policy, an appropriate ideology.

Ideology is being made to look a dirty word in India today. And that will be the single reason for our downfall. Ideology is a set of values consistent within themselves with your aspirations. Either we overcome the small identities to which we are accustomed by our birth, transcend them and have always a vision of India, or we shall be led away in the name of searching for identities like a literal era of memories, howsoever glorious the memory might be. This does not of course negate in any way the role of what I call true religion, which is, in the words of the great reformer of the Christian Church, Martin Luther, a matter between the individual and his Lord. He says, in such a relationship there is no need for intermediaries or the priest. And Luther was a religious man. That idea shook the very foundation of a tyrannical, hierarchical, clerical paper authority, the Roman Catholic Church. It did not destroy religion but it destroyed all the malpractices under which Europe was writhing, suffering and without the destruction of which Europe could not emerge into an industrial, modern civilization with modern political structures.

So I would submit for your consideration that it is essential for us to examine with clinical objectivity the false ideology which is gaining ground in our country. The hundred years of national movement itself suffered from a lack of clarity of ideology. Vivekananda, for instance, took us back to our glories of the past. This is understandable, because when you are down and out and a great civilisation is crushed by the East India Company, and that too with the help of the people of India, then the humiliation makes you feel that you must look back somewhat and find some anchorage in your past. But it is also known that if you look forward to a future, a new future, then dead traditions of the past are a millstone round your neck. That is why in the course of the renewal of Europe, prior to industrialisation, there was Renaissance and reformation; constant questioning of everything. That is why in the course of the tortured history of China there were movements, such as the May Four Movement; there were rebellions such as the Boxer Rebellion; there were all kinds of movements questioning the very traditions of the past which were feudal traditions, mandarin traditions. Until they did that they could not renew China.

Is it suggested that our salvation will be achieved only if Sikhs reinterpret their history? I say their identity is *sui generis* within itself. That way lies destruction, sure destruction! Can it be argued that India's salvation lies only in holding the trishul and saying '*Har Har Mahadeo*'? Politics of incitement and people who incite one against the other are the true enemies of India. They have no right to talk about a vision of India, of the future.

Make no mistake, there are no spiritual guarantees that countries and civilisations do not decay. Many proud civilisations have decayed and crumbled leaving no traces. The Pharaoic civilization decayed; the Roman civilisation decayed; so did the Babylonian. Why do you think India is exempt from history?

So I would suggest that sociologists and, with great respect, economists, develop a historical perspective. In my view one of the most valid aspects of economics is to learn the history of economics and not to reduce economics to a thing in itself. One must take note of the relationship of economics to history and its evolutionary changing patterns. There are no fixed aspirations. Aspirations are constantly changing. Sociologists and economists have to adapt, adjust, resolve conflicts. Therefore, what we are studying is not merely what we have called, by the habit of time, communal tension; what we are studying are the stresses and strains, the conflicts, contradictions of the formation, for the first time in Indian history, of a modern nation state.

I hope that this background will be kept somewhere in mind in carrying out an analysis of what constitutes an impediment; what does not constitute an impediment; which conflicts can be resolved within the system; and which conflicts for their resolution require adaptation, change, moderation of the system. I would beg of you, with great respect, to bear this in mind if sociological researches are not moments in time but, according to a well-known historian, a tension between continuity and change. Or, it is a *sangharsh* between *parampara* and *parivartan*; the compulsion of *parivartan* and the weight of *parampara*, both positive and negative. No country can be rid of the past. The question is which is the valid past. If we are to understand all these forty years, we might say that the valid past will be the Vedas and the Puranas; the Sikhs would find it in a reinterpretation of their glory of the past; and the Christians would no doubt do the same; Islam would to the same. We find this process reaching its dead end in one corner of our country, called Kerala, where people are organised in serried ranks as Christians, Muslims and so on. And you get an extraordinarily unstable situation.

If the new generation wishes to cope with the future, and there is a great deal of boasting about coping with the future of the 21st century, it is very necessary to understand with the utmost humility and criticality that our future will not lie in the game of politics which is played in the short term; that it does not matter what happens tomorrow; today's votes can be gathered if I incite the Sikh against the Hindu, the Hindu against the Sikh, Muslim against Hindu and so on. That way lies destruction.

To the younger generation I can say, you cannot migrate anywhere, even those who have migrated are having hard times. In the country of the French

Revolution under the banner of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, a party has arisen, as a result of which one in every tenth Frenchmen has declared himself a racist. Similar trends are visible in Western European societies. In Germany, against Turkish workers whom the Germans themselves imported and now find it very difficult to digest, racism finds expression in resentment against the construction of mosques there. I do not have to tell you the true state of affairs prevailing in that great home of liberal democracy, called Great Britain. I do not have to tell you what is happening in the melting pot homeland, the United States, of ethnic multiplicity and unabsorbed ethnic diversity, with each one trying to create a kind of vote-bank for itself.

So if we are to look at things as they are, be sensitive to our environment of today and not of yesterday's, but also understand our yesterday in a true sense and not dressed up to look very dramatic, very heroic. Then alone, I think, we shall be not only doing relevant social science research, but also relate such social science research to the critical concerns of our times of creating a new India of today and tomorrow.

P.N. Haksar

FOREWORD

It was Carlyle who said that wonder is the beginning of philosophy. And I recall in his famous book Prof. Pigou, quoting Carlyle, said it is not wonder, but rather the social enthusiasm which revolts against the joylessness of withered lives and the sordidness of the mainstreams which is the beginning of economics. I would say that also is the motivation for all social sciences. Here, as nowhere else, as Cornes said, it is for the heart to suggest our problems, it is for the intellect to find solutions for them, and the only purpose of the intellect is to be the servant of social sensitivities.

Communalism has emerged as a major obstacle to the building of a modern progressive nation state and a secular democratic society. Communalism implies the negation and non-recognition of the logic of growing interdependence. To that extent it is a reactionary phenomenon. Minority communalism breeds a sense of insecurity and fear which is destructive to the self-confidence of the minorities themselves. If not controlled, we can see the consequences of unbridled communalism in multi-religious societies. Take Lebanon for instance, a paradise of the East until ten years ago, and look at the sorry state to which communal conflicts have reduced that beautiful country. But what is more is that unbridled communalism can lead to the brutalization of societies. The fear of disintegration often leads to a situation where people are willing to tolerate suppression of civil liberties and normal judicial processes. Therefore, in a long run, uncontrolled communalism can lead to the death of democratic institutions themselves. Minority communalism, it is obvious today is fanning majority communalism. Therefore, the consequences of communalism, what it means in terms of its impact on our development, in terms of the survival of our democratic system, all these need to be explained. We need to conduct more research, but the purpose of such research must be illuminating as well as fruitful. Action-oriented research is an important input to bring more sense and sanity to our public life.

In this background it is indeed very timely that CRRID has decided to publish a book on communalism particularly in the context of the situation that prevails in Punjab, a tragedy, I think, which cannot be described in simple words. A state which has made such phenomenal progress, which was a source of pride to all those who have been associated with its growth and development is today involved in fratricide, in communal tensions which have taken such an ugly form.

One could never imagine that this could be the fate of the premier state of the Indian Union. One could never imagine that communal tensions could take this form rousing such deep fears and deep suspicions to divide communities, two religious communities whose essential relationship, to describe it very mildly, has been non-antagonistic in every possible sense of the term. We have to ponder why all this has happened.

Beyond all this, the situation that prevails in Punjab would require close collaboration not only between social scientists of various disciplines, but also leaders of all shades of public opinion. The situation in Punjab demands a free and frank self-examination on the part of all communities and all parties. Individual self-examination is difficult; community self-examination is still more difficult. But I think without such heart-searching we are unlikely to find, solutions to the contemporary problems of Punjab. We see in Punjab today the harmful consequences of missing religion and politics in its worst form allowing the use of religious places for political purposes. As a consequence, even those who are responsible for administering these shrines cannot themselves enter them. Therefore I feel that it is necessary to re-examine some well-founded and some not so well-founded beliefs, as such for example is it necessary to combine religion and politics? It requires a fresh look to see to what extent Sikhism sanctifies mixing of religion and politics.

My limited reading of Sikh history convinces me that our Gurus never wanted to create a political order. They never wanted to create a state and what passes in the name of so-called religious fundamentalism today is a total negation of all that the Sikh gurus stood for. But this is no time to enter into recriminations. I think, the foremost need is to find common links. We have to adopt a new approach, whereby we can appeal to our common cultural heritage. We should appeal to those forces and those factors which unite all Panjabis rather than those which divide people in this vital state of the Indian Union. Sikhism has had a strong progressive influence on the evolution of the state, but the essence of Sikhism is compassion and tolerance. I think that to me is the supreme message of Sikhism.

It is necessary, therefore for the Sikh community, as much as for the other communities, to conduct this self-introspection, so that Punjab can be saved from this path of self-destruction. Too much blood has already been shed. The fact that every day innocent people are losing their lives, mothers are losing their sons, wives are losing their husbands, children are becoming orphans, is a most shameful chapter in the recent history of Punjab. Working collectively it is the duty of all shades of public opinion in the state, all political parties, intellectuals, trade unions, all those who influence public opinion to reverse this tide before it becomes a mighty wave of self-destruction.

In nutshell, the country as a whole also has to find ways and means of combating communal forces. We must, therefore, look at our institutions, to see to what extent our institutional defences are strong. I believe we need to strong economy, because it is only in the framework of an expanding economy that we can find meaningful solutions to various often seemingly conflicting regional and communal demads. Therefore, the foundation of our economy must be strengthened. We must sustain a vibrant economy, because it is only then can we find compromises of the type which can satisfy the aspirations of various regions, so that development does not become a zero sum game. When social change becomes a zero sum game, conflicts and tensions are often extremely difficult to resolve peacefully.

The second condition is that in our country the state influences so much of our economic and social life that it is very important that the state should act not as an agent of one or other dominant community, but as the upholder of public good. Commitment to the ideals of secularism on the part of those who have taken the oath to defend the Constitution is absolutely essential. The organs of the state must not be misused. They must be seen to be used for promoting not narrow sectional interests, but the common good of all people. A strong government at the Centre with sensitive perceptions and self-confidence on the part of national leadership, can help enter into meaningful negotiations for viable modes of sharing power with regional and sub-regional elements.

Therefore, anything that weakens the cohesiveness or unity of the country or the government at the Centre cannot find solutions to the type of conflicts that are emerging in various part of the country. We need a much stronger Central Government, a much more self-confident national leadership. This, in my view, is pre-condition for solving various problems that are arising in different parts of this country of ours.

Therefore, I regard this volume as indeed very timely. What communalism is how do we identify it, what are its manifestations, what are its causes, what are its consequences, how can we meet collectively the challenge of communalism – these are burning issues if we have to manage change in an orderly fashion.

Communalism is not simply the consciousness of a religious identity. But for purposes of research and analysis it can be described as a religion-based movement which makes a political claim for recognition as a distinctive and separate identity in one form or another by the state. The type of political claims that communal movements make, of course, varies from one region to another, from one country to another, depending upon the geographical factor and the concentration of populations. Where minority populations tend to be concentrated it is natural in due course for these communal demands to take

territorial dimensions. From various shades of autonomy to the extreme form of secessionism, this is the route which these demands ultimately follow.

On the other hand, if you have a situation where a minority community is dispersed and does not constitute a major concentration of population, its search and its desire to preserve its identity takes different forms. Therefore, we have to take note of the fact that communal movements need not take a uniform or single path to express their fear of loss of identity or to get their imaginary or real grievances redressed.

Notwithstanding the type of challenges that communalism poses for our country today, one has to recognize that religion-based politics is not an exclusively Indian phenomenon. Religion has been very often a strong factor in political movements, in shaping the course of history. Even in modern times, there is an example of the evolution of the recent history of Ireland. First is the fact that in 1921 Northern Ireland was not allowed by the Protestant majority to join the mainstream and now more recently, the troubles that have arisen in Northern Ireland in the last fifteen or sixteen years. For that matter, in the continent of Europe there is the example of the separation of Belgium from Holland. Even in the United States, until the election of president Kennedy, nobody could have believed that a Catholic could become President.

So religious prejudices, religious bigotry have existed in many countries and it is not exclusively an Indian phenomenon. The challenge before our polity is, how to control and contain the communal mentality so that it does not disrupt the orderly growth of our economy and polity. But before we can adopt a strategy to deal with the disruptive consequences of communalism, it is necessary to take note of various forces at work. And here social science research has a very important role to play.

Until recently, in common parlance, it used to be argued that communalism is essentially a creation of British imperialism and after the withdrawal of the British from India communal tensions would disappear. That is how the folklore of Indian history used to be described. Yet, forty years after independence, we find that communal tensions have not disappeared, that in some form they have even got aggravated. There is hardly a year in which there are no communal riots in our country. Therefore, all of us must reflect as to what are those deep-rooted and deep-seated factors which have kept communalism so much alive as a patent force in our society. Is it the political system that is to be blamed? What is the relationship of democracy with communal tensions?

I was recently reading a very informative article by professor Morris-Jones in which he says that a relationship between democracy and separatism is at best ambiguous. On the one hand, democracy, with its emphasis on accommodation and mutual bargaining, encourages an attitude which can accommodate

genuine demands. At the same time the type of competitive politics that invariably gets associated with democracy also gives rise to a situation of exaggerated demands, which in turn feed conflict, give rise to counter demands, become more and more difficult. I think political scientists need to reflect on the role of the political factor in accentuating communal tensions. To what an extent, the way we are organized as political entity, accentuates or moderates communal tensions is another area of fruitful research.

Coming back to the economic factors, you have very many theories. The relationship between development, social change, inequalities is a recurrent theme of mainstream economics. One often hears how unbalanced or uneven development gives rise to fears and tensions. But here too, whether it is the leading sections or the lagging sections which really throw up communal movements is far from clear.

In the case of Punjab, for example, it would be very difficult to say that it is because of lack of development that communal tensions have taken shape here. By all objective standards the rate of economic growth of Punjab has been the highest in the country. In terms of all indicators of social change Punjab has made phenomenal progress by Indian standards. Yet we have this ugly form that the communal tensions have taken in this stage. Is it that development cannot by itself be regarded as an integrative force or is it that development itself contains seeds of disruption? I think it is necessary for social scientists to reflect on this. Again, when I was reading Prof. Morris-Jones I found he quotes cases in recent history of the Ebos of Nigeria, Quebec in Canada, where communal consciousness or separatist forces arose not because these regions were backward, but because they had overcome their backwardness.

Therefore, the relationship between backwardness, economic growth, economic development and communal consciousness, communal tensions and separatist movements, is another fruitful area of research in economics.

The desire of feudal forces to use communal tensions to perpetuate their hold is another theme which is often analysed in popular discussion on communal tensions. It used to be said before independence that Muslim feudal groups were using religion as a cloak to serve their economic interests. The same thing is being said in post-independence India too. But I would say that in social sciences all short sentences have their limitations. One needs a theory of causation which takes into account the complexities of social realities. The desire of vested interests to take advantage of a situation which is ripe for potential conflict cannot be wished away. But what are those objective forces which give rise to these sores on the body politic? This is something which requires deeper analysis.

Finally, one should not also lose sight of several other dimensions. For instance, in situations such as in Punjab, terrorism need not have ideological or political factors as its main inspiration. What is the role of such factors as smuggling, other anti-social activities, whereby such a group of anti-social people takes hold of a movement to carry out its nefarious activities?

Therefore, I suggest that an analysis or an anatomy of communal tensions must be a multi-disciplinary exercise in which the inputs of all social sciences, economics, social psychology, political science, sociology and other relevant disciplines must be pooled to gain a comprehensive understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon with our country is faced.

We must consider the role of education too. Education, in our country, has not been, very often, a force of integration. It has been a force which has in some ways sharpened sectional, communal identities. In the same context, there is also the failure of the national movement to throw up a cohesive national ideology which could unite all communities transcending narrow sectional loyalities, not completely eliminating them, but giving rise to new liyalities which would be more integrative. In the last forty years the national ideology which would generate new loyalities bind all communities. I think this is another major failure of our polity. That is why the recurrence of this phenomenon of communal tensions, sectional conflicts in one part of our country or another.

Finally, I would say that one must also recognize that most countries are culturally pluralists, with diverse regions, languages, ethnic groups. If all were to plan their future in their own ways the dominant group may impose their design on the weak. If we want a truly integrated society we must have a plan to manage inter-group conflicts and to induce the diverse groups of people to identify with and realize common national goals. Here is a fruitful agenda for social science research, that transcends the narrow boundaries of social science. This is a task in which, as I said, all shades of public opinion, political parties, social organizations, farmers' organizations, trade union organizations, women's organizations, must pool their resources. It is only then that we would be able to create a new consciousness not to replace the communal identity, but a new sense of identity which transcends these narrow sectional identities, which creates a sense of security, which gets over the fears of minority communities and at the same time strengthens the cause of national unity, cohesion and integration.

Man Mohan Singh

PREFACE

Communalism has emerged as a major obstacle to the building of India as a modern progressive nation state and a secular democratic society, observed, Professor Manmohan Singh, in his inaugural address delivered at the six-week long Research Methodology Course to Study Communalism in India, organised at our Centre. He said, "Communalism implies negation and non-recognition of the logic of growing interdependence and to that extent it was a reactionary phenomenon". Talking of minority communalism, he said it breeds a sense of insecurity and fear which is destructive to the self-confidence of the minorities themselves. Communalism, if not controlled, the consequences of unbridled communalism in a multi-religious society like ours can be discerned from what was going on in Lebanon until recently.

The observations made above take us to examine the basis of relationship between communalism as an ideology and objective reality in the prevalent situation. In fact, according to Professor Bipan Chandra, it creates a great deal of difficulty in the prevailing situation to understand communalism and analyse it. Professor Asghar Ali Engineer, another distinguished participant in the Research Methodology course has offered a partial analysis by describing communalism as a modern phenomenon. Our own studies on communalism have empirically attempted to trace the ideological roots by examining the pattern of social and economic development on the one hand and analyzing the weakening of the administrative, education, judicial, social and secular institutions within and outside the state structure, on the other. The studies have brought out the growing irrelevance of generalisations in understanding communalism and analyzing it. This conclusion is derived from extensive field surveys carried out intensively over a period of ten years by the Centre in the selected districts covering the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Another important finding from the studies related to the weakening of secular stance in the functioning of political parties except the Left and Left oriented political groups, which had led to the further weakening of the political system that continues to regulate all other systems.

An interesting observation to unveil the relationship between communalism as an ideology and objective reality in the prevailing situation has been made by Shri Balraj Puri, a well-known legal and political activist. He says communalism is in fact, an Indian contribution through the political dictionary of English language. According to him connotational dichotomy and its derogatory

implications in the Indian context have led everyone disown this term, notwithstanding the operative reality being the other way round, that is, close to the findings of the studies mentioned above. This, he says, is visible from recurring and widely spreading communal violence, negation of religiosity and religion by itself.

Another significant view emerges from the contribution made by a well-known columnist and expert on defence studies, Professor K.Subrahmanyam when he said, “In order to understand phenomenon of communalism in a modern nation-state, we have to go back to its origins, evolution of the concept and the emergence of multi-religious states and subsequent growth of secularism in various parts of the world.”

According to him, the Indian scene has to be looked into against this background. He has drawn our attention to the persecution of the Christians in the Roman Empire having taken place only two to three centuries ago and of Jews all over Europe or of the Bahias in Iran and Ahmadiyas in Pakistan. In between even in India, he said, “When a king got converted from Buddhism or Jainism to Hinduism, those who remained as Buddhists or Jains were persecuted and vice versa”. Again in England espousing of Anglican faith, repudiation of the Pope by the King and him proclaimed as the Head of the Church. Furthermore, when Islam conquered more territories, the majority of the people in the occupied land accepted the faith of the rulers. This brings home the point reflected in the observations of Professor Manmohan Singh that human spirit being what it is, it was not always possible for rulers to suppress totally the minorities practicing their particular faiths.

In the Indian context, the framers of our Constitution had drawn inspiration from the experiences of England, Europe and Ireland that enabled them to provide full guarantee to protect the religious faith of the minorities together with the majority as an ideology. The problem has arisen in observance of the constitution norms. Hence this has brought a dichotomy between ideology and objective reality.

For purposes of understanding and analyzing the growth of communalism in the post-independent India, there is a need to look at some of the empirically important evidence that has provided continuity to this phenomenon on the one hand and the failure of the state structure to combat it on the other.

Take for example, an historically important evidence provided by the pamphlet on *Rangila Rasul* or “*The Gay Prophet*”, a grossly abusive attack upon the Prophet Mohammad. The author of this pamphlet was prosecuted by the administration but subsequently acquitted by the High Court. The editor and proprietor of the Muslim Daily Paper in Lahore condemned the High Court decision and was sentenced for contempt of court. About the same time, a

monthly journal published at Amritsar, made another attack upon the Prophet. The Muslims by this time were considerably agitated and so the prosecution was quickly ordered. In this case, the accused were convicted which had a soothing effect upon Muslim public opinion (refer to Clyford Manshardt book, the Hindu Muslim Problem in India).

We in India have not yet evolved such laws that ensure the prosecution and conviction of communal rioters. The numerous examples of such communal rioters having escaped prosecution and subsequent conviction after having committed the crime are traceable from Bhiwandi, Hyderabad, Delhi, Jamshedpur and of late Shaharanpur, to cite only a few examples.

Before one could conclude, the imperative need to structure a well-defined Research Methodology Course to study communalism in India an attempt has been made by the committed team of researchers at our Centre to take this initiative as a beginning of this exercise.

I might end by bringing the attention of the readers to another contribution by our esteemed friend late Professor Moin Shakir and also a refer to what Sarvshri Ashok Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan have mentioned in their book, the Communal Triangle in India.

Professor Moin Shakir said “the problems of the minorities in India cannot be understood in isolation as no minority can become an autonomous entity. In fact it is the prevailing politico-economic system which should form the major frame of reference for the study of various Indian communities. Sarvshri Ashok Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan have observed “In the making of the communal triangle the Hindu Strand has played no un-conspicuous part. Hindu communalism has been both an irritant and a reaction to Muslim Communalism. In cannot be denied that the two communalisms have fed a pattened on each other, each has provided *raison d’etra* and stimulus need for the other.

It may be worthwhile to quote the following excerpts from a recent publication, “Pakistan’s Political and Economic History since 1947” by Omar Normal, ‘the saving device so far is that while in Pakistan the military and the bureaucracy acquired effective supremacy of power over the state at the expense of the civilian representatives, the ethnic composition of this nucleus of power reflected the preponderance of Panjabis in the military, and North Indian immigrants in supremacy in the civil service.”

“The appropriation of power by the military bureaucratic apparatus, entailed the denial of power to the elite of the majority ethnic group, ‘the Bengalis’ which subsequently formed the basis of separation, since the class background

of the Bengali elite could not overcome the inferior status accorded to their ethnic group."

In the final analysis, one may conclude that there is lot of lose talk about the Hindu-Muslim relationship – there is a failure to recognize that there are all types of Hindus and Muslims. If a Hindu attacks a Hindu, it is seen differently from when a Hindu attacks a Muslim and vice-versa.

In view of the above and several other unquoted conclusions drawn from our own studies and piling up literature on the understanding and analysis of communalism, the six-week long Research Methodology Course was conceived as a milestone in the understanding of communal phenomenon and its disastrous implications and impediments in the long walk of secularization of Indian Society through the institution of democracy.

Rashpal Malhotra

INTRODUCTION

The Indian social reality is confronted with a new set of questions and challenges posed by changes in the socio-economic formations and developments in politics, culture and religions. The complex of processes once observed in western Europe or central and eastern Europe do not see, to be operating in post-colonial countries with any degree of consistency. Neither their form nor manifestation not the causal links like those between free market, private property, role of peasantry or industrial elite are similar. The specificity of social institutions like the caste system, religious practices and beliefs, tribal social formations and gender relations provide sufficient conditions for the persistence of the phenomena of divergent forms and practices in India.

There have been serious attempts to comprehend and analyse these issues, but these were vaguely and variously explained either as pre-capitalist practices or in terms of 'Asiatic' or 'Oriental formations'. Attempts have also been made to understand issues thrown up by socio-economic formations with the help of 'borrowed' models and concepts. In other words, ideas developed by social science research on specific issues like communalism were not, to a large extent, an expression and product of social realities, but were the product of a process of mere academic thinking or imitation. Cultural and ideological factors, including those relating to social relationship between groups and/or classes, were not given adequate weightage and were not subjected to a critical examination with historical-ideological framework of knowledge.

However, there have been attempts to understand the phenomenon of communalism in the context of specificities of historical experience, and the nature of social, economic, political, cultural and religious formations. This has resulted in some kind of theoretical modifications.

It was felt that there was a need to look at these theoretical and methodological modifications with a view to becoming familiar with new trends of scholarship and also specific issues relating to communalism thrown up by complex processes. It was in this perspective that a six-week research methodology workshop on communalism was organized. This effort helped in the preparation of an agenda for working out the theoretical issues and appropriate methodological tools to link various strands with other phenomena of divergent sorts. Further, the purpose of bringing out a volume which is the outcome of this workshop is to pool specialist knowledge and acquaint researchers with the methodologies so evolved to understand the phenomenon of communalism

and also the possible consequences of growing communalism for the future of democracy and secularism. Studies on communalism, therefore, have acquired an important place in academia due to its pervasiveness in society. The issue is, however, by no means academic. Given the political importance of communalism and its use as a political weapon with dangerous social and political implications, serious and concerted efforts have to be made not only to understand the phenomenon but also to forge ideological tools to counter it. It is our contention, therefore, that the need is not merely to understand the phenomenon to acquire greater clarity, but also to evolve perspectives to counter and combat it.

The basic question with which this book is concerned is: what is the meaning and causation of and the strategy to counter communalism. The identification of specific historical factors and conditions which have associational, causal or conjectural relationship with communalism have been dilated upon. It is not a simple question. The preliminary discussion of the reasons, and also the fact, why it is not simple has thrown sufficient light to begin answering some of the fundamental questions.

The first difficulty that arises is with the meaning of the term 'communalism' itself. Social science literature in the global context attributes a positive meaning to the term 'communal'. In India this term has been used to denote a negative phenomenon. There has been a trend which extrapolates the global meaning to understand communalism as it exists in India. For example, a communalism has been defined in relation to community which means a common identity accompanied by common culture, history, interests and these characteristic features have been seen to have their basis in religion.

Extrapolation of this understanding to analyse the phenomenon of communalism has introduced certain distortions. The erroneous conception of community as a religious, caste or other ascriptive group focused thinking and research on incorrect lines. The other trend has been to understand communalism in relation to competing religious group identities. In this, communalism is to believe and propagate that the social, economic and political interests of one religious, caste or ascriptive group as dissimilar, divergent and antagonistic to those of another.

These notions are projected to negate the image of a genuine religious man who is a non-communalist. In other words, communalism highlights only those aspects of religion which are antagonistic rather than those that are humanist and universal. In this sense, religion is only an instrumental cause for the growth of communalism.

It is, no doubt, necessary to explore the relation of religion, caste of other ascriptive group categories with communalism, but at the same time the

hypothesis of the inevitability of communalism in a multi-religious society should be critically examined. This view does not consider associational, causal or conjectural relationship for the growth of communalism, but over-emphasises religious, caste and other ascriptive categories.

It was also pointed out that communalism is a false ideology as it reflects objective reality not only not adequately, but also in a distorted way. This view is questioned on the ground that it suffers from an empiricist error. It is contended that if communalism is an ideology with widespread effects, how can it be false?

A serious and indepth investigation is called for on this question. It is necessary to dispel the notion that 'false' means nonexistent, or that 'falsity', in this case, means something which cannot even be seen in empirical reality. It is also worthwhile to examine those mediations which smudge objective reality and render it a hostage to perceptions like communalism. Therefore, issues relating to the meaning of the term 'communalism' which most of the authors, policy planners and others proclaim as settled, do in fact remain highly contentious. In order to avoid confusion and semantic nicety, the existing term 'communalism' may be scientifically defined instead of coining a new term which may not be viable.

The second difficulty in a discussion on communalism has to do with the character of the writings on the subject. These writings are for the most part the product of a particular historical context and specific circumstances. For instance, theorization on the subject of communalism in the pre-1947 period was mainly one between nationalism and colonialism. It was thought that since communalism was a pre-capitalist notion and was caused by colonialism, it would get eroded after freedom from the British and with the initiation of the process of development of science, technology, industry, etc. Communalism in its existing form and magnitude is, thus, a typical phenomenon experienced only in the former colonies of the British.

A counter argument to this is that communalism is not a conspiracy of the British. Communalism appeared due to the social conditions prevailing in India; the British used it to perpetuate their rule. There existed a reservoir of mistrust and suspicion among members of different religious groups which was exploited by the British colonialists. And this practice has continued even after independence of these colonies.

Another variation of this view has been articulated by nationalist discourse on the subject. It has been mentioned that communalism was a weak force when the struggle for the national freedom attained it speak. Therefore, communalism is an outcome of the failure to inculcate national consciousness in independent India. In other words, 'it is a development of disproportionately

high loyalty to one's caste, tribe, religion or any group as against the normal requirement of prime loyalty to the nation state'. This over-emphasis on nationalism as an ideological anti-dote to communalism may result in suppression of the urges of various sub-nationalities in a caste country like India. This suppression of their urges and ethos will strengthen the forces of communalism rather than weaken it; it will also subvert democratic and secular ethos. Therefore, communalism has to be understood in relation to the contemporary reality of the multi-national character of the Indian state. The vision of making India into a monolithic entity by evolving a canopy culture and producing a colorless homogeneity and, thereby, denying its various constituents their democratic right, will be at the expense of democracy. Communalism is an outcome of the failure to resolve social problems in a secular and democratic way. The slogan of nationalism in independent India is not a cure for the ills of social inequalities, unemployment, denial of civil liberties, etc.

Further, to view communalism as a product of 'uneven economic and political development of ascriptive groups', or co-existence of pre-capitalist institutions with modern institutions and capitalist path of development' may not be adequate. To analyse communalism as an ideology of the middle class does not appreciate the distinction between the appeal and basis of communalism. Communalism has an appeal amongst the members of the middle class. From this it cannot be inferred that it is the ideology of the middle class.

The danger of such understanding is that the solutions offered are generally confined to propagation of an alternative ideology without questioning the structural basis which provides life-force to the phenomenon of communalism. Therefore, communalism can be seen as one of the instruments of ruling class politics to blur the real contradictions, and it derives its life-force from the conflicts inherent in the contradiction of the specific form of capitalist development and from the reservoir of mistrust and suspicion prevalent among various religious or caste groups. Communalism in this sense is not a direct manifestation of contradictions and is also not a total ideology. In this context, the co-existence of communalism and capitalism will mainly depend on the choices made by the ruling class.

In view of this, the struggle against communalism, no doubt, should identify the structural roots which provide life-force to it, but at the same time the practice of communalism must be fully understood and analysed. Therefore, an analysis of the character of the Indian State as well as political practices will be helpful in counteracting the phenomenon. It is also true that no struggle can be launched in abstraction.

The Indian State, is increasingly getting communalized. But a distinction between Lebanon, which is a communal state and India which proclaims to be a secular state, must be appreciated. The Indian Constitution does not regard society to be organized around religious, caste or together ascriptive group lines. The Constitution guarantees certain rights to all citizens, irrespective of religion, caste, sex, etc. But at the same time, it has some elements of communalism built into it. Further, politics in practice, by and large, uses communal cleavages to win election or to form governments and even to engineer riots. Political parties like the Congress, Janata and Lok Dal have been using communalism in an opportunistic fashion; the left political parties have on occasion compromised with communalism. On the other hand, the Akali Dal, RSS, Bharatiya Janata Party, Muslim League, Shiv Sena and the Jamaat-e-Islami profess communalism as an ideology.

The role of Jamaat-e-Islami, RSS and the Akali Dal has been discussed in detail. It is felt that these organizations are dangerously sectarian and chauvinistic. The Jamaat-e-Islami treats all Muslims other than the Sunnis, with contempt, the RSS mobilizes only a section of people who accept the divine ordination of 'Hindus as the custodians of world peace and harmony'. Secondly, these organizations are anti-democratic. Jamaat-e-Islami believes in the sovereignty of God, the RSS considers the cult of a leader to be supreme; hence both do not believe in the sovereignty of the people. It was felt that these organizations represent communal thinking in its aggravated form.

With regard to the Akali Dal, it has been pointed out that this political party is an off-shoot of the Akali movement of the 1920s. The Akali movement was in its core a religious reform movement to end corruption in places of worship. The Akali Dal, on the other hand, is a political party which has increasingly become communal. It uses and perpetuates the notion of communal monoliths to project sectional interests as those of the whole religious group. The content of its political mobilizations between 1962-1980 has, no doubt, been communal, but the demands it had raised are economic. However, since 1980 with the emergence of multiple social crises and deterioration in the policy, the Akali Dal has begun raising political demands using communalism.

On the other hand, even the left political parties have blundered conceptually and compromised electorally with communalists. Before independence, the left considered communalism to be an ideology of feudal sections, and hence wrongly as a pre-capitalist ideology, which would evaporate with the growth of capitalism. Further, the left has not maintained its separate identity nor has it given the people alternative politics. Instead, it is satisfied with providing alternative policies. After the split in the CPI in 1964 and during the coalition Government days of 1967-69, the left became a partner in the State Governments alongwith patently communal political parties. Despite these

mistakes in conception and practice, the left parties are the only political and ideological force which can lead the struggle to strengthen secularism.

The Congress has used secular rhetoric and communalist appeal in an opportunistic way. The pervasiveness of communalism in society has led to a situation where the secular mobilization is sacrificed and soft options are resorted to by the Congress. In the 1950s even the secular leadership which dominated the Congress party chose 'Muslim-majority' constituencies – Rampur and Gurgaon – for a nationalist like Maulana Abul Kalaam Azad. Conceptual errors in combating may have influenced such decisions during that period. However, in recent times the use of communal symbols and slogans for mobilizing people, the choice of candidate on communal considerations and alliances with communalists have become a common practice among non-communal and secular parties.

Communal politics have found it convenient to use the content of education and media which is imbued with elements of communalism. The communal view of Indian history has been the main ideology of communalism in this country. This is particularly true of Hindu communalism. If you take away the communal interpretation of Indian history, there is hardly anything left with 'Hindu' communalism. Further, it is mentioned that the term 'medieval' for a period of Indian history, was used to describe what was earlier called the Muslim period and a communal concept has been introduced in the periodization of Indian history. A comparison has also been introduced between 'Hindu India' and 'Muslim India' with the implication that 'Hindu India' is inferior in civilization to 'Muslim India'. It is a fact that the history of different religions has its special features. But from this it does not follow that history can be misinterpreted to mean a separate history of a different religious group. The periodization of history as India, Muslim or Sikh is, therefore, unscientific, being a production of communalism; such periodization of history also conceals the triumphs and trials of mankind in its struggle for better life. Therefore, the Sikh, Hindu or Muslim periodization of history is anti-people. In this context arises the importance of improving the curriculum as a pre-condition for improving the text book content.

In regard to the print media, it is pointed out that news is no longer information, but a commodity for sale in the media market. Further, cinema, television and radio, however, as compared to the print media, do not preach blatant communalism, thought they can be held guilty on two counts for

i) not taking a clear-cut stand on communalism and not opposing it squarely; and,

ii) promoting religiosity, fatalism and superstition. This is not communalism, per se, but contributes to the existence and persistence of communalism.

The third difficulty, which is a continuation of the first and the second, is in relation to finding a way out of communalism. The identification of causes for the existence and persistence of any-social phenomenon provides the necessary insight into the ways of seeking a solution. For instance, if one takes religion as a cause of the growth of communalism, the solution has logically to be found in criticising religion.

From this flow two contradictory views on the ways to overcome communalism. Firstly, it is believed that communal groups must tolerate each other and live in a spirit of brotherhood. Secondly, if it becomes unavoidable, members of antagonistic religious groups must be expatriated or eliminated. Widespread sympathy for communalists and communal rioters is one of the consequences of this approach. Fear, suspicion and insecurity are the resultant facts lying at the root of it, will be farcical. This will remain superficial because it does not attack the structural basis of communalism. Therefore, the fight against communalism cannot be fought though curtailment or elimination of religions. Assuming that communal, unscientific, fatalistic and undemocratic ethos has its basis in religion, the solution has to take note of the various intervening variables and mediations. This is necessary because any social phenomenon involves a historical process having several stags in its formation.

It is, therefore, mentioned that the struggle against communalism, if launched as part of the political programme of the working class struggle, will demystify “motives”, “banners” and misplaced targets of conflicts. At the mass level there is need for dissemination of secular theories about the origin of the universe, progression of history and development of society. This will create an environment, which will facilitate the launching of a political and ideological struggle, to transform those conditions which have given birth to communalism.

Pramod Kumar

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE – P.N. Haksar *vii*
FOREWORD – Man Mohan Singh *xii*
PREFACE – Rashpal Malhotra *xviii*
INTRODUCTION – Pramod Kumar *xxiii*

Section 1
COMMUNALISM: CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

COMMUNALISM: A DISTORTED IDEOLOGY 3
Bipan Chandra
PHENOMENOLOGY OF COMMUNALISM 15
Surjit Hans
COMMUNAL NATIONALISM: A FARCE 23
Asghar Ali engineer
COMMUNALISM AND NATION-STATE BUILDING 34
K.Subrahmanyam
COMMUNALISM: MEANING AND PRACTICE 49
Balraj Puri
COMMUNALISM: DEFINITION AND CONCEPTS 61
Pramod Kumar

Section 2
COMMUNALISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM DISCIPLINES

COMMUNALISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES IN INDIA 93
Yogender Singh
COMMUNALISATION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY ON MEDIEVAL INDIA 109
J.S. Grewal
SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLITICS: COMMUNITY - A TREND REPORT 116
Moin Shakir

Section 3
COMMUNALISM IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

COMMUNALISM: THE DRAGON'S TEETH 141
Moonis Raza

GANDHI, NEHRU AND COMMUNALISM 150
Ravinder Kumar
INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND COMMUNALISM 161
Bipan Chandra

Section 4
CAUSATION, CONTENT AND FORMS OF COMMUNALISM

SOCIAL ROOTS OF COMMUNALISM 179
Bipan Chandra
WHY COMMUNALISM? 194
K.F. Rustomji
CAUSES AND APPEAL OF COMMUNALISM 202
Pramod Kumar
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGING SOCIAL TENSIONS 239
G.S. Bhalla
URBAN GROWTH ACCENTUATES COMMUNAL TENSIONS 247
M.N. Buch
STATE, DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND COMMUNALISM 257
Manoranjan Mohanty
POLITICS OF COMMUNALISM 264
Asghar Ali Engineer
COMMUNALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY 286
V.P. Dutt

Section 5
POLITICAL PARTIES AND COMMUNAL POLITICS

THE LEFT AND COMMUNALISM 299
Mohit Sen
COMMUNALISM IN THE AKALI PARTY 316
Harish Puri
JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI AND COMMUNALISM 333
M.S. Agwani
RSS AND GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM 340
D.R. Goyal

Section 6
EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND COMMUNALISM

TEXTBOOK WRITINGS AND ELEMENTS OF COMMUNALISM 353
Arjun Dev

USE OF HISTORY AND GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM 374
Bipan Chandra
MUSLIM DENOMINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNALISM 398
M.S. Agwani
DENOMINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: RELIGIOSITY AND COMMUNALISM 409
Kuldip Kaur

Section 7
MEDIA AND COMMUNALISM

MEDIA AND COMMUNALISM 421
Ram Dhamija
COMMUNALISM AS A COMMODITY IN MEDIA INDUSTRY 434
Subrata Banerjee
PRINT MEDIA AND COMMUNALISM 451
Iqbal Masud
CINEMA, T.V. AND COMMUNALISM 463
Iqbal Masud
PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA AND COMMUNALISM 474
R.K. Mishra

Section 8
COMMUNAL RIOTS IN POST-INDEPENDENT INDIA

COMMUNAL RIOTS IN MAU NATH BHANJAN 485
Pramod Kumar
MEERUT RIOTS: AN ANALYSIS 516
Dildar Khan
FROM SEDITION TO RIOTS 534
Surjit Hans
ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNAL VIOLENCE 547
T.N. Chaturvedi
LAW, POLICING AND COMMUNALISM 563
K.F. Rustomji

Section 9
COMMUNALISM: THE WAY OUT

SECULARISM: SOME OBSERVATIONS 575
Bhupendra Yadav
SECULARISM: CULTURE AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION 580
Mulk Raj Anand

COMMUNALISM IN INDIA: RESEARCHABLE ISSUES AND APPROACHES 588
Iqbal Narain
METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE STUDY OF COMMUNALISM 600
Iqbal Narain

Select Bibliography 613

Index 620

List of Contributors 631

SECTION I

COMMUNALISM: CONCEPTS & DEFINITIONS

COMMUNALISM: A DISTORTED IDEOLOGY

Bipan Chandra

The relationship between communalism as an ideology and objective reality creates a great deal of difficulty in understanding communalism and in analysis it.

In this context the basic question is, are all ideologies the same? That is, do all ideologies have the same degree of truth or untruth in them? In dealing with communal ideology, its content and the fervour with which a large number of people believe in it, can we say that ideology is nothing, the way a person or a group of persons thinks and its relationship to objective reality.

In other words, the basic thinking which is quite dominant in social sciences is that there is no objective basis for any ideology, that it is thinking which makes it so. This means that ideologies such as nationalism, socialism, class struggle, communalism, casteism, all are equally or unequally valid and what is important is how many people subscribe to it. We will deal with this question at greater length, later, but examples can be cited to prove that ideologies do have an objective basis.

Take nationalism, for example. When an Indian said in the nineteen-thirties, 'I am a nationalist and I want the British to go', was his ideology the same ideology, with the same degree of validity, as an Englishman who said, 'I am a nationalist, I want to remain in India', or 'I am an Englishman, I am a nationalist, I think the Russians or the Germans are endangering my empire and therefore, patriotism requires that I should fight the Russians or the Germans for the sake of the Empire?

Is the ideology of class struggle as valid or invalid as the theory of the communal divide? Is the battle between workers and capitalists very similar to that between Hindus and Muslims, or Hindus and Sikhs, or Muslims and Sikhs, and so on?

In the concrete circumstances of our country this means, do Hindus or Muslims or Christians or Sikhs, constitute, in actual reality, as Hindus, as Muslims, as Christians, as Sikhs, separate monolithic social structures or monolithic 'communities' with common interests, common bonds, common outlook? Or does it mean that it makes no difference, whether Hindus constitute a solid social structure with common interests or not? What is important is, do Hindus feel that they constitute a single monolithic social

entity with common interests, common bonds and so on? The same for Muslims, the same for Sikhs. In other words, should the question be asked, say in Punjab today, 'Do Sikhs have common interests, do Hindus have a common interest, or it makes no difference whether this is so or not and what matters is whether Sikhs feel that they have common interests, that they have need for an identity, and Hindus feel that they have common interests and they have need for an identity, and so on.'

Commonality of Secular Interests of Religious Groups: A Misnomer

Communalists certainly talk about common interests. They talk about defending their community and its interests. The question is, do such interests, such identities, such common bonds exist or not in real life? This is a very basic question, because unless one is able to answer this question, one way or the other, it is just not possible to understand communalism and, what perhaps is more important to launch a political ideological struggle against communalism.

This question seems abstract and philosophic, but it is an empirical question. My positive answer to this would be, of course, that no such common interest exists among Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs or Christians, outside their religious identity. This does not mean that communalism does not exist. It does not mean that communal ideology might not engulf large masses of people or the majority of a religious group. But it does mean that the question still remains valid and so is the answer. In the 1946 elections, for example, based upon restricted franchise, 95 per cent of the Muslims in India voted for Muslim League candidates in support of the idea that Muslims constitute a separate nation and should have a separate homeland. That is also an empirical reality. But to me, that still does not validate the question, whether Muslims were a nation or not or did Muslims have a common interest or not. In fact, life was later to show that no such common interest existed. The division between Bangladesh and Western Pakistan showed this. Therefore, whether this ideology grips a few or grips a large number is still a question which has to be validly asked.

There is no such thing as an Indian Muslim in the sense that a Muslim who has social, cultural, economic interests common with other Muslims living in India as against some other Indian called Hindus. Muslims or Hindus or Christians or Sikhs are part of a local society in terms of their culture, politics, social rituals and practices etc. On the other hand, on an all-India scale, they belong to all India social classes, to regional, linguistic, cultural identities. They belong to all-India occupational groups, such as lawyers or government servants or monopoly capitalists, small capitalists or rich farmers and so on. On the other hand, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians as such as are divided among

themselves by common interests. That is, they are divided along class, caste, social status, linguistic and cultural lines and in fact they are also divided so far as the religious part is concerned.

This one can see very clearly among Hindus where hundreds of sects prevail. One can see this among Muslims also as not only Shiah and Sunni, but so many other religious divisions prevail. One can even see this among the Sikhs, who are a very small religious group, and yes we find that an extreme section of Sikhs felt threatened and had to denounce Nirankaris and Shejdharis as non-Sikhs.

In fact, one of the aspects of the social development of every people is that not only class-wise, but in religion also diversity starts prevailing as people start developing culturally and socially. Complexity is an aspect of the higher development of human beings and society. The more they develop, the more complex their lives become and this complexity finds reflection in religion also. This is something which fundamentalists try to reverse. They try to go back to a non-complex understanding and role of religion.

If you go to a village in U.P. near Delhi, you will find that there is no such identity as Hindus and Muslims. The identity is of a Jat, of a Harijan, of a Brahmin. People will tell you this where Brahmins live, this where Harijans live, this is where Jats live, this where Rajputs live and if the Muslims are a minority, they will say this is where Muslims live. Muslims are seen not as a religious group vis-a-vis the Hindus, but as a caste type of group, this is, just as there are Brahmins, there are Muslims also. Even in Punjab villages, I do not know what happens in Amritsar or Gurdaspur or Jalandhar villages, but in the villages of Patiala district, for example, the word 'Sardar' does not mean a Sikh. It means a Jat Sikh. A Harijan is not called a Sardar or a Singh Sahib though he may have the long beard and long hair and goes to the same gurdwara as a Jat does.

Similarly, among Hindus also, it is not the Hindu identity which has traditionally prevailed, or even now prevails, it is entirely the identity of a Brahmin or an Arora or a Bania and so on. This was invariably always the case. Let me quote only one instance.

This is what the Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak wrote to a Commissioner of Delhi Division in 1900 regarding Rohtak:

> The Hindu Jats and Muslim Jats and Hindu Gujars and Muslim Gujars think more of the common ancestors from whom they have descended than the fact that he is a Hindu or the other is a Mohammedan and live in the same village with as much peace and

> good feeling towards one another as if they were members of the same race and religion.

Similarly, Francis Robinson writes regarding Muslims in U.P.:

> The Muslims were more a multiplicity of interests than a community. Hindus are no less divided than Muslims. It should be clear that Muslim government servants and landlords were just a part, though a large part, of the Urdu speaking elite and that their connections with Hindus who belong to the elite were far stronger than their connections with Muslims who did not, such as the butchers of the towns or the bigoted weavers of the villages. Muslims held little in common with each other apart from their religion. Hindus were fundamentally divided even by their faith.

To this I would like to add further that traditionally, in our newspapers, and even in our social science writings, the difference between a communalist and a nationalist or a secular person is defined in a very wrong manner. The tendency usually is to say that a communalist is a person who is narrow-minded, who has a partial view of the reality. He is narrow-minded because he is looking only at the interests of the Sikhs or Hindus or Muslims. His view is partial, because he is looking at things only from the Hindu or Sikh or Muslim point of view, a narrow or limited point of view. Nationalist or secular persons, on the other hand, are declared to be persons who are broad-minded and whose view is total. They look at the issues from a national point of view, of all Indian people, not only from the point of view of Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs.

In my view this difference is wrong. Communalist is not a person who looks at reality from a narrow angle. In my view, a communalist is a person who is looking at the reality from the wrong point of view, because there is no such thing as looking at things from the Sikh interests. There is no such thing as Hindu interests of Muslim interests either. Therefore, it is not true that Gandhi was broad-minded, because he was looking at things from an all-India point of view and Jinnah was narrow-minded, because he was looking at things from the Muslim interests point of view. In my view Jinnah was not looking at things from a Muslim interests point of view, because no such thing as Muslim interests existed.

Communalist, primarily and first of all, is an enemy of the very people he claims to represent. Therefore, it is not only that he is not narrow-minded, but the fact is that he is working against the very people he claims to represent. A communalist is an enemy of the Hindus, if he is a Hindu communalist, and an enemy of the Sikhs if he is a Sikh communalist. This we can see very clearly if one studies communalism as it has developed in our country in the last one hundred years. After all, whom did Muslim communalism harm? It developed

on the theory of protecting Muslim interests from 1880 onwards. Whom did it harm? Above all, Muslims of India, Muslims who remained in India after partition, Muslims of Bangladesh and Muslims of Pakistan. Who are the main victims of Muslim communalism in the Indian subcontinent? Above all the peoples of Pakistan and Bangladesh and also very much the Indian Muslims who suffer from so many disabilities today because of the success of Muslim communalism during the nineteen-forties.

Similarly, who are going to be harmed, or who are being harmed most by the spread of communalism in Punjab? Sikhs and Hindus as a people living in this part of the world. If as a result of the spread of Sikh communalism, Khalistan were to come then one would know how much Sikhs would be harmed anyway. The first victim of Khalistan would be precisely the Sikhs who will not be able to think freely and who will not be able to function as decent human beings. If you have a 'Hindu Rashtra' in this country, the first victim will be Hindu who will be compelled to live in a particular 'Hindu' manner and all the democracy, the liberty, the freedom of thought which characterises our society to a certain extent today or to which in a way it has subscribed for centuries, will be in danger. Who were the main victims of Nazi Fascism? Above all, the German people, not the people of Europe or of even the Soviet Union to the same extent, or even the Jews, to the extent to which the Germans were victims, with the millions dead left behind by the time Hitlerism was over in Germany. But above all, who paid a heavy price for Hitlerism of 1933 to 1945 in terms of the destruction of German culture, German social values, and so on?

In other words, as William Cantwell Smith has put it, communalism involves either conscious deception or unconscious self-deception. The communalist is either bamboozling the people, his followers, or a communalist, being honest, is deluding himself, unconsciously deceiving himself or herself. The communalist is deceiving himself or others because the interest he claims to represent does not exist in real life. The demands he undertakes to fulfil are incapable of being fulfilled in the way he poses them.

This is the reason why even a decent, extremely cultured, civilized person, one of the finest Indians of the twentieth century, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was compelled after 1937 to talk like a Fascist. This was because of the fact that even his followers were capable of understanding that all the demands for which Muslim communalism had fought, from the eighteen-eighties onwards, had been accepted and fulfilled by 1935. Jinnah's fourteen demands of 1928-29, the 1929-30 demands of the Muslim communalists, had all been accepted. Jinnah's demands did not, therefore, mean anything so far as Muslims were concerned; it meant some jobs for some middle class people, a high court judgeship here, a civil surgeonship there or a few more seats in the Assembly

or Parliament or Municipal Committees, but nothing more. Consequently, people were beginning to understand that since no such common interests existed the communalists could not achieve the objective which Jinnah was proclaiming.

The Muslim communalists had certain demands; if these demands were accepted then Muslim interests would be protected and then Muslims would advance. The demand for Pakistan was a demand which by its very definition could not be proved wrong till it was fulfilled. They would not define Pakistan and in any case it was not possible to say that Pakistan would not fulfil the Islamic dream. They talked about protecting Islam, Muslims would be protected and Islam would grow if Pakistan was formed. But how far has Islam grown after 1947? It was a sort of issue which could not be tested in any manner by the people before the formation of Pakistan and which could only be argued about emotionally.

If I may suggest, the same is true of the demand for Khalistan. It is a logical development of the communal politics in Punjab, because after the demand for Punjabi Suba, for jobs and all that had been met, the people were bound to find out that the communalists were incapable of fulfilling the promises that they had made in terms of the Sikhs or Hindus or Muslims and so on. Consequently, the demand had to go to a stage where it could not be proved wrong or right till it was accepted, when it might be too late.

I can illustrate this with another interesting example. Jinnah, whose entire politics was based on the theory that Hindus and Muslims are separate nations, that they can never live together, that Muslims are bound to be dominated by Hindus and vice versa, when Partition came not only did he leave the Muslims of India here (except those few who were forced by the rioters in Punjab and U.P. and other parts to migrate to Pakistan) but on 14 August 1947, as Quide-Azam, he declared in the Constituent Assembly, that in Pakistan there would be no distinction on the basis of religion; there would be no Hindu, no Muslim in Pakistan, they would all be Pakistani citizens and that religious categories would be used only for personal life; it would not enter politics and, therefore, Hindus would be as good Pakistanis as Muslims and the question of domination would not arise. In other words, it was only on that date that he accepted that all that he had been saying was a big life. He knew that you could not build a health state on a communal basis. So he wanted to lay the foundation of a modern nation, a developing nation, a democratic nation. For totally opportunistic reasons, after 1937, he had gone over to a fascist ideology of extreme communalism, but he still thought basically in his previous ways. Even he could not reverse the logic of the situation. Therefore, Pakistan did not develop the way he wanted it to develop after 14 August.

Let us take another instance, the former Chief Minister of Punjab, S. Surjit Singh Barnala believes that 'Hindus and Sikhs are brethren; we are a single family'. His followers are not willing to believe it. They had been for decades fed by communalists, including himself, on the ideology that Sikhism is in danger in Punjab and in India, especially during the years 1981 to 1984; the Sikhs are being oppressed, because there is a Hindu majority at the Centre. People are not willing to believe, because somebody becomes Chief Minister suddenly all this disappears into thin air. In other words, it is clear that the communalist, in power, is not capable of fulfilling the very communal promises. This is not the case in India alone and Pakistan either. Therefore, the concept of true and false consciousness plays a crucial role in our understanding of communalism.

Communal Ideology is a False Reflection of Social Reality

There is a communal ideology and there is the counter ideological notion that I have presented as, what I believe to be the secular point of view. Crucial to this is, how is the debate between these two points of view going to be decided? It cannot be decided on the basis of voting, though the future might actually be decided on some such basis. In real life it may look as if it is to be decided on the basis of who can get more people behind them to make more sacrifices. But if rationality counts in life, if argument counts in life, if political and ideological activity and education count in life, then what is crucial is the question of true and false consciousness in this respect, as to which of the two points of view is a true reflection of objective reality and which is a false reflection. All objective reality, all that is happening outside our subjective reality, all that is happening outside our subjective understanding, our intentions, our thinking, is grasped by human beings through the activity of their minds of brains. It is grasped through cognition through the human minds. That is where the problem arises. Not all cognition, not all human thought, not all ideology are equally valid cognition or understanding or reflection of social reality.

In this respect I might point out that there are two basic schools. There is a major school which denies the possibility of truth as a correspondence of propositions to reality. There is a school of thought which denies that it is possible to find out which proposition is more true, which proposition reflects reality more truthfully than the other. They say it is not possible. They say that there is only an illusion of truth, that there cannot be any distinction between the true and the false, because all truth, all thinking, all cognition, all ideology, all human thought is the activity of the human mind. True. It is through the mind that we are able to understand the objective reality. Therefore, I am not presenting the point of view of those who say there is no reality at all, there is,

therefore, only the human mind. That is an extreme position which is known as the extreme realistic position. I am not going to discuss that.

But there is the other view which accepts objective reality, but which says that because all objective reality is grasped through the human mind, therefore, it is not possible to study objective reality, one can only study the human mind and all thought and activity of the human mind. Therefore, there can be no such thing as true and false consciousness. They have very sharply criticised, apart from other reasons which I will not discuss, the notion of false consciousness of reality. I have no objection, if somebody wants to remove the words false consciousness because the word false consciousness have many other philosophical problems. Some people have been debating it. When Marx say 'false consciousness' what does he mean? One view is that he regards all thoughts as false, all ideologies as false consciousness; later Marxists have regarded Marxism as true consciousness and other thoughts as false consciousness. The third view says if all ideology is false consciousness, then Marxism is also false consciousness. And so on. I am not debating that. Change this word. Adopt any other word. But the basic question is, can we and can our thought, grasp reality and, therefore, be more true and less true or not more true and not less true. In other words, are all thoughts of the same type, equally untrue, equally false, or are there degrees of truth and falsehood in the realm of human understanding of objective social phenomena?

In our circumstances this means asking the question: Is there any truth in the communal point of view? Is the secular approach as valid or invalid as the communal approach? Some people say that there can be no smoke unless there is fire. If there is a widespread ideology it must be having some objective truth – that is one view. The other very similar view is that it is impossible to find out which view is right or wrong, and, therefore, all we can say of Punjab is, to decide how many people believe in the Sikh communal point of view, how many believe in the Hindu communal point of view and then find out is it possible to somehow reconcile them in the national interest and manage the show somehow or other for five years, ten years or more, or in other words, the only way to deal with the situation is to recognise the prevalence of the communal view and accommodate it in some sort of an empirical formula, or is it that one can say that this particular point of view if false and that this particular point of view if more true?

In social science theory the word nationalism is used very indiscriminately, especially because it originally arose in Western Europe. What is nationalism? A Marxist says that nationalism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie. This is how it developed in Britain and France. If one is not a Marxist, one says that the British are nationalists, the Americans are nationalists, the Indians are nationalists, the Chinese are nationalists, all of them belong to the same

breed. Then either support this nationalism or say all nationalism is bad, it spreads hatred among human beings and therefore, one should oppose all nationalism and move towards some sort of world view of world government of whatever one may have.

The other view would ask the question, when discussing nationalism is it reflecting correctly some aspects of social reality? Then one would make a concrete analysis of the social situation. When nationalism developed in France or in Italy or in Germany or in Britain, in the 18th century and the 19th century one would ask the question, was nationalism reflecting true interests? Was there such a thing as national interest which was being project? When the bourgeoisie in these countries took up the question vis-a-vis feudalism, or artificial division, say, of Germany, or division of Italy and occupation of Northern Italy by Austria, or the Polish people's struggle against German, Austrian and Russian occupation, then was it reflecting some aspects of reality? I would say, yes, nationalism did reflect the fact correctly that Germany could not develop without being unified, as it was culturally one unit, politically one unit and it was economically becoming one unit, it had to function as a unit, and therefore, those who were representing nationalism is Germany were on solid reality. Therefore, they were reflecting the truth of their times, though there might have been all sorts of other accretions.

It is for this reason that, for example, Marx justified Bismarck's war against France in 1870. But as you know German troops marched into France. The war was justified, because France was coming in the way of German unification with all sorts of slogans, democracy and what not. But as soon as German troops marched into France, the question was no longer the unification of Germany, but of the occupation of France and Marx turned against the German war machine. In other words, his analysis was based on the notion, is nationalism of Germany representing the reality or not? As nationalism developed in Western Europe, the ideology of imperialism tried to convince the people of their own countries that the empire was a unifying factor. I have pointed out at some place that the British workers who never saw the sun in their life, working for long hours during the day time, were told that the Sun never sets on the British Empire and they should feel happy about it. In such situations, I see nationalism as false consciousness, false consciousness of the objective reality.

Then let us take the colonial reality. The colonial revolution, against colonialism, was also fought under the slogan of nationalism all over the world. Was this nationalism equally invalid as the contemporary nationalism of Britain, of France and, above all, the nationalism of Germany and Italy and Japan of the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties? Or, did it reflect a reality of the common interests of the people of China or of the people of

India or of the people of Mozambique or of the people of Algeria or the people of Egypt? Did it represent their common interests against colonial authority, uniting all sections of society when faced with a foreign invader, all sections including the big landlords in China from 1937 onwards, or in India at least an overwhelming mass of the people irrespective of their class, caste and religion and language? If it did not, if there was no objective reality of colonialism and colonial domination and colonial exploitation which was engulfing all sections of the people, then it was a false ideology. On the other hand, if there was such a colonial reality, then it reflected the truth of a social situation. It was a valid or true consciousness of reality.

In other words, when examining ideologies such as communalism or in fact any ideology, in our view the question must be asked, what is its relationship to the objective situation or objective reality? When we discuss racialism, anti-semitism, communalism, man-woman relationship, four major ideologies of the modern period, we must ask the question are they false or true? We cannot rest content only with the question, how many people believe in it? In Western societies, in the USA, for example, racialism was believed in till recent years by an overwhelming majority of the white people, including the working class. Anti-semitism was a progressive phenomenon in the Western world for centuries. The notion that man is superior to women is a belief which has been held virtually from the dawn of humanity till this day and tomorrow by people, without having any objective basis in reality at all, with some such false notion as men are physically stronger or some such thing.

It other words, there can be no complete relativism when one discusses ideologies, especially ideologies such as communalism. In our understanding of communalism, for example, historically or even politically, this point of view finds sometimes strange reflections, in more recent years even in some radical scholars who say, if the peasants are mobilized against landlords it makes no difference behind which ideology they are mobilized. The question is, are they mobilized against their exploiters? I say this because I know some of my young friends in Punjab. I do not know whether they say it even now – till two, three years back, used to say that communalism is bad, but it is a reflection of the peasantry's struggle against the big bourgeoisie.

I think there is a very big difference, whether this ideological reflex of the struggle between the rich peasant and the big bourgeoisie funds reflection in a class struggle ideology or in the false consciousness ideology of communalism. Because, sooner or later the fact and the meaning would become clear. In more traditional political science this same view of relativism of ideology found reflection in the early writings of Rajni Kothari – I do not know that he thinks now, though some signs of it are there even now – where he wrote that it makes no difference whether the people are mobilized for voting along class

lines or linguistic lines or caste lines or communal lines, so long as people participate in the political process and these ideologies can be made to make the system function in a balanced way; so long as there is functionalism in the system, it makes no difference which ideology people vote with and under which ideology people are mobilized; that communal mobilization is as valid or invalid as linguistic mobilization or class mobilization. As I said, I am not sure whether he would stick to this point of view now.

In our view, certain ideas, ideologies, analyses are objectively more true or valid than others to the extent that they reflect the objective reality more truly, that they are more deeply and truly rooted in the social reality of the times. The only argument against this view, in my opinion, can be in violation to claims of absolute truth. There I would go along with Lenin, that there is truth, to deny that is to go in for utter subjectivism; but what is true is that human beings do not reach absolute truth, they are constantly moving towards truth; this is the whole human endeavour. At one level you might say that this is the greatest endeavour of the human race, that is, moving towards truth, though one hopes that one will never arrive at the full truth, because then nothing might be left for the coming generations after that.

In other words, not all politics or political understandings are on par. The differences between these are not arbitrary. They are not mere questions of psychology. They are not mere questions of belief systems. They are not mere questions of personal preference. What is the objective truth, is the basic question to be asked? The truth of an ideology or politics is not to be established by its effectivity or degree of prevalence. This to me is a very important and basic aspect. When for example, one discusses the Punjab problem, the first question I would like to ask is, what is the objective reality? In Punjab, when the Sikh communalists say that they are threatened, that their religion is in danger, that they are facing physical liquidation – I am quoting from the speeches of 1982, 1983 not of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, but of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Surjit Singh Barnala – then one must ask the question, what is the objective truth? Is that so or not? When the Hindus of Punjab say ‘we must mobilize and attach Sikhs’, then one must ask the question first, what is the nature of the threat? If so, what is the nature of the threat? If this is the threat then what is the nature of the remedy? Will the remedy achieve the result that is sought to be achieved? Similarly, when one discusses the Sikh communal question, one must first ask the question, what is the degree of threat and what is the objective reality of the danger to the Sikhs? If there is any objective truth and if there is some threat, how is that threat to be met? Are the remedies that the communalists suggesting capable of meeting the threat or not?

Therefore, the question of conformation to reality – how far do ideology analysis, the remedy, politics, conform to the objective situation? This is the first and the main question that should be asked. It is on the basis of an answer to this question that any struggle against communalism has to be then conducted. The question is not only whether there is truth in the complaint, but also in the nature of remedies suggested. My bias is that there is no degree of correspondence between reality and communalism. Sikh communal ideology in recent years, after 1966, has been based upon hundred per cent, in my view, lies. The same is the case with the Hindu communal ideology in Punjab since 1900.

There are, however, lower castes in our society who are oppressed and to a certain extent Muslims, suffer from disabilities in various ways. Disabilities might not be what the Muslim communalists say they are. For example, Islam is not in danger, but the Muslims do suffer from disabilities. Therefore, there is a certain objective truth in their complaint. But the relevant question is, is casteism the answer, is Muslim communalism the answer? Do they analyse or represent the problem correctly? What the disabilities? Does ideology provide an understanding of these disabilities? Does their political programme provide an answer to these disabilities? Do they have a viable programme or alternative as to how to overcome these disabilities? The falsehood of communalism in the case of Muslim communalism and in the case of most of the lower caste movements in the country does not lie in the fact that they do have a correct basis in reality because they do suffer from oppression, especially the lower castes, but their analyses, their politics, their answers, sometimes conservative, sometimes very radical, are false answer. That is where the falsehood lies.

Of course, all politics have social roots. I have so far argued that communalism reflects not the objective reality truly or more truly that secularism: in other words, it does not reflect the social reality correctly, but this does not mean that communalism has no social roots. It does have social roots. But it does not reflect the social reality correctly.

PHENOMENOLOGY OF COMMUNALISM

Surjit Hans

Phenomenology is a careful description of phenomena in all areas of experience. As a philosophical doctrine, it is superficial on principle. A superficial understanding of communalism in the sense of a variegated texture should not only be welcome but also cannot be exhausted. The ontology or the inner reality of a phenomenon should no doubt be gone into. The two should be complementarily inclusive. There is no reality without appearance, and no appearance without reality.

India is a backward country. Emotion plays a big role in our politics (M.N. Roy 1052). That is why the Bihar Governor speaks of the growing jealousies of the two communities (1229). The jump from emotion to culture is easily simple. Mohd. Iqbal states the crux of our politics with prophetic brevity: 'The economic problem is not the only (sic) in the country. From the Muslim point of view, the cultural problem is of much greater consequence. At any rate it is not less important than the economic problem.... No political device however subtle can make the Indian Muslim lose sight of his cultural identity' (261).

Some of the institutions, introduced into our body politic under Western impact, were the necessary conditions for the rise of communalism. According to Sikander Hyat Khan 'those, who, on one pretext or another, indulge in pouring vials of communal poison through the press or from the platform, into the minds of unsuspecting and unsophisticated public' (341) are responsible for the trouble. There are 'offensive' remarks and statements directed at the other communities. Nehru certainly did not know fully what was being stirred by the press, 'fortunately I seldom have time to see the Urdu or Hindi press and cannot follow its outbursts. As for the so-called nationalist press in English... In any even please remember that the Congress does not control any such single newspaper', Nehru to Mohd. Ismail Khan, (1304).

The establishment of the rule of law made one take a chance to disturb the established patterns of domination. Master Tara Singh complained to Sikander Hyat about the Kot Bhai Than Singh affair. 'One, Sardar Mohd. Nawaz has been intimidating and harassing the Hindus and Sikh... His tenants twice assaulted the Sikh in the Gurdwara'. The Sardar tried to save them from the clutches of law. 'You made a public speech in which you fixed the responsibility for giving provocation on the Sikhs because they had the audacity to hold a religious *Diwan* without the consent of aggressive Muslims' (951). No moral judgment is

intended. The Sikhs were exercising their right; the Muslims were insisting on respect for tradition.

Communal tension may be seen as a consequence of the break-up of the established pattern of domination, for which no justification is advanced. It may also be added that the newer Western institutions were disturbing the established order. Mohd. Iqbal wrote to Jinnah hinting at the same thing, 'In North West India alone at least three riots during the last three months.... at least four cases of vilification of the prophet by Hindus and Sikhs. In each of these four cases, the vilifier has been murdered. Cases of the burning of the Koran in Sind....The real cause of these events is neither religious nor economic. It is purely political, i.e., the desire of the Sikhs and Hindus to intimidate Muslims even in the Muslim majority provinces' (664-5).

A state, built on demographic majority, can equally disturb the equilibrium. A representation to the A.I.C.C. made out that 'left along, the minority Hindus can fight the Muslims: The Muslims are neither bold nor organized. Only the government support has stiffened their neck' (1004). The Punjab Governor related communal order or disorder to the constitutional aspect of the state – 'there is still some misunderstanding regarding the practical working of the new constitution, and a certain amount of misapprehension regarding its effect on law and order situation, especially from the communal point of view' (988). All the contemporary observers were struck by the fact that there was no communalism in the autocratic princely states and made out that the Britishers were responsible for it because it was confined to British India. In fact, the British institutions of the 'rule of law' and the 'representative' state were to be blamed, but which the Indians would not forego.

The traditional appeal to emotion, which finds its life-and-death expression in culture and religion, was evoked to secure the requirements of the newer electoral institutions. The Secretary of State submitted to the Cabinet – 'in the midst of political ferment, communal trouble has unfortunately been more in evidence in many parts of India' (448-9). The U.P. Governor wrote to the Viceroy that 'with the approaching elections the riots are appearing in many places' (19). One Pir Badhash was contesting the election on the promise that he would secure for the Mohammedans 'Gorkhatri', a large building in the centre of Peshawar City (32). Among the Muslims in the rural areas (of Assam) the Kuran is still a good platform (45), the Governor wrote the Viceroy. 'The Raja of Puri, who is superintendent of the Jagannath Temple, supplied candidates with *Mahaprasad*, the food made holy by presentation to Jagannath. The idea was that the electors might be induced to swear upon it that they would vote straight' (82). 'Efforts were made to arouse religious enthusiasm by the aid of Mullahs against the Congress Party in favour of Nawab Sir Abdul Qauyum' (168). Regarding the bloc of population Sind,

Punjab, NWFP and Baluchistan Gen. Wigram predicted that 'comprising as it will be the dynamic and bigoted element of Muslims, it will take a leading part and will exert considerable (sic)' (159), (influence) on future politics. Yolked to representative institution, 'bigotry' becomes dynamic.

Communalism has been the basic category of politics, sometimes bemoaned, and more often bargained with. The golden hearted Nehru had rusty logic. 'The ties that bind people are common economic interests, and, in the case of a subject country especially, a common national interest. Religious questions may arise and religious conflicts may take place, and they should be faced and settled. But the right way to deal with them is to limit their sphere of action and influence and to prevent them from encroaching on politics and economics. To encourage a communal consideration of political and economic problems is to encourage reaction and go back to the Middle ages. This is an impossible attempt, for it ignores realities' (25).

Nobody can prevent a man from following the wrong way of expanding the sphere of action and influence of religion to encroach on politics and economics. Declaring such an attempt 'impossible' is neither an argument nor politically countering a communal opponent. Sikander Hyat's statement reads that 'each one of us (Cabinet) is pledged to watch vigilantly and to protect scrupulously the legitimate interests of all communities equally with those of his own. We are constrained to warn an unsuspecting public against the insidious and unscrupulous attempts by interested persons ... to mislead them under the pretext of a safeguarding the interests of their respective communities. It is time that all patriotic Punjabis took concerted action to expose these pseudo-leaders and to save to the province from the consequences of their dubious tactics' (341).

Apart from the fact that the Cabinet must have been composed only of Daniels, it is ironical that safeguarding the legitimate interests of a community is not only a process of legitimation of power, but also a means of its subversion because of the push and pull of community and legitimate interests. Nehru knew the nature of these legitimate interests: 'A few state jobs, a few seats in legislature. How does this effect the hunger of the millions or the unemployment of vast numbers' (426)? This is just one horn of the dilemma, presented by Iqbal. The very unemployed and hungry millions may 'identify' with a few state jobs and seats in the legislature. Addressing the Convention of Congress Legislators, Nehru let his righteous indignation get the better of his sense of reality. He referred rhetorically to the landlords and communalists. 'Where are they now, these pillars of imperialism in India and exploiters of the Indian people? Sunk almost without trace, overwhelmed by the sea of Indian humanity, swept away by the big broom of the masses'.

The basic category of our political approach was also the inner mechanism of national politics: 'We have too long thought in terms of pacts and compromises between communal leaders and neglected the people behind them. That is a discredited policy and I trust that we shall not revert to it. As soon as we leave the top fringe which is continually talking of percentages and state jobs, and reach the masses, we come up against these problems' of economic groups, poverty, unemployment and national independence (Nehru to Convention, 252), 'I find that even Congressmen sometimes fail to appreciate this and talk in terms of pacts and compromises with Muslim or other religious groups' (Nehru 424).

The tactics of politics cannot be changed overnight. During the general election in U.P. there was not much conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League. It was the desire of both parties to avoid a conflict as much as possible and to accommodate each other. In the early stages of the election campaign a number of Muslims, who were more or less Congressmen, were doubtful if they would stand on behalf of the Congress or the League' (Nehru 763). There was no kind of arrangement between the U.P. Congress and the League, but a convention developed .... During my tours where there was no Congress Muslim candidate, I usually supported the League candidate, if he was not an obvious reactionary' (Nehru), 764). Imagine Nehru canvassing for Muslim League candidate.

This is the epitome of 20th century politics, leaving aside the 'separate electorate' of Minto-Morley, we have the Lucknow Pact (1916), C.R. Das Pact (1923), the nationalist support to the *Khilafat* (1919), and the Akali agitation (1925). The conditions for the League MLAs to join the Congress Legislators are interesting. 'All the Muslim League MLAs to become full members of the Congress Party (but there was this, they were not specially asked to take the Congress pledge). But we did not ask them to severe all connections with the parent Muslim League' (Nehru to Rajendra Prasad, 767). If this was the Congress attitude to communal approaches, the opponents of the Congress could think only communally. The U.P. (interim) cabinet, headed by Chhatari, discussed in their party organization whether there should be a non-communal party or not. 'Recent developments have emphasized the fact that the Muslims intend to stand together as a community against the Congress, acting as a community and not as individuals. Chhatari made it quite clear that it was impossible for the Muslims to merge themselves in a non-communal party'. There were discussions about the possibility of organizing non-Congress Hindus also on communal lines. 'Some of the ministers maintained that this could be done by adopting as aggressively Hindu policy, e.g., stopping cow slaughter' (518).

Politics has a catchment area of 'emotion' often bursting into the open. The Bengal governor had this say on the coalition ministry of Fazlul Haq: 'The only unifying force is the fear of general Muslim indignation against anyone who could be publically held up as responsible for breaking up 'Muslim Unity'; 'that will not prevent individual members from yielding in private to personal or pecuniary considerations if they feel they can do so with impunity' (214). Fazlul Haq confirmed the reading of the situation; 'to aggravate the situation, Mr. Shamsuddin is also out to exploit communal feelings amongst Muslims in order to mobilize public opinion against our ministry' (307). 'The ministers who are ostensibly leading the coalition party, finding that the majority of the coalition group are Mussalmans are utilizing the old weapon of communal way to keep them united' (Representation & AICC, 1009). We have already come across a similar statement by the Punjab Premier.

In such an emotional background, figures were invested with symbolic value. The Bengal Governor impressed upon Fazlul Haq that six to three ratio is based on false premises. The proper ratio would be five Muslims to four Hindus. Fazlul Haq saw the point, but found it difficult to satisfy his own community, and meet the commitments on which the coalition was based (215). The U.P. Governor wrote of the interim ministry: 'the communal composition is three Muslims and four Hindus. Under normal circumstances it had been assumed that the Cabinet would consist of two Muslims and Four Hindus; but in view of the nature of support to this ministry the addition of another Muslim was inevitable' (348). The Governor of Sind on the dilemma faced by Shri Ghulam Hussain, his Premier: 'I don't think much of his Hindu nominee, nor does he; but he is the main who Hindus want (262). 'The Sikhs have been urging their claim for one and it could be met by putting in Sant Singh of Bareilly, but then the labour representation would be shut out' (Pant to Nehru on U.P. Cabinet formation 756). Dr. Khan Sahib was pressed to nominate a Hindu, as no member of the community had yet been given this opportunity of representing this province at the Centre. If he accepted this request he would be alienated some of his Muslim followers; if he ignores it he might anger his Hindu protagonists' (461-62).

The alternative to collaborationist communal nationalism was a violent revolution, involving the workers and masses to make them the 'broom of history'. Some of the wo(men) of insight realized the immorality of 'choice' between communal slaughter and class warfare. 'In Cawnpore, where the strike situation had been improving serious danger of communal class suddenly arose from the murder of a loyal Muslim mill overseer' Secretary of State to Cabinet (1288), 'Congress would be in no hurry to have an open breach with the British government, that their aim was first to get control in the provinces and complete domination over minorities, especially the

Muslims, and when that happened, to drive the British out. If they succeed in this, they would have the minorities at their mercy. In the Muslim view this policy of Congress must result in civil war. I give this appreciation not as my own, but that of Muslims as interpreted by Sikander. According to this view and here I agree that the Punjab and to a less extent Bengal must be the bulwarks against Congress domination' (Emerson to Linlithgow, 1059).

The Punjab governor wrote of the consequences of the Muslim League declaration of war against the Congress at the Lucknow session. (2) 'It will put a brake on their activities. Their policy is likely to be less extreme in regard to many matters than appeared likely a few weeks ago. (3) If it is, in fact, the aim of the Congress to work for the mass revolution in a few years then their difficulties will be greatly increased. (5) It will promote separatist tendencies in between provinces. (6) It will greatly aggravate the communal situation. (7) It may ultimately lead to an agreement between Congress and Muslims' (1061-62).

The Congress opposed the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bill, with disastrous consequences, or alienating the sympathies of the Muslim peasantry in the interest of Hindu intermediaries. The representation to AICC reads, 'Already the atmosphere is sufficiently communally poisoned to make the Muslim Congress workers' position extremely difficult... Bengal Congress uptill now had not been able to inspire confidence in the poorer classes. We entreat you to firmly tackle the Bengal situation and make the Bengal Congress a mass organization and not a political organization in the hands of communalist leaders' (1009, 1010). Given the right wing of the Congress, the choice between violent revolution and communal carnage was already prejudiced.

Communal trouble reached its climax on the eve of power, as if it were a back to the wall resistance to stem the change in the power equilibrium. We have already come across the prospect of 'driving the British out' to equated to 'civil war' (1059). Khaliq-uz-Zaman wrote to Nehru: 'So long as the Congress stoutly refused to enter the legislatures, or consider the possibility of acceptance of offices, there was neither the desire nor the necessary impetus to the League to offer any organized opposition to the Congress activities, but in the present programme of the Congress it is felt that there is a possibility of the Congress accepting offices and becoming itself the government of the province for all practical purposes (697-98). The Punjab Governor echoes that 'Congress arrogance is increasing the apprehensions among Muslims of Hindu domination, and communal feeling will soon reach a dangerous level (559). Jinnah declared in his presidential address: 'On the very threshold of what little power and responsibility is given, the majority community have clearly shown their hand that Hindustan is for the Hindus' (1033-34). 'Despite the implicit violence in an established pattern of domination any disturbing of the

pattern leads to overt violence. Iqbal wrote to Jinnah: 'We are actually living in a state of civil war which but for the police and military would become universal in no time' (664). He was perceptive enough to see civil war in riots.

Given the emotion in the catchment area of social conflict, i.e., the psychology behind politics, trivial incidents get blown into communal trouble. 'Communal disturbance and tension in Madras City started with a trivial incident' (539). 'There was another unfortunate outbreak of communal rioting in Bombay City. On this occasion the cause was so completely trivial. Ali Bahadur Khan may have something to do with stirring up these riots. He got himself elected as one of the Muhammedan MLAs from Bombay City in March, last (Brabourne to Linlithgow (623). This is the stuff of politics.

Communal politics is less to benefit one's own community but more to offend the rival community. 'Sir Abdul Qauyum, a year or two ago, as Education Minister (restricted) the teaching of Hindi and Gurumukhi script' (Governor's Fortnightly Report, 643). Today Haryana is repeating the story with regard to the teaching of Panjabi.

Communal politics is not over zealous in cherishing the life and property of the co-religionists scattered in places away from these demographic strongholds. It beats one's imagination to find how callous Iqbal could be. 'Muslims of North West India and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to self-determination. Personally I think that the Muslim of North West India and Bengal ought, at present to ignore the Muslim minority province.... it will, therefore, be better to hold the coming session of the League in the Punjab' (Iqbal to Jinnah, 666). Callousness is probably a professional hazard of the politician.

The mechanics of communal appeal in politics is interesting. A communal leader fights the enemy less but appeals to his co-religionists more. The dissensions in the community are unnaturally held to be the work of the enemy. 'This suspicion is further confirmed by your efforts to buy all those Sikh leaders who are prepared to sell their community for petty favours. You may persecute us but, you will never succeed in crushing the Sikh spirit and demoralising the Sikh community' (Master Tara Singh to Sikander Hyat, 952).

It is a big help to a corrupt officer to trumpet his communal loyalties. A Governor wrote: 'they (ministry) are opposed to taking any drastic action against the Collector, who is a Muhammedan, for fear of offending Muhammedan opinion' (1103).

The belief of the member of the French National Assembly that the goings on in the Assembly affected life, outside in the country was characterized by Marx as 'parliamentary cretinism'. Our Parliamentary cretinism consists in the

believed that mere, empty elections are not a recipe of disaster. 'We go to election of course in the hope of winning a seat but I hope you will remember that we aim higher. Winning seats does not carry us far. We are out to develop the people politically and to organize them for the fight for freedom. Elections give us the opportunity for this and so we welcome them. An election run on personal issues or other side issues are of no use whatever; indeed it injures our cause' (Nehru to Rajendra Prasad, 765). Communal harmony could be a casualty of institutionalized election. Governor Emerson replied to the suggestion of dismissal of the ministry and appeal to the electorate: 'This formula... conceals a dangerous fallacy; and if rigidly applied, might conceivably result in relegating the minorities to a position of political shudras and a state of perpetual serfdom – a result which I am sure Mahatma Gandhi does not intend or wish to produce' (563).

* *All references are from Towards Freedom 1937-47 Vol.1, Experiment with Provincial Autonomy, ed. P.N. Chopra, ICHR, New Delhi, 1985.*

COMMUNAL NATIONALISM: A FARCE

Asghar Ali Engineer

Most of us know that communalism is a modern political phenomenon – not a religious phenomenon. This is to be underlined. Professional Bipan Chandra has elaborated this aspect, but the need is to emphasize and reiterate it, because this is the most fundamental aspect of communalism. Most of the people, and sometimes even learned scholars, make the mistake of thinking communalism as a religious phenomenon. Religion is only an instrumental cause. Politics is the fundamental cause, or even socio-economic and political factors are the fundamental causes. The difference between fundamental and instrumental causes must be understood.

In this connection, we must distinguish between religious consciousness and communal consciousness. These are two very different things. It is not that one who had religious consciousness will have communal consciousness, or vice versa. There are various shades of it in all of us, but on a conceptual plane, it is very necessary to distinguish between religious consciousness and communal consciousness.

Religion Consciousness and Communal Consciousness are not Synonymous

In the medieval period, the predominant consciousness was religious consciousness, not communal consciousness. Communal consciousness is a modern phenomenon which began with the introduction of British rule in this country. But in the medieval period, before the introduction of British rule in this country, the predominant form of consciousness was religious consciousness.

In this connection, we should also bear in mind the distinguishing features of the medieval period, human consciousness, where the concept of loyalty – loyalty to the king, masters, rulers – was one of the most fundamental concepts. You know the very famous phrase in Hindi – *Maine namak khaya hai uska* – until yesterday we were very often used to say it – many people still use it – but it is getting slightly outmoded. But in those days loyalty was a very important element of one's consciousness. Today, as opposed to that, human rights and dignity, individual rights and dignity, are more important. Loyalty does play its role within certain organizational structures, but as far as modern political processes are concerned, the emphasis is on rights, and this does

make a lot of difference. All this has a bearing on the absence of communalism in the feudal and medieval era.

During the medieval age the emphasis was on fate and destiny. The most common form of thinking was, “This is my destiny”, “This fate has been bestowed upon me”. Not that these concepts are not functional, the way they used to be in the medieval age. As opposed to this, in the modern age the emphasis is on efforts and intellect.

We have also to understand that in the medieval age we used to theologize and now we theorize. We should also distinguish between theologizing and theorizing. In theorizing it is rational thinking and in theology it is revelation which is central. These differences in consciousness must be understood while analysing modern political processes.

During the nineteenth century, with the introduction of British rule, structural changes took place in our socio-political system. Not that the capitalist system became predominant with the introduction of British rule: it was a slow transformation. There have been theorists who ascribe communalism to the colonial form of economy, because full capitalist development is not allowed by colonial masters and slow development results in fighting for crumbs and that gives birth to communalism. However, it is gross simplification to attribute communalism to colonialism or to one single cause. Of course, the colonial economy did play a very vital role in promoting communalism and in giving birth to communalism, but to maintain that it is the only cause would be rather an over simplification. We have to take various other factors into account.

There are also instances where religious consciousness could not be transformed into communal consciousness because of personal integrity and personal conviction.

Let us take Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani who belonged to Jamiat-ul-Ulema. He was a very respected theologian. Nehru and others had great respect for him. He was an *alim*, a divine personality, and his main form of consciousness was religious because he was an eminent theologian who had a deep faith in his religion which happened to the Islam. Until the country was partitioned, he not only remained loyal to the Congress ideology – or rather, nationalist ideology – and to the concepts of composite nationalism, but he also resisted the demand to divide the country. His consciousness was not transformed into communal consciousness, so such so that the Muslim League ‘goondas’ attacked him several times. For instance, in 1945, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani was touring India to plead for composite nationalism and for opposing the idea of partition. Near Moradabad railway station Muslim League ‘goondas’ threw *Keechar* (marshy water) on him. Inspite of all this,

Maulana Madani remained very steadfast, and never budged from the idea of composite nationalism.

Even a person like Iqbal, the eminent Urdu poet, entered into a debate on nationalism with Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani. That has been published a few decades ago in Urdu – *Qaumiat ka Sawal*. The Maulana in the mid-thirties had made a speed outside the Jama Masjid in Delhi, in which he emphasized the concept of nationalism, and said that we must distinguish between Qaum and is a much disputed word. In Urdu, the modern meaning of the word Qaum in nation. Millat is a religious term, i.e. community of Muslims. In other words, Millat is international community of Muslims; but we should, at the same time, not forget that we belong to the Indian Qaum. He said, "If I go to England, or to any other country, and somebody asks me "what is your nationality". I would say, "I am an Indian". So you must distinguish between Qaum and Millat. He said that being proud of our Qaum, i.e. our nation, does not necessarily mean that we are degrading the concept of Millat. He said, 'I am equally proud of being an Indian and I am equally proud of belonging to *Millat-e-Islamia*, the international Muslim community'. Some Urdu papers, as usual, distorted it, and they published in bold headlines that Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani attached Islam and the Islamic concept of Millat. Perhaps, Iqbal read what appeared in the newspapers and wrote a very strong letter to the Maulana, in which he said, 'I am surprised that a theologian of your stature cannot understand what harm the concept of national can do to humanity, and you are de-emphasising the internationalism of Islam'.

In his reply to Iqbal, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani quoted a number of verses from the Holy Quran and said that the Quran has also used Qaum in a geographical sense, not in a religious sense. The Quran even goes on to say that *Kafirs* and Muslims belong to the same territory. Qaum is a territorial concept. Let us not forget this *Kafirs* do not come into existence after the birth of Islam. In the Quran Kafir is used for those who opposed the previous Prophets – those who opposed Abraham – we think that only those who are not Muslims in the technical sense are all *Kafirs*. It is not like that. In the Qura, *Kafir* is one who opposed any Prophet. Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani quoted verses in which those Prophets addressed their opponents as 'fellow-nationalists'. The word 'nation' does not exist in the Quran, but Qaum does. So, he said that even *Allah* is not opposed to territorial unity and territorial aspect of the Quran.

Then he went on to cite the example of the Prophet himself. He said that when the Prophet went to Medina – when he migrated from Mecca to Medina – there were very few Muslims. It was in course of time that the Arabs went on embracing Islam, but when the prophet went to Medina, there were hardly a few Muslims – those who migrated from Mecca with him and some of those

who had been converted in Medina. So, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani said that the Prophet entered into a pact with the people of Medina, who belonged to various religious groups and various tribal units. There were four categories: Jews, Christians, Pagans and Muslims.

The Prophet drew up a pact between all these communities, because there was a common link, and that was a territorial link. They all belonged to one territory and that is why the Prophet entered into a *moahida*, a pact, and gave equal rights to all. No superior rights were assigned to Muslims in that pact. All were given equal rights, and it was stipulated in that pact that if any dispute arose within a particular religious' community, then that would be solved, not according to Islamic principles, but according to the principles of that religious community. That was clearly laid down in that pact. So, Maulana Madani said that the prophet of Allah entered into such a pact when with *Kafirs*, not merely with Christians and Jews but even Pagans, which meant *Kafirs*. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with common nationality in India.

I am putting all this before you so that we should be able to appreciate what is the concept of nationalism as far as Islam is concerned and how there have been differing schools of opinion among Muslims themselves and how eminent theologians, such as Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani have stood with all conviction for territorial nationalism. Not that territorial nationalism is the last ideal in the world; it is an empirical reality which one has to accept. Perhaps internationalism is a much better ideal, but given the conditions today in the world, we cannot have that kind of internationalism. Even Islam failed in establishing internationalism. In Islam only for thirty years there was one Caliphate which was accepted by all Muslims but thereafter it was converted into dynastic rule and so many different rulers claimed to be the Caliphs, that internationalism was shattered within years of Islamic history.

And let me also equally frankly say that even communism failed to establish that kind of internationalism. Islam in that respect failed earlier; communism failed leer. Of course, the Islamic concept was purely idealistic, whereas the communist concept of internationalism was based on certain materialistic processes, but precisely because material equality could not be established throughout the world, communist internationalism failed. Internationalism can strike roots only when all nations are equally balanced. If resources are unevenly divided, if development has taken place unevenly, some nations will remain in commanding positions and others in subordinate positions. So territorial nationalism is not the last ideal. But it is a reality and one must accept that reality and that is what Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani was saying to Iqbal, 'Well', he said, I also agree with you that if we could establish internationalism we should, but unfortunately we cannot. So territorial nationalism would remain; it is very much here to stay; that Muslims must

support it; and there is nothing non-Islamic about it, as the Quran itself has accepted the principle of territorial nationalism.

Unfortunately, many Muslims themselves do not know what the Quran has to say and what eminent theologians have to say, and they were swayed by Muslim League propaganda that Hindus and Muslims can never stay together, because they are two separate nations. In fact, the two nations theory was very unsound. It cannot stand empirical examination even for a moment. Now, I would like to ask those who propound this theory what place did they given to the Muslims of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in Pakistan today, and as you know, Bengali Muslims could not stay for a very long time with Punjabi and U.P. Muslims. If you examine the political scenario in Pakistan today, you will see that even Punjabi Muslims and Sindhi Muslims do not feel compatible with each other; the Punjabi Muslims and the Baluchi Muslims do not feel compatible with each other. The Sindhis, Baluchis and Pathans in the North-West Frontier Province strongly feel that their culture, their identity, is being undermined and it is only the Punjabi Muslims who are dominating. So, it was a very unsound theory.

Muslims can unite for certain other purposes; emotionally they can unite; there is no doubt about it. Not only Indian Muslims; but Muslims throughout the world, if some religious issue arises. But that unity can be purely emotional and temporary. Muslims united for Shah Bano agitation also. Many Muslims were boasting, "*Allah ka shukr hai is faisle ki wajah se sab Muslman ek ho gaye"*. They were united – for how many months? It was an emotional upsurge. It was an emotional issue, and all Muslims got united. Similarly, if something happens tomorrow say, the Kaba is invaded by the Americans or the Israelis, you will find that unity throughout the world, but that too was temporary and highly emotional.

Emotional unity cannot be real unity. The moment that issue is over, they stand divided, and this division is on the basis of region, languages, culture or for that matter on any line which is a dividing line within any other community in the world. To say that Muslims of diverse cultures can unite is fallacious; they may unite for socio-economic purposes. Despite the best possible efforts, even Libya and Egypt could not unite. Even Bahrain and Kuwait could not unite. They are very close to each other. They share the same region, in fact, the Gulf area – and yet they cannot unite. It is a difficult thing even between Bahrain and Kuwait. Even Palestinians and the Kuwaiti Muslims.

What better integration can be there in view of same language, but they are not nationals in Kuwait any more than any Indian Muslim or Pakistani Muslim or Filipino Muslim or any other Muslim for that matter. So one must understand these realities. Those who talk of Islamic internationalism or

Islamic unite must understand on what place and on what issues that unite is possible. That is very important.

Nationalism is a political phenomenon, and that itself shows that religion cannot become an effective binding force for the existence of any territorial nationalism, because the considerations of territorial nationalism are very much different from religious considerations. Spiritual requirements are very much different from religious considerations and from material requirements. We might share some spiritual values and spiritual concepts with an American, but we would not like to share Indian material resources with an American or vice versa. Though they might accept Hare Krishna or Islam, or an Indian version of Islam, but this would be sharing only spiritual concerns and spiritual concepts, not material wealth and that is why even Arab nations do not unite together. Kuwait is not prepared, or Saudi Arabia is not prepared, to share its rich material resources with any other country.

During the pre-partition days, we have been part of a common history. I am not going into the history of the medieval age; I am talking of the history of modern India after British rule was established because we are trying to understand the genesis and growth of communalism. I would like to give one example here why this tussle started between a section of the Muslims, not all Muslims believed in the two nation theory. There were very large sections of both communities, or for that matter of all the communities in this country, who stood for composite nationalism, but, nevertheless, some sections arose among the Muslims, among the Hindus, among the Sikhs and others who thought on separatist lines. One example is quite interesting in this respect.

Sir Syed Ahmad was a campaigner for modernism and for education among the Muslims. When the British introduced the Local Self-Government Act in Certain northern province, Sir Syed made a very prophetic speech. It was prophetic, because what he foresaw is precisely what happened. He said that democracy does not suit India because people of diverse religions and diverse language groups exist in this country and, if you introduce democracy here, all these communities would fight against each other because each community would like to have more and more share in power, and that is why, he said, 'I would advise the British Government not to introduce, at least for a few decades, any democratic process in this country'. I totally disagree with his view that democracy ought not to have been introduced, or local self-governments ought not to have been formed. But he had a point – the moment democratic processes were introduced and the moment all of us realized that, after the British, there would be no foreign rule in this country, all of us started asserting ourselves for our share, and that is where communalism took birth, because we wanted more and more share in power.

Now, how do we claim that share? In a backward country like India which is not conversant with any democracy, which has no concept of nationalism at all, naturally we would claim it on the basis of our religion, or language, or culture and the fight would start and communalism would be born. That is how communalism was born in this country.

Communalism of Language Question

Sir Syed represents the elitist point of view. He belonged to the noble gentry. His father and his maternal grand-father held important offices in the Moghul administration. So his outlook was the elitist *Ashrafia* outlook. He had hatred even for the Bengalis because he thought that these low caste Bengalis were learning the English language and were claiming equal status with the Rajputs. He said to the Rajputs, in one of his speeches, that the Bengalis who, at the sight of a sword, would hid himself under the table, is becoming our ruler; how can Rajputs swallow this insult? So, he had a purely elitist point of view – the point of view of an upper class Muslim, and he was much closer to the Hindus of his class. He was very close to many eminent Hindu figures of that century. Even then the split took place ultimately on the question of language. When the British wanted to replace Persian as court language – naturally, Persian could not have continued as a court language after Moghul administration was gone – by either English at a certain level and/or local languages at other levels – they wanted to introduce Urdu in place of Persian – at that time these people started a fight on this question: some Hindus said that it would be written in Devanagari script, whereas Muslims said that it should be written in Persian script. This controversy became very bitter, and Sir Syed felt that this was the beginning of division in India, and he pleased with the British Government not to replace Persian and/or at least retain the Persian script.

The question arises: why this insistence on the Persian script? It should not be connected with religious sentiments; otherwise, it becomes a very dangerous trend in our thinking. Muslims perceived that if the Persian script was replaced by Devanagari they would lose all their jobs because Muslims held a large number of jobs in British courts. A British scholar, David Lelyveld has written a book entitled Aligarh's First Generations. It is a very interesting book. He gives a great deal of statistics on how many Muslims held jobs in British courts. Muslims perceived that if the Persian script was replaced by Devanagari they stood to lose their jobs, or they would have to learn Devanagari script.

Today we have a language controversy. We know how Tamil Nadu opposes Hindi because Tamils think it is unfair that they should learn Hindi to hold government jobs, whereas Hindi knowing people do not have to learn Tamil; so Tamils feel they are put to a disadvantage. Suppose Tamil is introduced as the national language, what resentment would it cause among Hindi-speaking

people because they would have to learn another language and they would think that the Tamils would be in a much more advantageous position, because they already know Tamil. Similarly, Tamilians feel upset about Hindi. The same sentiments were there at that time and slowly, with all such disputes, or with all such controversial issues, communalism acquired a sharper and sharper edge.

As we know, the Muslim League was born in 1905. A debate goes on whether the Viceroy had invited certain prominent Muslims, or it was on the initiative of the Muslim elites themselves. Whatever it might be, the fact remains that the Muslim League was born and the memorandum which was submitted to the Viceroy in Simla in 1906 had not a single demand which was religious or which even had a religious orientation. This is very important. The birth of the Muslim League was not on any religious issue, because nobody had interfered with anyone's religion. The British neither interfered with Hinduism, nor Islam, they pretended to remain neutral. Of course, they had their subtle ways, but strictly technically, legally speaking, they maintained a neutral position; they were not interested in imposing Christianity on others. So, the Muslim League could not have been born on any religious issue, such as, Islam is not free in this country, or Muslims should be allowed to pray, or Muslims should be allowed to follow their doctrines. This could not have become an issue; simply because there was no ground for that. So, the very birth of the Muslim League on secular demands shows that communalism is all about secular issues and it is not based on any religious issue.

Communalism Couches Secular Demands

If you take the whole history of the Muslim League's struggle, you will see that throughout not a single religious issue was raised by it. It is only in 1940, that they swayed Muslim sentiments, because Jinnah had realized his isolation. In the 1937 elections the Muslim League was hopelessly routed. It could only capture a few seats in different regions, and in Muslim minority areas also it lost heavily and in Muslim majority areas it had simply no roots. Jinnah realized his isolation, and he raised the slogan of Islam, saying that Hindus and Muslims constitute separate nations. This he propounded in 1940 though he remained quite secular in his outlook. He did not demand a theocratic State. He made it very clear in all his speeches that Pakistan would not be a theocratic state; Pakistan would be a secular state. But he used Islam as a weapon, as an instrument, and in communalism, religion is an instrumental cause. He used religion as an instrument to realize the demands for Muslim elites. This also needs to be underlined.

Communalism never benefits the masses of any community: it always benefits the elite – we should remember this. Whether it is the campaign of the Vishwa

Hindu Parishad or the RSS or the Muslim League, it always expresses the elitist point of view. Even the assertion of identity – Muslim identity or Hindu identity or for that matter any identity – is always by the elite of a community. They use religious identity or linguistic identity, or cultural identity, to realise their own ambitions, not the aspirations of the masses. Whenever such communal issues arise, they are always all about the elite. So, the demands which the Muslim League raised pertained to the Muslim elite. For example, they wanted a certain share in the Central Legislature. The Muslim League emphasized that the Muslims should get 33 per cent representation in the Central Legislature, though their population was 25 per cent. Their argument was that Muslims are a very important, significant minority in this country and therefore, their aspirations cannot be satisfied with proportional representation in the Central Legislature. This was one of the very important demands of the Muslim elite of securing representation in the Central Legislature or in the State Legislatures. Such representation was in those days open only to the elites of the community, not to peasants or workers of the community.

If you analyse all the 14 demands of the Muslim League will see that they are all of the Muslim elite. So, communalism, after British rule was introduced, was nothing but the fight for certain secular benefits for the elite of a particular community and the sharper the awareness of these demands, the greater the degree of communalism. So, this also very clearly shows that communalism is not a religious phenomenon, but it is an expression of the aspiration and ambitions of the elite of a particular community.

The elite of a community cannot express its aspirations and ambitions purely in secular terms, because that would appear selfish and earthly, and it would not arouse the emotions of an entire community. So, they couch those demands in an idiom which would rouse the emotions of the whole community and that is precisely why it becomes communalistic.

For example, if we take the majority communalism today in India, the leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad tell the Hindus, ‘Look here, you are besieged, you are being surrounded by aggressive minorities; so, you better be on your guard; otherwise, you will be over-powered’. Immediately, it appeals to the emotions of the Hindus. There is no empirical evidence to show that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad or the RSS is working for the masses of the Hindus. I do not think any such empirical evidence exists. Otherwise, it would work for the upliftment of the Harijans. When embarrassed, they might talk about the welfare of the Harijans, but the Vishwa Hindu Parishad or the RSS or any other Hindu communal organization for that matter has not done much for them, just as no empirical evidence can be produced to show that Muslim League worked for the masses.

In fact, in 1937, Iqbal wrote to Jinnah in which he said – Iqbal was the President of the Punjab Muslim League – 'I am sorry that Muslim League leaders have not paid adequate attention to the poverty and misery of Muslim masses and so it is rightly isolated among Muslim'. Iqbal said this in 1937. The Government of India Act was passed in 1935 and elections were held in 1937, and when the Muslim League fought the elections, the results, what Iqbal had said were correct. So, the President of a Provincial Muslim League himself admitted and wrote in agony to Jinnah that Muslim League was failing in taking up the problems of the Muslim masses. Not that Iqbal's writing a letter to Jinnah was effective. Not at all. Rather, Iqbal was dropped from the post of President ship of the Provincial Muslim League. It, in fact, worked the other way round, because if the Muslim League had taken up the genuine problems of the Muslim masses, it would have gone against its very raison *de etre* and it would have lost the support of all the feudal lords, all the upper class or middle class Muslims. The middle class Muslims also played a very vital role in promoting the Muslim League.

Hamza Alvi, in one of his recent writings, has rightly pointed out that it was the Muslim salaried class which became the backbone of the Muslim League, because middle class Muslims were aspiring for bigger and bigger share of jobs and they could not compete equitably with their Hindu counterparts. The migration pattern after partition, clearly showed that it was the big merchants, big feudal lords and those holding important jobs in Government who migrated to Pakistan, because they saw greener pastured there. The poor Muslims did not perceive any advantage in migrating to Pakistan. That is why the Muslim peasantry never migrated from U.P. or Bihar to Pakistan. It was either those who belonged to the middle class or those who belonged to the propertied classes, including zamindars, who migrated. Those people went and claimed evacuee properties from Pakistan. Those who owned a few houses here got huge mansions in Pakistan.

Similarly, the middle classes could get quick promotions. An under-secretary could become a secretary, or a sub-inspector of police could become a superintendent of police, because the new state required more hands. It is because of these gains that they backed up the Muslim League.

All this evidence clearly shows that communalism is all about secular demands of the elite of a particular community and it is these demands which give rise to the phenomenon of communalism. When it acquires a certain degree of sharpness, it results in violence. We have to reiterate this fact against and again because the whole phenomenon has been very much misunderstood. Therefore, religious consciousness should not be confused with communal consciousness. Communal consciousness can never become religious consciousness. For example, member of certain Muslim League organizations,

e.g. the Indian Union Muslim League, are today all secular elites whether it is Sulaiman Sait or Banatwala. Banatwala is not a theologian; he does not have a religious consciousness; it is essentially a communal consciousness not religious consciousness, as opposed to Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani's consciousness, which was religious consciousness or Maulala Abul Kalam Azad's who was a very eminent theologian of international standing and whose commentary on the Quran is quite a significant contribution to tafseer/literature. He always remained loyal to nationalism. That such an eminent theologian remaining loyal to nationalistic ideology clearly shows that communalism is not all about religion. Otherwise, Maulana Abul Kalama Azad and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani should have been the leaders of Muslim League and Jinnah, Liaqat Ali and others should have been leaders of Indian National Congress. This is not so. We see these eminent theologians being leaders of Indian National Congress and secular leaders such as Jinnah and others like Banatwala being Muslim League leaders.

So, communal consciousness must be distinguished from religious consciousness. Similarly, examine the entire pattern of the RSS leadership or the Vishwa Hindu Parishad leadership. Now many of them are temple priests? How many temple priests are there in the Vishwa Hindu Parishad? Although, may be, there is some exception here and there, but it is not the rule; no top leader of RSS or the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and no one belonging to the middle cadre of RSS or Vishwa Hindu Parishad, is a temple priest.

COMMUNALISM AND NATION-STATE BUILDING

K. Subrahmanyam

In a modern nation-state, the nation is the supreme reference point for the loyalty of the individual citizen and all his other loyalties to religion, language or caste are subsidiary to this primary loyalty. In a democratic nation-state, based on representational government and the principles of equal rights to all citizens and equality of all citizens before law, there should not be any contradiction between the loyalty to the nation and the other subsidiary loyalties referred to above. This is the ideal state. Unfortunately, this idea is not always obtained in practice. Hence we have the problem of communalism where the loyalty to the community often outweighs the loyalty to the nation-state. It is therefore necessary to investigate why there are contradictions between loyalty to one's community, especially the religious community and the loyalty to the nation-state, especially a democratic nation-state.

In order to understand this phenomenon of communalism in a modern nation-state we have to go back to its origins, evolution of the concept, the emergence of multi-religious states and the growth of secularism in various parts of the world. We may then look at the Indian scene against that background.

In history, till about two three centuries ago, the loyalty to the ruler dominated over the loyalty to a religion and in many cases it was the ruler who determined the religion of the population. The Christians were persecuted in the Roman Empire till the Emperor himself became a Christian. Even in India when a king got converted from Buddhism or Jainism to Hinduism, those who remained as Buddhists or Jains were persecuted and vice versa. England espoused the Anglican faith because the king repudiated the Pope and proclaimed himself as the head of the church. As Islam conquered new territories, the majority of the people in the occupied lands accepted the faith of the rulers (There were also areas where Islam spread through proselytisation through saints). The human spirit being what it is, it was not always possible for rulers to suppress totally the minorities practising their particular faiths. The Jews, dispersed all over Europe, attempted to sustain their identity and their faith and had to endure tremendous persecutions. So did various other religious minorities. Some of them fled from persecution like the followers of Zend Avesta (the Parsis). Even today Bahais are persecuted in Iran and Ahmadiyas in Pakistan. Others migrated to far off sparsely inhabited

lands to establish small compact settlements to practice their faith in peace, far away from the tyrannical persecution by rulers. Many of the American colonies came into existence in this manner.

The newer the faith and the body of doctrine, the more fervently were they espoused. If the majority adopted the newer faith, they were very harsh on minorities. Catholics were put to death in Britain and unbelievers were burnt at the stake during the Spanish inquisition. A minority adopting a new faith very often displayed great heroism in resisting persecution. Out of this saga of resistance to the majority and the rulers' persecution, saints emerged in all faiths. Such resistance was often the life-blood of new faiths. In many cases such a spirit of resistance also flowered into value of tolerance and secularism. When practitioners of different faiths and sects who fled from Europe came together to establish a stage in the United State of America they realized that it could be done. Only on the basis of live and let live, mutual tolerance and on the principle of separation of the state from religion. That logic led to the establishment of the first secular state which formally declared itself as such – the United States of America.

In practice however secularism of a sort emerged wherever the rulers or the majority found that the followers of the other faiths were too numerous to the physically eliminated. The Islamic rulers in India, barring a few, did not attempt to establish 'Darul Islam' in India. Even in areas in the north western part of the subcontinent, which had been under continuous Muslim rule over centuries, the Hindu and Sikh minorities survived till 1947.

During the period the concept of nation-state was evolving in Europe, religious intolerance was at its highest and religious wars took a very heavy toll. France witnessed the Bartholomeo Day massacre when the Protestant States of Germany fought the thirty years' war which decimated nearly thirty per cent of the German population. All this happened in spite of the fact that in the Christian tradition it was enjoined that one should render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and render unto God what is God's. In that sense the Christian tradition had a basis for separation between the church and the state. Yet religious wars in Europe took their heavy toll.

The impact of religion on affairs of society has not ceased to have effect even today in Europe. The prolonged disturbances in Northern Ireland are evidence of the religious factor intruding into politics. Recently the Catholics of Ireland voted overwhelmingly against permitting divorce though it was clear to them that this vote would engender fears among the Protestants of Ulster about their rights as a minority if unification with Ireland were to take place. There is some secessionist tendency among the Catholics in Croatia in Yugoslavia, the majority being followers of the Greek Orthodox Church. Even in the avowedly

secular United States legal battles are fought on prayer in schools and abortion rights – issues which have religious overtones.

At the present stage of the intellectual and emotional development of human beings, religious faith is still a felt need for the overwhelming majority of the people of the word. Nearly seventy years of continuous anti-religious propaganda has not been able to eliminate completely the need for religious faith felt by significant sections of people in the Soviet Union. So has been the experience in China after thirty-seven years of Communist rule. In East European Community countries too Catholic faith is still a mighty force. With all the advancements in knowledge, the strains and stresses of modern living have completed even the so-called sophisticated people to look for solace in religion and in various cults. There is no denying that for the vast mass of the people religion is an emotional necessity. Even the great philosopher, Sankara, the exponent of Advaits, recognised the need for simple faith and devotion (Bhakti) for the masses.

Religion does not confine itself to dealing exclusively with the relationship between man and his God. All religions, in various degrees, have attempted to organize the social life of human beings. However, many countries with Christian populations the need to distinguish between religion and the state is recognized. Hindu religion, if at all it can be called a religion – without a dogma, without revealed truths, and without prophets – too does not pose a problem in this respect. But other religions claim that they encompass the total life of a human being in respect of all relationships and hence religion cannot be divorced from the social and political life of the faithful. This conflict between the state and organized religion is found in many countries of the world. In nations where there are many religions, very often conflicts occur between religions and between a particular religion and the state.

Modern nation-states consist of people who have a sense of shared history of the past and look forward to a shared common destiny in the future. Once this sense of shared past ad shared present and future is there, differences among people in regard to language, religion, ethnicity do not matter and they constitute a nation. Thus we have nations where many languages are spoken, religions espoused and different races coexist. We also have different nations sharing a common language, common religion and common ethnicity.

The nation-state is a phenomenon of the last three to four centuries. Before that there was no sense of loyalty to a nation or identification with the nation. Kings could raise mercenary armies and march into other territories and seize them by force. The rise of the middle class, evolution of political institutions, spread of education and increasing identification with language and culture gave birth to the concept of the nation-state. Over a period of time each

nation-state developed into a unit distinguished from its neighbours with its own political culture, institutions, domestic market and goals and aspirations and ideas of its place in the world. Though the process can be traced to 16th or 17th century most of the nation-states emerged in Europe following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. As the institution of the nation-state and capitalism developed, religion as the organizer of social life receded into the background, especially in the Protestant areas. In France, the Revolution had pushed the church away from the centre of the state.

The political development in the Western European and North American countries was an evolutionary process spread over more than a century. Industrialization, mass education and secularization of those societies preceded or accompanied in some cases, democratization of political structures. Mass politicization, universal franchise came later, with some degree of stabilization of political institutions and industrialization. Religious faith and the organized church still continue to play a significant role in the politics of most of such states. The very appellation, Christian Democratic, or Christian Socialist, which political parties in Europe have adopted indicates this influence in the present day. But the church has conceded that political, social and economic relationships among the people have to be settled by the people themselves. While the Christian Church would continue to offer a framework of values as reference, it would not question the basic right of the people to decide on such issues by exercising rational choices. In other words, the Christian Church does not contest the sovereignty of the people in the industrialized states.

The Indian experience in unique. India was the most developed of the colonies ever brought under western Imperial domination. Even as democratic values developed in Britain many of them were absorbed and internalized in the Indian freedom movement. The Indian freedom movement acquired a mass base and became a mass struggle from the end of the second decade of this century, under the leadership of Gandhiji. As mass mobilization began, channels of political and social communication among the people got energized. While the organized church and clergy could not play a communication role in the case of Hindu majority population (caste played that role to some extent), in respect of other communities, especially the Muslims and the Sikhs organized religion did play that role. Gandhiji himself recognized this when he supported the Khilafat Campaign and the Akali struggle to get control over the gurudwaras in the mid-twenties. While individual Christians played a notable role in the independence struggle, the church itself did not play a significant role. Partly this may have been because of its recognition that what is to be rendered to God and what is to be rendered to Caesar are separate and distinct.

Where organized religions exist, their involvement in the political mobilization process is inevitable. So it happened in India. Though the British tool full advantage of the resulting differences they did not originate them. Where people are organized around basis faiths and revealed dogmas, a certain minimum amount of separateness vis-a-vis other believers is inevitable. This is not only true as between two religions. It is true of sets within a religion. It is true of even a secular faith like Marxism. Dogmas and faiths, while binding a number of people, also divide them from others. The forces that bind the fundamental particles within an atom, and thereby make up the atom, also divide them from other atoms.

The Indian political mobilization proceeded at two levels. One was the level of national politics, where the aim was to create a secular, democratic, federal, linguistically autonomous state (some also emphasized socialist aspirations). This was represented by the mainstream political mobilization embodies in the Indian National Congress. There were a number of subsidiary political mobilizations, based on religious and sectarian considerations. Muslims and Akalis were the most prominent among them. The Harijan mobilization attempted by Dr. Ambedkar and of backward classes by the Justice Party and the Dravida Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu are instances of sectarian mobilization. All except the Congress were communal politics, some based on religion and others on caste and other considerations. In post-independent India, one saw the political mobilization on a linguistic and tribal basis too. Caste-based political mobilization has become a normal feature in the current universal adult franchise system, even within the Congress Party.

These developments are deplored by sections of our elite. While all the above phenomena should objectively be categorized as communal politics, only the religion-affiliated political mobilization has come in for particular condemnation as communalism. Before we analyse the impact of communalism on nation-state building we should understand the nature of communalism. Viewed in a cold blooded way it is obvious that in a modern representational polity communal political mobilization is inevitable. In Marxist states political mobilization on an ethnic basis takes place. Even in the United States votes are solicited through lobbies which are based on religious and ethnic considerations. Colour, sectarianism (Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Jew, etc.) and ethnicity (Jew, Irish, Polish etc.) are factors of significance in US elections at local and state levels. Whether a person is a Catholic or not does count for the chances of his election in many constituencies in Germany. In India religious and caste affiliations are the most easily available network for social communication and hence effective means of political mobilization. One cannot afford to overlook this important reality of our society. So long as governance is based on some degree of acquiescence

of the population and not authoritarian this factor will continue to be important by and large, tough, in particular constituencies or areas some personalities may dominate because of their charisma, or their past services.

An important aspect to be taken into account in developing countries like ours, with political power being wielded only at the state and the union level, most of the time it is difficult to conduct elections on issue-oriented politics (1984 December was an exception when the country was asked to affirm its commitment to its unity and security). Voting is on the basis of candidates with whom the voter can identify himself. One of the reasons for the increasing mediocrity of our politicians, about which Governor B.K. Nehru recently bemoaned in his John F. Kennedy memorial lecture, is that the average voter feels more comfortable with such mediocre persons than with candidates from professional classes. In this electoral process religion and caste must be expected to play a crucial mobilizing role. Enlightened and secular persons find that unless they identify themselves with their constituents in terms of their community aspirations and demands, often to the extent of being communal they will be upstaged by others who do so.

In a shortage-ridden developing economy, where the resources cake is limited and job opportunities fall very much shorter than demand, politics tends to turn communal once the state has adopted, with justification no doubt, the principles of job reservations and university admission reservations. Since such patronage distribution is by and large at the state level the politics of the States is bound to be communalized. All our states are riven with communal politics and communalism in Punjab is only distinguished by the injection of violence in communal politics.

Communalism is a symptom of mediocrity in politics. If the politicians cannot mobilize votes on the basis of issues- which needs a much broader understanding of stage of evolution of our society, where we are heading, what is feasible as the optimum strategy, etc. – they fall back on whipping up emotions of the community concerned by blaming other communities in the area for their own inadequacies and above all Delhi for its alleged policy of discrimination.

Once communalism has been brought into politics, it has a snowballing effect. Those elected on a communal basis tend to distribute patronage on that basis. This further reinforces communal divisions. Politicians who get entrapped in communalism find themselves prisoners of it and cannot get out of it. Euphemistically, such communal politics is rationalized as nursing constituencies an enlarging one's political base.

We must also take into account the nature of our electorate. There is less of class consciousness in their voting behaviour than communal, and caste

consciousness. It is easier to trigger their concerns in terms of their community (religion or caste) interests or identities, than in terms of their class or area interests. Sad as it is, Muslim women are likely to be swayed more by an allegation that the Shariat law is in danger than by all reasoned arguments that a common civil and criminal code will protect their interests better. This is not peculiar to people of Islamic persuasion alone people of other faiths react in a similar fashion. In a sense, barring a few exceptions, we are all communal in varying degrees.

Given these basic factors, our political system is extremely vulnerable at this stage of its evolution to the onslaught of communalism. Our society is being subjected to an accelerated pace of transformation – industrialisation, urbanization, secularization. This is no doubt a highly disorienting phenomenon for most of our population. In these circumstances, those who try to resist these changes in the name of fundamentalist values, decry the breakdown of intra-religious and intra-caste cementing forces, and consequently uphold inter-religious and inter-caste barriers, emphasize traditionalism in the name of preserving identity, have an appeal to the masses in transition. Hence, as the pace of change increases the challenge of communalism also becomes shriller.

A whole new generation of political leaders in the post-independent era, thrown up by the new electoral systems, have opted for the easier way of mobilizing votes through the communal and caste social communication network, instead of ideologically oriented party system, built upwards from the grass roots level.

Certain sections of communalists also derive inspiration from the international fragmentation phenomenon that has been going on for the last 15-20 years. A number of small, mini and macro-states, with populations ranging from a few tens of thousands to a million, have emerged as sovereign nations. Consequently, relatively small communities, if they are concentrated in an area, dream of attaining sovereignty. Tamil extremists in Sri Lanka, Baluchis in Pakistan, Nagas, Mizos and Khalistanis in this country fall in this category. Such communal forces also become convenient instrument of other nations for coercive diplomacy against us. Even nations like Great Britain are unable to prevent the Catholic IRA of Northern Ireland from receiving external assistance from USA and Libya. Pakistan attempts to fish in the troubles waters of Hindu-Muslim communal tensions and now in Khalistani communalism.

If communalism is a widespread phenomenon, we should carefully analyse how it affects adversely the process of nation-building. Communalism by definition is the development of a disproportionately high loyalty to one's caste, tribe, religion or language group, as against the normal requirement of

prime loyalty to the nation-state. When a person starts qualifying his Indianness he is communal. Being Indian cannot be diluted. We may be Punjabi, Hindi or Telugu speaking; we may be Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Christian or Parsi. These cannot qualify our being Indian first and last. To talk of one being Hindu Indian or Sikh Indian or Muslim Indian, Tamil Indian or Punjabi Indian is as irrelevant as one being married, unmarried or divorced Indian, a tall, a short or a medium height Indian. These are personal and subset attributes having nothing to do with our nationality. Such sprit of communalism conflicts with the primary loyalty to the nation.

Communalism cannot substitute for the spirit of nationalism. Pakistanis discovered that being Muslim did not prevent Bangladesh breaking away. Muslim Iranians fight Muslim Iraqis. Shia Muslim militia fight Sunni Muslim militia in Beirut. Christian nations of Europe fought with each other in the two world wars. The logic of communalism will inexorably lead it towards further fragmentation into sectarianism. Muslim Pakistan considers the Ahmediyas as non-Muslims. The laws governing Sunnis stated to be different from the laws governing the Shias. Therefore, in Pakistan the Pir of Pagaro has opposed the introduction of Shariat laws on the ground that it will divide the Muslims into followers of different figahs. While the spirit of nationalism looks to a future of shared destiny and achievements based on the collective efforts of all citizenry governed by common laws, influenced by common history, shaped by common successes and failures, providing equal opportunities to all, the communalist outlook emphasizes past division and animosities, separateness from the rest, and a parochial approach to communal gains as against the national interests and in many other similar ways.

Communalism comes in the way of national development and integration – whether it is a common civil code, sharing of river waters, an optimum national language policy, standards of excellence in advanced educational institutions, teaching of history to our children and so on.

How does one tackle this corrosive communalism? Here one may be pardoned for being somewhat controversial. In my view, from the beginning, in this country, our leaders committed a grievous mistake. They defined secularism as equal respect for all religions. In a sense this idea of extending equal respect to all religions is a peculiarly Hindu idea. ‘Ekam sat; viproh bahudah vadanti’ (Truth is one; the learned expound it in many ways). This can be said by the Hindus who do not have a dogma, a book of revelations and a prophet. The followers of other religions, by their very faith in those respective religions, are precluded from accepting that other religions also represent truth in equal measure. An orthodox Muslim cannot equate Jesus and Mohammad as equal prophets. Nor can an orthodox Christian accept Jesus and Mohammad equally as saviours. Therefore, the idea if paying equal respect to all religions is not a

viable or practical proposition and understandably did not evoke much credibility among the minorities who could not accept the formulation 'Ekam Sat; viproh bahudah vadanti'.

Secularism in India must, therefore, be defined anew. It has to be on the basis that the state will have nothing to do with any religion in this country. All religious affairs will have to be managed by the practitioners of the religion concerned and the state will have nothing to do with it and will compulsorily keep out of it was a mistake to have had a Hindu code enacted by Parliament. It should have been a common civil law for all Indians with the proviso that if any two contracting parties wanted to be governed by a religious law they would go to a religious court. Even if one refused one would have to be governed by a common civil law.

The Indian State should not continue to administer either Hindu religious endowments or Wakf properties. Let all temples, mosques, churches and gurudwaras, built before a particular date, be declared historical monuments and protected. Let not the state have anything to do with their administration. Similarly, state radio should not broadcast any religious music. Let a few private radio stations be licensed to broadcast religious music. Let there be no participation of state dignitaries in religious ceremonies – neither in Ram Lila nor in Iftar. Let there be a strict division between State and all religions. The US Supreme Court said recently that under the constitutional provision of separation of state and religion, they would not permit even a few minutes silence for silent prayers in schools, but they would not strike down a few minutes silence for meditation. Once the term prayer is brought in, it becomes a matter relating to religion.

Once we proceed on the basis that our secularism is based on 'Sarva Dharma Samabhava' (equal respect to all religion), some people want their religion to be accorded more equal respect than others. They talk of their identity traditions, their unalterable and everlasting truth, the glory of the mythical kingdom of righteousness in the past, the saga of their sacrifices, the victory of their sword of justice, etc. The only way of getting out of this trap is to declare firmly that the secular Indian State will have nothing to do with any religion. Religion is a matter between a human being and his or her God or between human beings of a particular persuasion and their God. The state is concerned with the relationship among human beings and this will be determined by laws made by representative bodies of human beings.

The communalists will no doubt oppose this. In the view of the communalists, the powers to make laws regulating the relationship among human beings do not vest entirely in the legislatures of democracies. These relationships are to be governed by laws and traditions handed down through religious texts, via

the clergy, over a period of centuries. In other words, the organized clergy is to limit and circumscribe the law-making powers of elected legislatures. The extreme extrapolation of this line of reasoning is the view that sovereignty does not vest in the people at all but in God. What they really mean in effect is that sovereignty vests in people who interpret God's words, namely, the clergy and those who are in a position to manipulate the clergy.

It is obvious that religion communalism is antithetical to democracy. The latter envisages the current generation of people's representatives taking decisions regarding the advancement of society based on current state of knowledge of natural, social and behavioural sciences. The communalist attitudes enjoin us to look back to traditions and very often bind us to the social systems, relationships and mores which have since been overtaken and rendered unviable by advances of technology, social relationships and values. Slavery was a perfectly normal and legitimate institution at one time. Are we, therefore, to maintain that it is legitimate today? Putting the adult male population of a captured city to sword was the normal practice once. Will it be so today? Polygamy was prescribed in a society which fought frequent wars where perhaps the sex ratio and the need to populate the area rapidly made it rational then, just as polyandry was rationally prescribed in certain other societies under different circumstances. Such human relationships are not eternal verities. If one were to accept that nothing that was not prescribed in the traditional religious literature can be practised and what was prescribed then should be strictly followed now, the result would be utter chaos. Muslim countries have not stopped collecting interest on their bank deposits abroad. If we are to follow the Shariat as strictly as we are asked to do in respect of payment of alimony for Muslims women then our banks should be barred by legislation to pay interest to Muslim citizens. Sikhs may insist on carrying the kirpan into an aircraft as a requirement of their faith. While carrying the kirpan is part of their faith, flying in an aircraft is not part of the faith. Therefore, if they want to observe their faith they need not fly. It is equally absurd for Hindus to insist that non-Hindus should not use certain bathing ghats at rivers like the Ganga and that non-Hindus should not enter temples which are public places to which all Indians have a right of entry.

Communalist tyranny reminds one of the tyranny exercised by our grandmothers and great grandmothers in case of traditionalist rituals during births, deaths and marriages and ritualistic purity. Since the poor old ladies could not exercise any other control or power on the families they tried to exercise their clout in the field of rituals and ritualistic purity. Similarly mediocre minds try to exploit communalism because their inadequacies prevent their exercise of leadership in any other way.

One need not repudiate our rich cultural heritage and the constructive role of the religious as taught by great prophets and saints who, in almost all cases, were themselves great reformers and protested against ossification of social relationships and mores of a particular time into dogmas. In most of the cases the saints and prophets themselves did not rigidify the then prevalent practices and codify their own sayings. These were done often by mediocrities who had a vested interest in exploiting the prophets and saints for their parochial purposes. Change is the law of life. The old order change yielding place to the new and God fulfils himself in many ways. If change is not the natural law of life it will be difficult to explain all that has taken place in terms of productive relationships and consequent social relationships since the days of various prophets and saints. Most of the communalists in fact insist on preserving the tradition only when it suits their convenience. The Hindu priests never hesitated to admit the 'malecha' British officials into their temples even when they barred the entry to others.

A democratic polity has to overcome the communalist cancer in order to survive. This is particularly true of a democracy like ours where vast populations following different religions reside, intermingled with each other in various parts of the country. While my definition of communalism encompasses parochial pursuit of community interests, based not only on religion but also caste and language, here it is proposed to deal primarily with countering religious communalism.

In this country communalism has thrived mainly because we have failed to expose it fully to countering effects of democracy at the grass roots level. In India the main focus of political action have been Central and State Governments. As pointed out earlier the State Government is the dispenser of jobs and educational opportunities, the main provider of agricultural and small scale industrial inputs and social services. Therefore, state politics is the main arena where political mobilization takes place. The full impact of communalism in politics is also felt at the state level. In turn this involves a few hundred MLAs at the most. The vote banks are able to operate on a communal basis optimally in this framework. In turn, the patronage distribution on a communal basis, which keeps communalism alive, can also be operated optimally through this mechanism. We are all aware that at this stage of the evolution of our democracy it is not always the parties at various levels which throw up and elect leaders. It is often the other way round, where leaders with resources get people elected to the legislatures and manage their parties. These unsatisfactory features of our democratic system are largely due to the failure to take democracy below the state level to districts, panchayat samitis and panchayats. While political bosses can manage parties with a few hundred

MLAs they will find it difficult to manage hundreds of thousands of panchayat members, panchayat samiti members and zila parishad members.

Today there are not enough electoral competitions at various levels, where people from the same community contest for elections and thereby lift the elections above communal considerations. Enough powers of patronage have not been delegated down to the panchayat, panchayat samiti levels to make those offices worthy of fierce electoral contest. It was a mistake to have propagated that elections at local bodies' level should not be on a political party basis. The surest way of secularizing the politics of this country is to fight elections from the panchayat onwards on the basis of ideologically oriented political parties. That would have kept alive secular politics at the village level. Today communalists are able to keep their politics alive at the village level through organized religious institutional networks but there is no attempt at countering it through energizing secular politics at the village level.

A legitimate question will be raised whether, if we delegate powers of patronage to panchayat samitis and panchayats and have elections on party basis, the communalists will not fight and win those elections on communal platforms and use the patronage of those institutions to strengthen their communalism. My answer will be, while the risks are there, my understanding of the nature of communalism is that democratic practice over a period of time will kill communalism, since the latter is based on the exercise of authority derived from tradition and not from responding to the current aspirations of people, which is what democracy is about.

Let us analyse this further. In every political unit where there is an election, even if the local majority community is under the influence of communalists, there will be election fights and that process itself will divide that community on non-communal lines. That will be the beginning of secularization. If a communal party wins in a panchayat or panchayat samiti elections, when it comes to the distribution of patronage, one would expect those who wield patronage to look after their supporters first. That again will divide the communalists. One can see this principle exemplified by the Akalis in power or the Muslim Leaguers in power in Pakistan. Both parties when in power always splintered. So far this splintering has been only at the level of the state party. If we energize electoral processes at the district, panchayat samiti and panchayat levels, the splintering will occur at all such levels.

I am not sure whether my analysis that follows will be a satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon. Dogmatic politics invariably leads to acute sectarianism and splits. This may possibly be due to the basic requirement in politics of a spirit of accommodation. The essence of democratic politics is to permit arguments all the time and to exploit to the maximum the possibilities

to move in a preferred direction. Dogmatism is an inhibitor of democratic unity and works better within an authoritarian set up. Even within such an authoritarian set up dogmatism invariably leads to splits as have been exemplified by developments in the communist world. Therefore, if communalism, the underlying basis of which is parochial dogmatism, is subjected to pressures of democratic functioning from the village level upwards, it is bound to wither away. This is perhaps what has happened in most of the western democracies where secularism has taken roots. In those countries the religious influence is still felt in politics but it is that of a lobby within a democratic frame work. It does not challenge the basis democratic principle that legislatures through democratic processes legislate on a non-discriminatory basis for all citizens. The Mormon Utah when it joined the United States had to give up the polygamy practices until then by them. However much the Catholic Church may be opposed to divorce and abortion, the Catholics in the United States cannot ask for separate legislation for themselves, though they are free to preach against divorce and abortion.

If the local bodies are energized and politicalized and are permitted to raise revenues and carry out local development, then the local bodies' elections will be fought on the basis of local issues and candidates will be fought on the basis of their stand on local issues. This will to a considerable extent render the politics non-communal over a period of time. One may point out to Shiv Sena capturing local bodies and ask whether energization of local bodies, politics will purge it of communalism. My answer is over a period of time it will DMK was a communal party. It captured power on the basis of communal politics. One it was in power for ten years it splintered as communal parties do. Today with DMK, ADMK and the Congress competing for power, communalism is less of a negative factor in Tamil Nadu politics.

Building a nation-state requires careful nurturing of the image of its achievements and a sense of shared history among the population. Most of the nation-states of Europe were forged in successive wars and revolutions. Britain and France became the first nation-states while fighting each other. The Napoleonic wars and subsequent wars with Austria and France unified and made Germany into a nation. Italy got united as a result of a war of unification. The Soviet Union went through a revolution and two world wars. Today they talk about the great patriotic war. Japan emerged as a nation-state through a series of wars. China had its quota of revolutions and wars – both external and internal. The United States had its revolution, followed by wars with Mexico, Spain and two world wars.

Let me not be misunderstood, that I am advocating war as a process of national unification and nation building. That is not the point I am emphasizing. These wars and revolutions constituted shared experience and

history for the people and these memories contributed towards nation building. Here history writing and history teaching became crucial instruments in forging national unity. The achievements of a nation give a sense of pride to its citizenry and generate primary loyalty to the nation-state superseding all other loyalties. In this respect there have been all round failure in India to generate that pride.

On the other hand, day in and day out we run ourselves down. In China they liquidated some thirty million people in the last thirty years and yet they are proud to be Chinese. In the Soviet Union they denounced Stalin and his excesses and they remember the millions that perished in Stalin's days. Yet they are proud to be Soviet citizens. The Germans are aware what their armed forces and countrymen did to Europe and yet they are proud to be Germans. All the anti-Vietnam was campaigns have not made Americans waiver in their commitment to US national interest.

I can go on with such a list. I am not against self-criticism and, as you would note, I have in this talk criticized some of the fundamental policies and approaches this country adopted in the last four decades. Yet there is a lot to be proud of in being an Indian. We have sustained our democracy in spite of all its deficiencies and shortcomings over the last four decades. We had major achievements to our credit in our industrialization and agriculture. We have maintained a federal system and Johan Galtung compared the unity of India to the unity of entire Europe, if at all it can be achieved. We have also some major scientific achievements to our credit. We have faced challenges to our security and come out of them with credit except for one occasion in 1962. We helped in the liberation and emergence of a new sovereign nation – the eighth largest in the world. Though some 40 per cent of our population is still below the poverty line we have created an industrialized state with the other 60 per cent which total 450 million – which is no mean achievement. We are the only liberal democratic state in which the Communist Party is able to govern units in a federal union on the basis of parliamentary voting procedure. We have had our failures, our fumblings, our emergency, our turbulence and our insurgencies. Yet we are the only nation in which after emergency the ruler accepted the verdict of an election and quit in a peaceful transition to return after three years. This is the only nation in which insurgents who fought against India, settled with India and had an honourable place in the system. Jasoki who wrote the national anthem of Nagaland subsequently became the Chief Minister of Nagaland. Annadurai, the secessionist was carried to his grave wrapped in the Indian tricolour with the Indian Armed Forces sounding the last post. Laldenga who fought against the Union for twenty years took over as Chief Minister. Someday the Khalistanis too may recover their sanity

and rule in Punjab accepting the Indian constitution. I am not aware of any other country in the world which has been so forgiving and generous.

India is a major factor in humanity's march towards a better integrated world. Hopefully, someday, there will be a world without war, without frontiers, a world of freedom and democracy. India with one sixth of the world's population within its frontiers, functioning as a democratic unity in spite of different languages, different religions and different ethnicities, is a forerunner model towards such a hopeful global future. There are negative forces in the world which would like to destroy this model. Communalism is one such force. Our struggle against communalism has therefore global dimensions and implications besides the national ones.

COMMUNALISM: MEANING AND PRACTICE

Balraj Puri

Communalism is, in fact, an Indian contribution the political dictionary of the English language. For, normally communalism connotes some community interest taken in the broad sense in contrast to something self-centred and selfish. The derogatory meaning that the term has acquired is typically Indian. In India nobody owns this term. Most of the parties which we would call communal would not call themselves so. In fact each such party has been described at various points of time by others as non-communal. Muslim League in Kerala was, for instance, described as non-communal by its coalition partner, because it was not a part of its namesake in the north which had demanded Pakistan. The Akali Party has been described as non-communal because it fought for the freedom of the country, and so on; so that the term has lost much of its precision and is used more to 'malign' than to 'define'.

During the freedom movement, this term was used in contrast to 'nationalism', depending upon whether you believed in the primacy of a national identity or a religion-based identity. During those days, such terms as 'nationalist Muslim' and 'nationalist Sikh' came into vogue. After independence, we no more contrasted communalism with 'secularism'. This shift in the use of terminology has caused confusion about the concept and meaning of the word, because 'secularism' and 'communalism' are not comparable terms. Communalism implies an identity based on a religious community whereas secularism denies it. Secularism is a negative definition, that is an identity should not be based on a religion community, but it does not define what it should be. Secularism in that sense can be better used as an adjective. There can be secular identities. There can be one type of communal 'identity', but there can be several secular 'identities'. A secular identity would include identity based on region, identity based on nation, identity based on class and a number of other factors but not on a religious commitment. Unlike elsewhere, community' in India is used for defining religious communities, and by usage territorial communities have been excluded from this definition. Instead of going into the semantics of the problem, let us make use of whatever is in usage. There is no use revising the entire language of politics at this stage. Since 'community' in India, according to usage, excludes territorial communities and the term is confined to religious communities, so in that sense, alternatives to communalism are regional identities, national identities,

and sometimes even caste identities can be called non-communal if they include members of more than one community.

But in general discussions that we have in this country about the problem of communalism we bracket communalism with other types of sub-national identities. Whenever we talk of fissiparous tendencies, parochialism, a threat to the nation, we refer to communalism along with regionalism, linguism, tribalism. It is this usage of the terms which means that communal identity is as good or as bad as all sub-national identities. In states where regional identities were disfavoured, or disowned, or frowned upon or as was the case in such states as Punjab and Kashmir, where regional identities did not get appropriate channels of expression, people were forced to fall back upon their respective communal identities.

Modernization Sharpens Community Identities

Another fact that we must note for the sake of clarification is that the revival of community identities is, in some respects, a universal phenomenon; in the sense that modernization creates certain forces which sharpen every type of ethnic or religious identity. For modernization creates means, such as education, expansion of media, politicization, economic and technological development which create a sense of self-awareness among the people. As people become aware that they first become aware of is the immediate community to which they belong. An illiterate person may not be aware of the 500 years of Sikh history or the 1400 years of Muslim history; it is only the educated person who knows the entire historical background, who becomes aware of the fat that he inherits that long history. Similarly, technological developments, direct dialling, jet travel, affluence, money, - these have shortened international distance. As a result a Sikh, or a Hindu, or a Muslim, sitting thousands of miles away from his home, remains in touch with developments at home and remains emotionally and nostalgically involved with the developments in the place of his origin. Unlike earlier migrations, when people tried to adjust to and adopt the local culture and become part of it, now, if a person goes from one place to another, he might settle there, but he will periodically visit his homes; he has the means and the facilities, to come back as geographical distances have become shorter. In fact, on account of technological developments and knowledge, both geographical and historical distance have been shortened, with the result that people have come closer to the members of their own community.

This has not been anticipated. In a way, we were taken unaware. Our presumption at the time of independence was that, after development and technological progress, people from ne part of the country would move to another part – a person from Kerala would go to Kashmir; a Kashmiri will go to

Calcutta; a Bengali will go to Bombay – and in the process would forget their geographical and linguistic affiliations to become just Indians in this melting pot. It was also presumed that the British policy of 'divide-and-rule' might not be as effective after they left, as it did before and we would have a homogeneous and well-knit country. Since these presumptions have been belied and we were not mentally prepared for the type of situation that has developed in the country, we were dazed, or we felt confused. Indians are not alone in having this experience and getting confused. Great deal of literature has been published on modernization, which has developed after the Second World War, by many western scholars, which spreads similar confusion. I remember, in a big, monumental work on modernization by Larner – on the modernization of the Middle East, mainly of Muslim communities the author had predicted that Islam would be defenceless against modernization, and Muslims would have to choose between Mecca and mechanization. I think his book was published more than twenty years ago. While reviewing that book, I had commented that Islam might get means to become more effective and mechanization might give its followers more means which might make access to Mecca easier. If there was more mechanisation – better planes, better facilities, better travel-then more people would go to Mecca. This is precisely what has happened. Some twenty or thirty years ago, the number of Haj pilgrims was only in thousands – 20,000 or 30,000 – now the number is no less than two or three millions. It is not due to the revival of religion as such but due to improved infrastructural facilities. In my home town, Jammu, the number of pilgrims to Vaishnav Devi used to be a few hundreds; now, it is very much more. Fifteen lakhs of people visited the holy shrine of Vaishnav Devi last year. So, more people have means to go there; travel facilities have improved. What has happened is that mobilization of communities, or mobility of communities, has become easier, which has sharpened the consciousness of religion identities.

Can Religion and Politics be Separated?

The liberals argue back by saying that the phenomenon is a last-ditch battle of religion. They say that it is an attempt – a desperate attempt – on the part of religion to save itself from the onslaught of science. It is more than that. In fact it is a result of a positive impact and not a negative reaction to modernization. It is on account of modernization that the consciousness of religious identity is increasing. In order to get over this dilemma, one of the remedies suggested is that religion should be a matter between man and the creator and it should have nothing to do with secular life, including politics. Religion and politics should be separate. That is one of the slogans of secularists.

Like many other generalizations, this too is a half-truth, or an inadequate answer to the problem. Firstly, it needs an amazing amount of naivety to

suggest that religion is a matter between man and God. Religion, by definition, is a social concept. Religion is not merely a way of worship, not a sort of philosophy. It is more than that. Religion is a social group – a social entity – with which everybody is related through ceremonies, marriages and kinship. Even those who are agnostics or atheists ultimately get within the fold of the community, by virtue of their kinship tie. You may or may not believe in God, but you are part of the religious society in which you were born. This aspect of religion, i.e. religion as a community, has not been diluted. Religious faith or religious dogmas or religious worship may decline but everybody who joins a community-based organization and feels the urge of the community identity, need not be a religious person. Some of the staunchly religious-minded people, on the other hand, might not be very firm believers in a separate identity. In fact, Indian political history of the last one hundred years bears this out.

Persons like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Dr. Mohd. Iqbal, or Mohammad Ali Jinnah could, by no stretch of imagination, be called revivalists or persons too much steeped in religion. Some of them did not strictly follow religious practices. Dr. Iqbal, who was the most radical reformer that Islam has produced in a couple of centuries, challenged some of the basic concepts of the Quran and the Shariat in the most daring manner. None of them was either a revivalist or a fundamentalist.

So it was not a community which was very much religious minded, that developed the consciousness of a need for religious identity. Persons like Jinnah, in fact, catered to the secular needs of the community. By 'secular' I mean the question of jobs, of political power, of political future. These secular urges moved the Muslim community in a far greater degree than all references to the Quran, or to the "other world" and Shariat by Maulana Azad, the Jamait-e-ul-Ulema-Hind or the Deoband School of Muslim theology.

All the ulema of the country and Muslim scholars were with the Congress. With all the weight of Islamic theology, Islamic knowledge and with the authority of the Quran, they supported Gandhi and the Congress, whereas the Muslim League broadly represented those who did not believe deeply in these theological questions and never touched them. They simply discussed the urge for Muslim identity. Whether or not Muslims should have a separate identity; whether or not they should have any type of a political identity were the questions that eventually influenced the Muslim mind. The League leaders made Muslims conscious that once the British left the country, the Muslim identity would be in danger; because in a democratic system more numerous Hindus would dominate over them. The feelings of fear and insecurity of Muslims not only from a religious point of view, but as a community, was enough to mobilize all Muslims. This urge for identity of various communities

has a certain inevitability on account of the process of modernization. Since we were unprepared for its emergence, we did not know how to handle it that created some of the problems we are faced with.

Our theoretical models, therefore, did not fit into the reality. In particular, the Gandhian model proved inadequate. If you remember, the entire Gandhian framework of nation-building implied a sort of federation of religious. Maulana Azad also used to say that he derived his entire political inspiration from religion. For him, religion and politics were inseparable.

Similarly, a categorical statement was made by Gandhi that those who said that religion and politics should be separated did not know what religion was: “only irreligious people, or ignorant people, talk like that”. So we find that the secular heritage represented either by Gandhi or Azad was based on a religious approach.

Also remember – some of the friends here will remember, though they were very young at that time – that the entire movement of Sheikh Abdullah against Pakistan and the Muslim League was fought from mosques and shrines of Kashmir, starting invariably with the slogans, “Allah-o-Akbar”. They were arguing, “Jinnah and Muslim League do not know Islam. We are the true Muslims. We do not want Pakistan. It is not in the Muslim interest. It is against the teachings of Islam.

Gandhi and Azad, who laid the foundations of Indian secularism, said that the basis of secularism was religion. When they talked of secular India, unity of religions was one plank. The other plank was a sort of federation of religions: suggesting that the Hindu should become a good Hindu and a Muslim should become a good Muslim. They should respect each other and live as separate communities. They are certain implications of basing our entire secular super structure on the basis of religion, which we are now becoming aware of.

You may also note that Maulana Azad and the Jamait-e-ul-Ulema-Hind sought sanction for Indian nationalism in Islamic theology. You know, according to Muslim history, the world is divided into two parts: Dar-ul-Islam and Dar-ul-Harb. One if the abode of peace and the other is the abode of the enemy. But then, the ingenious Ulema devised a third form: Dar-ul-Moahida.

For a very brief period, the Prophet entered into an agreement with the Jews of Medina for a joint partnership rule in that area. When the Prophet migrated from Mecca to Medina, it was administered by the Jews. The Prophet entered into a covenant with the Jews, according to which, both were joint rulers of that area and lived together. On that analogy, the Ulema propounded a theory of Indian nationalism, viz India was a land of Dar-ul-Moahida. According to it Hindus and Muslims had entered into a Moahida, or a contract to live together

in this common country. It went against the two arguments of the Muslim league. In order to answer that argument the Ulema made use of a theological doctrine. They argued that there need not be two nations, one a Hindu nation and another a Muslim. Hindus and Muslims could co-exist in Dar-ul-Moahida. Whereas Iqbal said that nationalism was the enemy of Islam. Jinnah said that non- Muslims, according to their faith, could be a nation. In order to counteract that, Gandhi and Azad evolved a concept of nationalism. But it is no more acceptable to either political leader or intellectuals of the country. After the partition, the Hindus of the country are in no mood to enter into a contract with the Muslims for a common nationhood. For they believe that they were the inhabitants of this country for the last five thousand years - or God knows for how many years. Why should they enter into a new contract with some community that was born yesterday.

Another difficulty which arises is the character of Hinduism. Hinduism and Islam are not comparable. In fact, Hinduism cannot be compared with any other religion. It is neither a revealed religion, nor based on any book. Essentially, it is a spiritual manifestation of Indian nationalism. Starting from the Rig Veda into modern times, it represents the reaction of the people of India to the natural phenomena, to the Himalayas, to the Ganga, and the quest for spiritual and divine power around them sums up the essence of Hinduism. The sacred symbols of Hinduism are the Himalayas and the Ganges. In fact, the most sacred deity for the Hindus is Bharat Mata. You can disown any other Mata or any other Devi or any God, but a Hindu will be extremely intolerant if you are not respectful to Bharat Mata. In some places Bharat Mata has been put into a statue form. Hinduism is indistinguishable from the symbols of the Indian nation, the mythology for the Indian nation, the history of the India nation. Unlike many Muslim countries, Muslims if India do not thus own their entire pre-Islamic phase.

Other Muslim countries are proud of their pre-Islamic heritage. Afghanistan proudly owns its pre-Islamic culture. In Iran, they are proud of their pre-Islamic heroes like Rustam and Sohrab. In Indonesia, they are proud of their pre-Islamic Ramayana heritage. In fact, they are prouder of their Ramayana heritage than the Muslims in this country. I remember, when at the time of Bandung Conference, the Indonesians staged a Ramayana ballet, as a cultural programme for the delegates, the Pakistani delegates walked out of that programme as a protest, because they regarded it as anti-Islamic. But for the Indonesians it was part of their cultural history. In the case of India, when Muslims go into Indian history, they enter into the domain of another religion. Hinduism meets other religions not as another religion but as a representative of an ancient civilization, and ancient culture. It is this character of Hinduism and its assimilative role and not its intolerance that threatens the minorities.

As far as theological doctrines are concerned, Hindus are bound to be tolerant, but the Hindus are really not tolerant as far as disrespect to Bharat Mata is concerned. They are very few Hindus who do not have respect for the Prophet or Islam as such, or the Guru Granth Sahib or the Sikh Gurus. But their suspicion or apprehension, is that the minorities are not sufficiently loyal to the country. It is not a religious clash between the two. But more Hindus feel that the minorities do not conform to their concept of nationalism. Or they find that their intensive emotional and spiritual attachment to the country is not matched by that of the minorities. The other communities are loyal to the country but they are not emotionally and spiritually attached to the country in the same manner as Hindus are. Their attitude towards Bharat Maya is not of a spiritual or emotional type like that of Hindus.

Remember the controversy about Vande Mataram. Muslims used to say that Vande Mataram means 'obeisance to Mata or mother'; it was mother worship; and mother worship or any other worship might be idolatry and hence un-Islamic. That is what some Muslims said, not all Muslims. But that used to be one of the major causes of riots. If you think of Hindu intolerance, it does not stem from their attitude towards other religions, but out of the attitude of other religious communities towards their concept of nationalism.

Ram-Rahim Approach is Counter Productive

Thus attempt to seek similarities in all religions is, in a way, rather counter-productive. When Gandhi said that Ram and Rahim were the same, he did not get as much response from the Muslims as he got from Hindus. He was bitterly disappointed and said, 'I say the same thing among Hindus, they respond'; He said, 'everybody is saying that Quran has said this. Whatever is in the Quran is also in the Gita. Whatever is in the Quran is also what Ram has said'. This Ram-Rahim approach did not satisfy the urge for a distinct identity. The broad-minded secular and generous attitude of Gandhi did not imply favour for separate identities of communities. Other communities felt threatened by his friendly embrace. His capacity to absorb, for synthesis, for assimilation were so powerful that it created an apprehension and a fear, that he was absorbing everybody.

Thus many nationalist Hindus are impatient with minorities because, according to them, Muslims, Sikhs, and others are not that much nationalistic or patriotic as his concept of nationalism demands; in terms of loyalty to the ancient past, from Ram and Krishna down to the current times, and of spiritual and an emotional attitude towards the country as he has been having. I am not referring to the communal or militant or anti-Islam or anti-Sikh Hindus. I am talking about those Hindus who are very secular, but they are not satisfied with the minorities' attitude.

Similar is the case with liberals. Even those liberals, who are not religious, or are agnostic, are also sceptical and impatient about the attitude of the minorities. They also say, why do not they go either to the mosque, or pray in their homes? Why do they mix politics with religion? Again, as I said, religion is, by definition, a social entity. It is difficult for the liberals to understand the urge for identity of a community.

Similarly, many leftists and even Marxists have been treating the assertion of minorities as a reactionary, orthodox, conservative, fundamentalist, revivalist which must be put down. Not that they are against a minority as such, but they find most of the minorities are reactionary and suspect an imperialist hand behind them. As the CIA is suspected to be bent upon destabilising the country and as Muslims and Sikhs are supposed to be becoming instruments of imperialist powers, so, in order to defeat the imperialist game, no encouragement or quarter, should be given to these people. Thus runs the argument.

This way the entire Hindu spectrum- from the RSS to the secular, nationalist, liberal, Marxist extremes – suffers from a lack of understanding and empathy of the urge of the minorities. I am emphasising this point particularly because we tend to equate Hindu communalism and Muslim communalism as two sides of the same coin. For Jinnah was not a reaction to Savarkar or Golwalkar, who were non-entities during those times. Jinnah reacted to Gandhi. Muslim League reacted to Indian nationalism, not to the RSS. They were seeking alibis in RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha. The RSS could not have created the sort of reaction, or apprehension, that made the entire Muslim masses hysterical. The hysteria was not caused by Savarkar or Golwalkar. It was caused as a reaction to nationalism represented by Gandhi.

Even today, the debate really is: do the political minorities or religious minorities have a right to their identity? What are the legitimate limits to that identity if they are entitled to such an identity? This is the crux of the problem, and the debate should be confined to that. We cannot simply wish these minorities away. They are there.

In this context, the Muslim personal law is a typical case in which the Muslim community expresses its urge for identity. But there is a universal reaction against that. From Balasaheb Deoras to Namboodiripad, from Hindu Mahasabha leaders to atheists and the Radical Humanists, from the Socialists, the Communists, and others to the Congress – the entire Hindu spectrum just unites like a solid wall to oppose Muslim demand for a separate law. It is in fascist manifestation of Hinduism, to use a mild phrase. In this matter, how can you distinguish between Deoras and Tarkunde, between Romila Thapra, Dandavae of Janata or anybody else? The entire Hindu fold is one at the

operational level. This creates a situation in which the bridges that existed between communities in terms of personalities, in terms of ideas, in terms of ideologies, are collapsing.

We talk of Punjab, Hindus and Sikhs are still the best of friends. But they are friends, till they discuss politics. A friend of mine was extremely disturbed yesterday. His son and daughter are Sikhs. The daughter is married to a Sikh. It is family of very liberal views. But they reacted very differently to what happened in Muktasar, even though the situation is not a very complicated one. My friend felt disturbed because, the family ties were overtaken by communal polarisation. On Muslim law and a number of issues, there is no dialogue between communities. The basis of nationalism is not clear; the rights of minorities are not clear; the limits are not defined. I am trying to narrow down the area of the entire discussion: I feel that this is the area in which a debate is needed.

Religious Group Identities are not Anti-National

All types of identities are neither reactionary nor progressive. An identity based on a religious community need not be anti-national or unpatriotic. It depends upon the type of its manifestation. If it can be properly channelized its urges can be expressed through highly patriotic, highly moralistic, and highly beneficial forms. What matters for the society is not the motivation of the identity of the community; but the way the urge expresses itself. If an urge can be given outlets, which are healthy, the identity will be healthy.

I need not given you many instances. Just one would suffice. In Kashmir, it was basically the urge of Kashmiri identity which submerged the sentiments of Muslim communalism, and got expression through humanitarian and some of the most progressive ideas, culminating in Kashmir's relations with India and also their behaviour in 1947, when Gandhi saw a ray of hope from them. But the same identity took aggressive forms later. So no identity can be permanently progressive or permanently reactionary. However, recognition of just religious identities alone is not enough. It also raises a number of questions.

The first question is how to provide them with healthy outlets? The second question is how to reconcile and harmonize them with similar other identities and with the national identity? A theory that is often propagated is that while accepting the identity of religious communities, there must be a hierarchy of identities. It is argued that first loyalty should be to the Indian nation and then only to the community. This concept requires careful consideration. For loyalty cannot be easily hierarchised. Loyalty stems from situations.

I will give a katha from the Purana to illustrate my point. According to the Puranic theology, the first loyalty of a woman is to her husband, and all other loyalties are secondary. There is a story of a woman who is sitting by the fireside, while her husband is sleeping with his head on her lap. Meanwhile, their small child comes crawling near the fireside. She is in a dilemma over her first loyalty. For a mother, the child is the first loyalty, but according to the religious injunction of the times, she should remain loyal to the husband. Finally, she decided to remain loyal to the husband and does not disturb his sleep and allow the poor child to fall into the fire and die. The fallacy of this analogy can be easily seen.

It is not possible all the time to perceive loyalties in abstract forms. In this case, the loyalty is not in fact between husband and child. It is between the sleep of the husband and the life of the child. Even if you take the real interest of the husband, it demands that the child should be saved. We should, therefore, try to understand what loyalty to the nation means. It means loyalty to the people who live in this country, including all communities. It is illogical to compare specific interests of a community with an abstract and arbitrary concept of national interest. Moreover, we have to understand that every loyalty is situational in part.

For instance, if there is a doctor sitting at the operation table, and a patient comes. The doctor is a Hindu, and the patient is a Muslim, or a Sikh, or may be a Pakistani. Can we say that the doctor's first loyalty is to India or the Hinduism? His first loyalty is to his profession and not to the country, nor to the so-called nationalism. So, this dogmatic comparison of loyalty is not valid. It depends upon particular situations.

It has been argued during the debate on Muslim personal law that the nation is first and not the Quran. Why should the choice be between the Quran and the nation? Sometimes, the choice is indicated by the situation. In a particular situation, individual conscience may be far more important than the entire nation. You remember the way Bertrand Russel defied the whole country during the First World War in which he refused to participate. You might also recall that so many people in America defied conscription in a similar way. On such occasions the individual conscience was held higher than the nation. Who knows the conscription objectors to war were representing a higher form of national interest, its moral and enlightened form? To say that loyalty to the nation is first and everything else next, without taking into consideration the situational aspect, is a very sweeping generalization. It should depend upon what the nation demands on a particular occasion, or in a particular situation, and what the individual conscience demands in a particular situation or on a particular occasion. It should be seen whether they are comparable or not. If you see the requirements of particular situation, there may be no conflict

between loyalty to the individual conscience and loyalty to the nation. It is only a national conflict on which the entire controversy rests.

Concluding Comments

I would conclude with the observation that the crux of the problem is, first, what do we do with religion based identities? Do we accept them as a social group in the country? If we do, then, secondly what are the boundaries and the limits, to their autonomy? What are the fields which are out of bounds for them and what are the fields in which they should retain autonomy? Thirdly, where they retain autonomy, can we provide adequate means for healthy outlets of their urges and use some of the religious concepts of philosophy for promotion of culture and the development of healthy personalities of the communities? Fourthly, how to reconcile and harmonize the urges of one community with those of other communities and with the national identity? Finally, how to satisfy the urge for the multiple identities of members of a community? Members if every community need a multiplicity of identities to represent their urges. For no identity can be exclusive or monolithic unless its members stop growing.

Take a person in Punjab. One identity is: either he is Hindu or Sikh. The other identity is of being a Punjabi. The third identity may be as an agriculturist, or a rural or an urban person. Within agriculture he may belong to a peasant class or a landed class. Then, for his mental growth, he needs an ideology. He may belong to an ideological group, which may be a political group or a political party.

So, for the healthy growth of any community, its members will have to acquire more than one identity. No single identity can represent all the urges of a community, without emasculating, distorting and endangering the mind of its members, so that it is in the interests of the community that its members belong to multiple identities.

In such a context, the role of communal identities should not necessarily be discussed in terms of community versus nation, but it should also be discussed in terms of the enlightened interest of the community itself. Is the Akali Dal in the interests of the Sikh community? Apart from the question is, does it serve the best interests of the Sikhs? Or in case of the Muslim League – does it serve the best interests of the Muslims? Or does the RSS serve the best interests of Hindus? We have to discuss it from that angle also, i.e. the enlightened self-interest of the individual members of the community.

One way is fixing up the limits to autonomy or the range of activities of a community so that it does not transgress similar autonomy of other communities. Mill was asked, ‘What is the limit of my freedom? Can I hit you?’

He replied, 'Your freedom ends where my nose begins'. Thus, whenever a community demands some facilities for itself, it should be willing to concede similar facilities to other communities also. This one limit. The other limit would be, in cases where a party confined to only one community returns to power while the other community is complexly deprived of power, that I think is a point at which we must apply a brake. In a country like India there must be some provision by which no single community, however large it might be should through the use of the electrical process, acquire an exclusive monopoly of political power. Either a constitutional, legal or conventional method should be found by which political power can be shared with various communities living here.

These conditions should suffice to put certain limits to the degree of autonomy that a community identity should get in a country.

COMMUNALISM: DEFINITION AND CONCEPTS*

Pramod Kumar

Students of social phenomena have offered different explanations for the existence and persistence of communalism in India. The variations in their explanations have roots in their conflicting answers to the questions relating to the meaning, origin and causation of communalism. Further, even the reasons for the need to understand and analyse communalism varied, with the historical conditions and of course with the theoretical framework of social analysis. For example, before independence the concurrence of the frequent manifestation of communalism in communal rioting and the attempt to understand it was more striking. This was due to the fact that communalism was seen as a hindrance to anti-colonial national freedom movement. The specter of Hindu-Muslim confrontation threatened the Congress claim of a unified secular nationalism and made cooperation across religious lines exceedingly difficult. Leaders of both communities joined with Congress stalwarts to discover a basic solution to the underlying causes of rioting.[1]

Similarly, Nehru writes regarding the role of British:

> It is a political question of the upper middle classes which has arisen partly because of the attempts of the British Government to weaken the national movement or to create rifts in it and partly because of the prospect of political power coming into India and the upper classes desiring to share in the spoils of offices.[2]

The compelling immediacy of over-throwing colonialism influenced the theoretical formulations on the subject and in the process restricted its scope. Political activists and theoreticians tried to grasp the essence of communalism in relation to the nationalism with the assumption that the better they understood this relationship, the more it would help fight British colonialism. This kind of approach can be discerned from the writings of Bhagwan Dass, Achyut Patwardhan, Jawaharlal Nehru and others.

This understanding implies a certain contrariety. The British colonialism may have used and perpetuated the existing reality of suspicion, fear and insecurity prevalent amongst various religious, caste or ethnic groups. But to say that it is the colonial mode of production which has caused the emergence of the

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1 Ashok Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan (1942), *The Communal Triangle*, Kitabistan, p.53.

2 Jawaharlal Nehru (1975), *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, Orient Longman, pp.175-190.

phenomenon of communalism may not be a valid generalization. Communalism was able to develop in an alarming way even after independence, after the end of British colonialism. This only highlights the fact that the theorization on the subject was inadequate or incomplete. The real nature of communalism was not correctly understood. An adequate theory of communalism may have helped the masses to launch a political-ideological struggle against it with a correct strategy and tactics. No doubt, theory alone cannot help to resolve conflicts and contradictions, but a scientific theory can help to launch the struggle on correct lines. However, there were authors like W.C. Smith, K.B. Krishna in the pre-Independence phase who tried to understand communalism in a much broader sense. For them communalism was to be seen in relating to its use by British imperialism, landed interests, bourgeois forces and a mass of people striving for freedom from all dominations. To quote W.C. Smith:

> All the present time, there are three aspects of the communal problem in India. One is its creation and use by the reactionaries, British imperialism and the landed interests and so on in India; reactionaries endeavouring to divert energy from the fundamental Indo-British struggle; and endeavouring so to disrupt and to vitiate Indian corporate life as to render it demoralised and helpless. Secondly, there are the bourgeois forces, divided among themselves and each struggling for power; for freedom from domination from above, for freedom to dominate below. Thirdly, there are the masses of the people, amongst who the mighty thrust towards freedom – freedom from all domination – is being couched in communal or local nationalist terms.[3]

These scholars identified the social forces creating and using communalism. But the character of these forces has changed in the post-Independent phase. However, for the Indian leadership, particularly Nehru, communalism was a kind of an aberration. Nehru though the communalism will get subsumed in the process of industrialization and with the penetration of science and technology.

> I am afraid I cannot get excited over this communal issue, important as it is temporarily. It is after all a side issue, and it can have no real importance in the large scheme of things. Those who think of it as the major issue think in terms of British imperialism continuing permanently in this country. Without that basis of thought, they would not attach so much importance to one of its inevitable off

[3] W.C. Smith (1946), *Modern Islam in India*, Usha Pub., p.231, K.B. Krishna (1939), *The Problem of the Minorities*, George Allen and Unwin Edn., London.

> shoots. I have no such fear and so my vision of a future India contains neither imperialism nor communalism.[4]

The theorization on the subject of communalism in the pre-1947 period could not throw adequate light on the persistence and growth of the phenomenon of communalism in the post-1947 phase. The objective of the theorization was mainly to study communalism in relation to nationalism and colonialism. A dynamic analysis of the phenomenon with its specific context may have helped to understand it in a more comprehensive and in-depth way. But it was thought that since communalism was a pre-capitalist notion and was caused by colonialism it will get eroded after independence. The perspective was that with the initiation of the process of development of science, technology, industry, and with the steady spread of literacy, communalism and other such retrogressive tendencies would automatically get subsumed and would lead ultimately to the emergence of a new kind of social and economic groupings and identities under-cutting the base upon which communal (i.e. caste, religion, tribal, racial) social relations and politics rest. It was believed that "communal particularism" will be submerged by universalistic character of market forces.

Consequently, in the initial years after independence i.e. upto the sixties, social sciences researchers paid scant attention to study communalism. This is evident from the number of books and articles published on communalism during this phase. It is of interest to note that there was a decrease of 20.27 per cent of the publication of articles on communalism in Phase II, i.e. 1948-1966, as compared to Phase I, i.e. 1925-1947. It is further revealing to find that in Phase III, i.e. 1967-1988, the percentage increase in the publication of articles on communalism was 400 as compared to Phase II, i.e. 1948-1966. Whereas in the publication of books on communalism, the percentage increase in Phase II as compared to Phase I was 637.50 and 2088.14 in Phase III as compared to Phase II.[5]

It is against interesting to find that since the mid-sixties, with the increase in incidents of communal rioting, attempts to understand and analyse, communalism and communal violence became more pronounced and widespread. Most of the studies undertaken, however, neglected the notion of totality and attempted to understand communalism only through its manifestation, i.e. communal rioting. Communal rioting was seen as a result of increasing intolerance of other religious group beliefs and discrimination on the basis of religious group identities. This was seen as a counterpoise to

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[4] Jawaharlal Nehru (1975), "Presidential Address at Lucknow Congress, 12 April 1936, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 7, Orient Longman Pub., p.190.

[5] Meena Khurana and Others (1989), *Bibliography on Communalism*, unpublished, CRRID, Chandigarh.

secularism. In other words, communalism was seen as a negation of secularism i.e. acceptance and tolerance of separate religious identities.[6]

Hence the need to study this. 'This approach underplayed the complexity of both phenomenon of communalism and wide spectrum of its operative reality. By identifying communalism at a single point locus it loses sight of a whole spectrum in which communalism manifests itself; and, in locating it at a point of tension, its silent manifestation goes unnoticed."[7]

The threat posed to the class politics by the institutionalisation of communalism was one of the main factors which attracted the attention of social scientists and activists.

> Upto 1960s, the so-called "Congress Socialism" was the common ideology which sought to bid the majority of the masses to the ruling class. But once the initial economic boom was over, and the conditions of the masses started worsening and the faith in the government started declining, this ideology lost all its meaning. Since 1960s there is no such common ideology though an attempt was made through slogans like Garibi Hatao, etc. This lack of ideology has led to a hiatus between the ruling class and the masses threatening the ruling classes with a compete loss of legitimacy. Communalism is one such ideology which can be a nationwide ideology binding majority of the people, diverting their attention from the real issues and securing the interests of the ruling classes. This is the reason why even the ruling party is coming out more and more openly with its communal bias.[8]

The other trend was to study communalism in relation to, community and nationalism. The systematic and scientific study of communalism is imperative, not merely because of its potential to disintegrate the country on communal lines, but mainly because it is a distorted, mystified and unscientific view of social reality.

Communalism blurs real contradictions of the society. In other words, it tries to mystify the real placement of individuals in society. For instance, communalism projects that all Sikhs are martial, separatist; all Muslims are

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[6] Rasheeduddin Khan (1989), 'Communalism and Secularism in Indian Polity: Dimensions and Challenges' in the Challenges to the Polity, edited by R.C. Dutt, Langer, page 4, "That is why the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India with all its other shortcomings, notwithstanding the lapses of its successive governments and major national parties still remains the most stable polity in the wide range of newly independent developing countries of the world and is respected for its commitment to secularism and secular democratic politics, which stands out as unique in the backdrop of Third World politics that is vitiated by religious fundamentalism, inter-ethnic violence, oppressive coup d'etat regimes, traditional autocracies and a wide range of undemocratic forms of government.

[7] Harbans Mukhia (1990), 'Communalism and Indian Polity' in *Secularism and Indian Polity* edited by Bidyut Chakrabarty, Segment Book Distributors, New Delhi, p.83.

[8] A.R. Desai (1985), *Caste and Communal Violence in Independent India*, CGSmtp., p.42.

uncouth and brutal; all Hindus are expansionists and money-minded. These notions are projected to negate the image of a genuine religious man who is a non-communalist. In other words, communalism highlights only those aspects of religion which are antagonistic rather than those that are humanistic and universal. In this way, it becomes easier for the communalist to use the garb of religion to articulate their interests. The focus of communalist propaganda is, therefore, based on differences between religious, caste or other ascriptive groups. The communalist ignores or pretends ignorance of the common cultural heritage, history and language which are shared by the people and which transcends religious, caste or other ascriptive group differences.

Not only this, the continuous propagation and subsequent inculcation of communal ideology among workers tend to divide them and hamper their struggle for better life. It also leads to the perpetuation of the inequitable division of labour by restricting the formation of the skills to particular religious, caste or other ascriptive groups. The multiples the sense of discrimination and feelings of deprivation, which find expression in hatred, suspicion or rioting against the groups identified on the basis of a communal understanding of reality.

Above all, communalism hampers the formation of a rational and progressive perception of social, economic and political process and hinders the struggle for equality and building up of a just society.

Defining Communalism

Social science literature in the global context attributes a positive meaning to the term communalism. but in India this term has been used to denote a negative phenomenon which has a disastrous consequence. it is our contention that to avoid confusion and semantic diversion and to comprehend the phenomenon with greater clarity, either a new term maybe coined or the existing term viz, communalism, be scientifically defined in the specific historical, political context. Ideas which are not an expression and product of social reality, but of a process of “pure thought” and imitation cannot help in understanding and comprehending the social phenomenon and reality.

Errors of perception and conception have inevitably led to a wrong understanding of communalism.

Communalism as Community Assertion

Communalism has been understood in various ways. Some authors understand communalism as the political assertiveness of a community in

order to maintain its identity in a plural society which is undergoing modernization.[9]

The following three features of the political assertiveness of these 'communities' are identified by these authors:

(1) The homogenizing and universalizing forces led 'communities' to define, maintain and continuously revise their distinct identities;

(2) The concentration of one 'community' in one area and its intermingling with members of another 'community' living in the same area may aggravate political assertiveness to an extreme form, like secession;

(3) The differences in wealth, status and power of members of different 'communities' leads to political assertiveness of 'communities'.

This definition of communalism, alongwith its aforementioned features, was unimaginatively applied to Indian conditions.

According to Ratna Naidu, "Communal situation is characterized by tensions between culturally distinct but geographically intermingled communities".[10]

Social scientists subscribing to this view further went on to define religious, caste or other ascriptive groups as communities.[11]

It is relevant to point out here that defining communalism in relation to community is the result of an understanding which has developed in social science literature in the global context. In this the term communal has been defined in relation to the community which means a common identity accompanied by common culture, history and interest and further these characteristic features of the community have been seen to have their basis in religion.[12] For instance, according to Durkheim, a religion is a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, the things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. The individuals which compose it feel themselves united to each other by the simple fact that

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[9] Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe (1970), "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, Milton Gordon (1964), *Assimilation in American Life*, OUP, New York; James S. Coleman (1960), *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, University of California Press, Barkley & Los-Angeles; Joseph Rothschild (1981), *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, Columbia, University Press, New York.

[10] Ratna Naidu (1980), *Communal Edge to Plural Societies*, New Delhi, p.87.

[11] Balraj Puri opines that Communalism implies an identity based on religious community, whereas secularism denies it. Balraj Puri (1976), "Communalism: Its Meaning and Practices", paper presented at CRRID at the workshop organized on *Approaches and Methods to Study Communalism*.

[12] Keneth W. Jones defined communalism "a consciously shared religious heritage which becomes the dominant form of identity for a given segment of society".
Kenneth W. Jones (1968), "Communalism in the Punjab", *Journal of Asian Studies*, 28, p.39.

they have a common faith. A society – whose members are united by the fact that they think in the same way in regard to the sacred world and its relations with the profane world and by the fact that they translate these common ideas into common practices, is what is called a church.[13]

In this understanding "communal" has been defined vis-a-vis one's own group. Whereas, the meaning which the term communalism has acquired in the Indian context is in relation to other groups. The term communalism has both the negative as well as positive characteristics. For example, communalism reinforces the commonality of interest of one religious, caste or other ascriptive group and at the same time, highlights divergent and even antagonistic aspects vis-a-vis other religious, caste or ascriptive groups. In other words, it reinforces the intra-group unity or communality, but highlights the inter-group differentiations and antagonisms.

The new meaning which the term communalism has acquired, particularly in the Indian context and it well accepted meaning in social science literature has been contradictory. This has resulted in an erroneous understanding of the social phenomenon. Some of the scholars used the well-accepted definition of communalism to understand a social phenomenon of divergent sort. Consequently, the phenomenon of communalism was mixed up with the growth of national identity. Political mobilizations by religious fundamentalists, casteists and other similar parochialists were taken to the assertions of national or sub-national identities. If this logic is extended to contemporary Punjab, it would mean that the Sikhs are a 'community' and hence, have an inalienable right to self-determination. But the perception of Khalistan among some members of the Sikh religious, group or Hindu Rashtra among some members of the Hindu religious group does not make them different 'communities'. By definition religion may be only one element of 'community'. Hence, the Punjabis may be considered a community, because they share a common historical heritage, culture and language. So a Punjabi Hindi is no different from a Punjabi Sikh except in some aspects relating to religion. Similarly, the treatment of Hindu and Muslim religious groups as distinct communities is equally incorrect because a Bengali Muslim has not much in common with a Muslim living in the North except his religion and a Bengali Muslim shares a common historical heritage, culture and language with a Bengali Hindu.[14]

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[13] Emile Durkheim (1915), *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, The Freeman Press, paperback, pp.59-63.

[14] Muslims do not constitute an all India community, because there are more intra-community diversities than common features.
Imtiaz Ahmed (1971), "Muslim Politics", *Islam and Modern Age*, November.
Suneet Chopra (1976), "Problem of Muslim Minority in India", *Social Scientist*.
However there is a tendency among minority communities to acquire a greater potential to create a pan-Indian consciousness and all India community. This is happening mainly due to communal violence,

Communalism as Discrimination on Religious Basis?

Communalism is also defined as the discrimination or protection of interests on a religious basis and is the outcome of conflicting religious practices. This understanding has the following implications:

It implies that religious groups are homogenous in nature and their members have common social, economic and political interests which bind them together.[15] This assumed that there exist separate socio-cultural, economic and political interests of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and these are dissimilar and divergent.

To accept this implication is to analyse the question of communalism within the communal framework. In fact, it is this assumption which is the basis of communal propaganda. The repeated assertion regarding the existence of such interests by communalists has even distorted the perception of some of the analyst and policy makers. It is very difficult to accept such an assumption when members of a religious group pursue different occupations and have dissimilar socio-economic background and cultural heritage. These elements of communal propaganda distort real issues and misrepresent real interests. To quote Bipan Chandra,

> The very tools of analyses have been contaminated by it (communalism) as a result of the ideological conditioning of the last 100 years, when the middle classes and the intelligentsia were perceptually surrounded by a communal outlook in politics, in the press, in literature and particularly often been viewed in the social sciences, as in real life, through conscious or unconscious communal assumptions. For example, if one's analysis starts by accepting the communal leaders as leaders and representatives of their 'communities' – and if one refers to the Hindu, Muslim or Sikh communalists as Hindu leaders, Muslim leaders, or Sikh leavers – or if

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cultural discrimination, physiological make-up, common religion and ruthless political initiatives. This view has been mainly expressed by Irfan Habib, Iqtidar Alam Khan, Javed Alam.

Ifran Habib, Iqtibar Alam Khan and Gopal Singh (1976), "Problems of Muslim Minority in India, *Social Scientist*, June.

Javed Alam (1983), "Dialectics of Capitalist Transformation and National Crystallization", *Economic and Political Weekly*, January.

But the question remains how far these factors which are contributing to the self-consciousness of being a (religious) Community, can withstand the historical process of formation of a *community* which transcends the boundary of religion.

[15] There are many authors who assumed that interest and structural communities based on religion do exist. Prabha Dixit argues that communalism is the phenomenon which make use of religio-cultural differences to achieve political ends. Prabha Dixit (1974), *Communalism: A Struggle for Power*, New Delhi, Rajni Kothari cannot be clubbed with the above mentioned authors. However, on this question though not explicitly, the logic of his arguments can be interpreted to mean that he is using the term 'minorities' for 'communities'. See Rajni Kothari (1984), "Communalism in India: The New Face of Democracy", Lokayan, June.

> one accepts communal political activity is the political activity of their 'communities' one is already accepting the basic communal framework of thought and analysis. On the other hand, if no communal, economic, political and social interests exist, the communalists cannot be representing such interests and are not, therefore, representative of their 'communities".[16]

The use of communal categories to understand and unfold social reality leads to mistaking the symptoms for causes. Remedies are then prescribed to eradicate the symptoms. The result is that the problem persists while the symptoms may disappear. To understand and counter communalism it is no doubt necessary to recognize the religious factor as an important component, but till will be hazardous to accept the notion of Hindu interest, Muslim interest or Sikh interest and so on. once this notion is rejected, there shall be no question about secular needs, aspirations and expectations of different religious groups being divergent and dissimilar.

The second implication is that communalism seeks the protection of the interests of one religious group at the cost of another. To accept this is to again reinforce the communal propaganda. Communalism does not and cannot protect the interests of one religious group at the cost of another. Communalists do not benefit the 'community' in whose name they seek concessions or do they safe-guard their religion. It is only a few individuals who benefit from this and such examples become a tool in the hands of communalists to mobilize support.

It arouses expectations for the fulfilment of the secular needs and reinforces the belief that a particular religious group is being discriminated against. The present system is not geared to benefit one or the other 'community'. Hence demands raised along communal lines cannot benefit 'communities' as a whole, but may only benefit individuals within them.

The third implication is the historical inevitability of the phenomenon of communalism in a society having plurality of religions and castes. The assumption that the very existence of religions would make communalism inevitable is false. Communalism, unlike class consciousness and the fight against imperialism, has not been caused by contradictions in society.

Rather it is based on the perception of common non-religious interests of a particular religious, caste or other ascriptive group. Present day communalism, which is a modern ideology, uses religion to fulfil their secular interests and will persist even if religious group identities are abolished. Only its form may change and some other retrogressive category may replace religion.

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[16] Bipan Chandra (1984), *Communalism in Modern India*, Vikas, p.101.

To subscribe to the above mentioned definition alongwith its implications is to accept the premises of communalism. Any analysis of or solution to the problem made on these premises is bound to be communal.

Communalism is the Use of Religion

Some of the authors also believe that communalism is the use of symbols and institutions associated with religious, caste or other ascriptive groups in politics. Use of symbols and institutions associated with religion, caste or other ascriptive categories of social organization in politics, is only a manifestation of communalism. This manifestation of communalism gets transformed into sufficient conditions for its perpetuation. On the other hand, it should be recognized that every use of symbols and institutions associated with religion, caste or other ascriptive groups is not communal. For example, the use of the notion of 'Rama Rajya' by Gandhiji was essentially a tactic to mobilize masses against colonial domination. Similarly, the movement launched by Wahabis against landlords and the British colonialists in North India and Bengal proclaimed a Holy War against the infidel, and appealed not only to the oppressed to unite against their exploiters but to the Muslims to unite for the defence of their religion.

The "Wahabi" movement, therefore, did not set lower class Muslims against lower-class Hindus in an open conflict, nor did it divert lower-class Muslims from economic issues to a false solidarity with their communal "friends" but class enemies. Nonetheless it did encourage communal attitudes, especially in religious thinking, and left a considerable section of the Muslim masses more susceptible to later communalist propaganda than they might otherwise have been.[17]

None of these political activities, however, was anti-Hindu or against any other ascriptive group. The movement made use of religious ideology, as class struggles in pre-industrialist society have often done and though religious, it was not simply communalist.

In view of the above definitional inadequacies the need is to develop a systematic definitional paradigm to explain the underlying causal interactions among phenomena of widely divergent types.

A starting point may be to define communalism as antagonistic assertiveness in political, social and economic spheres by one aggregation of individuals against another after being organised along religious, caste or other ascriptive lines.[18]

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[17] W.C. Smith (1946), op. cit., p.193.

[18] It is possible that linguistic, ethnic, caste and religious group identifies co-exist. The assertion of the primary category of group identity varies with the changing times. For example, in Punjab in the 1950s

In other words, communalism is to believe or to propagate that the socio-economic and political interests of all members of one religious, caste or an ascriptive group are similar and are dissimilar, divergent and antagonistic to those of another.[19]

Communalism is an ideology which derives its existence and persistence from the specific socio-economic conditions prevailing in India. Secondly, communalism not only acquires, colour but operates through traditional and modern structures. The following are some of the distinctive features of the definition of communalism.

Duality in Communalism: Integration and Differentiation

The inherent notion of communalism is the inter-group differences and intra-group commonalty of secular interests having their basis in religious, caste or other ascriptive group aggregations. In other words, communalism underplays the homogenous and common aspects shared by members of different religious, caste, or ascriptive groups and highlights their differences. For instance, communalists use religion as an instrument to cement communal monoliths. Communal propaganda projects the commonalty of social, political and economic interests of all members of a particular religious, caste or other ascriptive group. It creates an illusion of the universal content of the secular interest of unequal individual members of a religious group.

Further it will be hazardous to accept the notions of Hindu interests or Muslim interests, Hindu history or Muslim history, and so on. Once this notion is rejected there can be no question about secular needs, aspirations and expectations of different religious groups being divergent and dissimilar.

Therefore, it will be wrong to categorize communalism as Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. The danger is that such a categorization would further sharpen communal polarization. The right approach is to identity the basis of a particular communal mobilization. It should not be forgotten that communalism uses religious or caste group differences, but is not caused by them.

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the primary category of group identity was language but after its division in the mid-sixties, it acquired religious overtones in addition to the language determinant.

[19] There is a broad agreement with the definition given by W.C. Smith, but with one important difference. Smith emphasises the distinction and even antagonism as central to the definition and rightly so, but the intra-group commonality aspect to reinforce communal monoliths does not find adequate reference. According to Smith, communalism in India may be defined as that ideology which has emphasised the social, political and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion and has emphasised the distinction, even the antagonism between such groups: the words “adherents” and religion taken in the most nominal sense. W.C. Smith (1946), op.cit..p.187.

Communalism has Elements of Ideology

Elements of communal ideology constitutes one of the necessary conditions for the persistence of communalism. In the absence of these elements of ideology, communalism cannot occur or persist. It needs to be pointed out that these elements are not only the result of the conflicts arising out of the specific nature of socio-economic development, but is also one of the conditions for the persistence of such conflicts in a distorted form.

Communalism reflects objective reality in a distorted way. For example, there is widespread unemployment. Communalists do not question the social system which fails to generate adequate opportunities for employment. Instead, communalists, particularly of the incremental-conformist type, seek a reallocation of the available scarce job opportunities along religious, caste or other ascriptive group lines. As is evident from this example, communalism reflects objective reality in a distorted way in so far as it does not explain the cause nor suggest a structural solution to unemployment. Secondly, communalism is a distorted reflection of reality insofar as it seeks employment opportunities along religious, caste or other ascriptive group lines, but not for all unemployed persons.

It may be appropriate to mention here that communalism, like fascism and racialism, also blurs the real issues and conflicts of a society. For instance, fascism articulated the supposedly democratic demands of the people but it did so to protect the interests of the monopoly fractions of the bourgeoisie. This concealment of the real interests of monopoly fractions under the cover of supposedly democratic demands was accomplished by projecting Jews as the exploiters of the people, hence, it was propagated that everyone who opposed Jews was a natural ally of socialism.[20]

Communal propaganda also smudged objective reality. It does not represent the hidden structure of concrete reality. The real conflicts are likely to get mystified and thus result in the identification of displaced targets. For example, in Ahmedabad the main trade union in textile mills is the Majoor Mahajan. This trade union has on its rolls more than 80 per cent of the total labour force employed in textile mills. It was interesting to observe that workers from among the Muslims were conspicuous by their absence from the Majoor Mahajan. They had formed their own union called the Sarni Kamgar Sabha. The Bombay Trade Union Act, also was applicable to Gujarat State then, stipulates that only the 'majority' trade union can negotiate with the management. This renders the Sarni Kamgar Sabha ineffective. Further a large section of workers from among the Muslims could not find employment or were under-employed after they were retrenched in the late sixties due to a

[20] See for details, Danial Gurein (1974), *Fascism and Big Business*, N.Y. Pathfinder Press.

crisis in the textile industry. Yet, the workers who happen to be Muslims continue to side with Sarnia Kamgar Sabha and those who happen to be Hindus are the Majoor Mahajan. The pervasiveness of communal ideology thereby not only drives an unnatural wedge between workers but fosters communal animosity and hatred among them. Communalism has been used as an instrument for achieving the ends set forth by sectional groups to serve their narrow interests. The prevalence of communal ideology, the non-absorption and displacement of existing skills make competition for jobs more severely communal. In this context, it is necessary to point out that there is no mechanical relationship between an individual's objective being and social existence. It is our contention that not all human thought, consciousness and ideology might be the valid reflection and cognition of concrete reality. There are ideas which mystify the real conflicts and blur the vision regarding the real social placement of individuals affected by them. This means that individuals are not aware of their own objective reality. For instance, to take the existence of Hindu, Muslim or Sikh interests to be an objective fact is to become victim of empirical reality. Religious differences are real. But portraying these differences to be the basis of political, economic or social organization and taking them to be the main inner contradiction in secular spheres, is an aspect of false or distorted ideology. The objective reality is filtered through values and beliefs adhered to by the social actors, which would constitute social reality for them. This may not be in consonance with objective reality. There are mediations which blur the real social existence of an individual from himself or herself.[21] Therefore it is necessary to comprehend the process of blurring issues and interests. This is imperative because a phenomenon involved a historical process having various pre-stages in its formation.

This point can be illustrated from the findings of a field study conducted in Maunath Bhanjan – a centre of handloom production and trade in Azamgarh district of Uttar Pradesh. The emergence of retailers of yarn during the early seventies is perceived by wholesalers, most of whom happen to be Hindus, as the emergence of "Muslims in yarn trade". Even the reasons for the emergence and growing prosperity of the new retailers are explained as follows: Muslim traders sell their product to Muslim weavers on credit. We

[21] See for details on the issue of ideology, Jorge Larrain (1982), *Marxism and Ideology* (p.103): "Even Althusser understands this by admitting that although ideology does not correspond to reality it does make illusion to reality". Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, p. 153. A false or distorted ideology is not a mere epistemologic or intellectual problem. Neither is false ideology a delusion or a fantasy without any basis in reality. Then the question that arises is whether the social being of an individual is not the reflection of his objective being? If communalism is an ideology how can it be false? The argument behind this question is that something which has widespread effects, like ideology cannot be false. This argument equates falsity with non-existence or non-reality. There is no reason why one should oppose falsity to existence. The false statement is quite real, it exists and has effects and yet it entailed a distortion.

cannot do so and, hence, are put at a disadvantage. We can do with less profit, but we cannot write-off our dues from these Muslims, who instigate riots to absolve themselves of credit liabilities".

Such beliefs arise from actual or pretended ignorance of market conditions prevalent in the household industry which, in turn, is operating within a capitalist economy. The emergence of retailers in the trade of yarn could possibly be attributed to:

(a) Surplus accumulation among a section of weavers during the different boom in the local market, viz. 1966-69, 1980-83 etc.

(b) The gradual emergence of small brokers as merchant manufactures and yarn traders.

Trade in cloth particularly has a greater credit component, some of which is advanced by organized credit institutions but much more by wholesaler middlemen and retailers. The amount of credit varies with the market demand of commodities, i.e. the higher the demand the more the likelihood of faster circulation of money leading to cash payments. Such market conditions are projected as benefitting only one section of traders who happen to be Muslims. Competition per se is related to the direction and nature of capitalist development. But its perception as competent between traders happened to belong to two different religious groups is caused by the operation of communal ideology and, in turn, it reinforces this ideology.

Not a Total Ideology

Communalism is not a direct manifestation of contradistinctions and is not a total ideology. It is not an ideology of any particular class. It appears to the middle and lower strata. Communalism appears to these strata as a panacea. The middle strata on the one hand conform to communal ideology and on the other tries to gain certain incremental benefits. It is most vociferous in raising communal issues and shaping communal ideology. In other words, communal ideology has its appeal among the middle stratum but it would not be correct to infer from this that communalism is a middle class ideology. The function of communal ideology is to conceal the real character of the conflicts by providing mystified 'motives' and 'banners' and misplaced targets. For example, the conflict between big and small capital, between landlords and capitalist farmers, has been often concealed by communal ideology under the cover of religious or caste conflicts in India.

Communalism: A Modern Phenomenon

Another distinct feature of communalism is that it is a modern phenomenon. No doubt communalism has incorporated some of the traditional ideological elements, but the content of present-day communalism derives its life force

from the new system of production and ideology.[22] For instance, in Punjab the nature of industrialization and agricultural development has given birth to a rural and urban bourgeoisie at the regional level. Relative stagnation in agriculture and lo-sided industrial development provide meagre scope for the expansion of investment opportunity in industry and trade. The persistence of communal ideology has provided a tool to sectional interests to exploit and mobilize the emerging regional bourgeoisie along communal lines for maintaining and enhancing their economic and political power. This, however, does not imply that modern communalism is a product of pre-capitalist notions or has been caused by past structures or institutions. Instead, it is a modern phenomenon flowing from modern structures.

To sum up, communalism is an ideology. It is not a total ideology and it is not an ideology of any particular class, not even of the middle class. Communalism is a distorted ideology as it reflects objective reality not inadequately but in a distorted way.

Elements of Communal Ideology

The elements of communal ideology are rooted in the basic assumption from which communalism derives its strength and reinforcement. The communalists enter into a dialogue with each other by referring to the fact gathered on the communal basis, without reinvestigating the theoretical assumptions on the basis of which the facts have been collected and interpreted. For instance, these elements of communal ideology has its basis in assumptions like: (a) Communal Based Nationality; (b) Communal Competitions; (c) Ruler-Centric Religious Based History; (d) Ascriptive Based Collectivities, Interaction and Discourse.

The political and social discourse between the competing communal groups takes place not merely through traditional mediums but also modern ones. This debate uses the medium of family, religious institutions and also media, both print and electronic, educational institutions like schools, political parties, etc. the authenticity of ideas having communal overtones also depends upon the disseminating medium. In this case it is necessary to understand that the degree of legitimacy attached to any medium is measured within the prevalent framework of political and social thought. Consequently, the social appeal of ideas depends upon, how clearly and effectively they reflect the communal way of thinking. In this an attempt shall be made to identify the elements of communal ideology and the assumption behind them.

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[22] P.C. Joshi (1980), 'The Economic Background of Communalism in India – A model of Analysis' in B.R. Nanda ed. Essays in Modern History, Oxford University Press.
The History of many countries bears testimony to the fact that the dead past – with all its memories, myth and legends – comes to life only in solution to problems and compulsions of the living present.

(a) Communal based Nationality

The understanding that religion is the sole basis of a nationality and the members of a religious group have an inalienable right to self-determination is subscribed by the communalists of all varieties. For instance, in the pre-Independence phase, the All India Muslim League speaking on behalf of the Muslims, claimed that Muslims are a separate nation. Vir Savarkar, President of Hindu Mahasabha, agreed with this claim. While addressing the 1937 all India Mahasabha session held at Ahmedabad, he observed, "India cannot be assumed today to be a Unitarian and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations, in the main, the Hindu and Muslim". Even after independence similar kind of views were expressed by various leaders. For instance, Urdu Times dated October 4, 1986, reported a provocative speed of Shiv Sena Chief, Bal Thackeray, whose first paragraph is as under:

> This nation is the land of Hindus. The oppression by Muslims and Sikhs will not be tolerated now. We will convert this nation into 'Hindustan' (or the place for Hindus). Every sacrifice will be made to obliterate the name "India" and "Bharat". Every 'Shiv Sainik' (a member of Shiv Sena, political party) will take up arms in defence of Hinduism. Under the guise of being a minority, Muslims have benefitted a lot in this nation and the government has also encouraged them. This so despite the fact that Muslims are conspiring against Hinduism, which conspiracy cannot be put to an end by either the government or the police. If there is anyone who can control Muslims, it is the Shiv Sainiks who are defenders of Hinduism (translated from Urdu).

Similarly, communalists of other variety accept the communal stereotypes propagated by rival communalists so as to create and widen communal cleavages. For example, Muslim communalists brand the Indian State to be "Hindu". Hindu communalists accept this and immediately start prescribing a code of conduct for "Muslims".

> After partition, Hindus are the owners of the India and Muslims second class citizens. Muslims should show gratitude towards their 'Maaliks' for allowing them to live peacefully. Since Hindus are the owners of this land they should be permitted to take their processions through any road or locality with music bands. Members of the minority community should stop prayers until the procession has passed away if they feel that they cannot concentrate.[23]

Similarly, Hindu communalists put forward the charge that Muslims are anti-national as they celebrate the victory of Pakistani sports teams over Indian

[23] 'Gems from other recent speeches of Bal Thackeray', *Muslim India*, Vol. 19, July 1984, p.301.

teams. 'There is hardly any Muslim who is faithful to "Hindustan". All of them without exception, rejoice when Pakistan defeats Indian in cricket or hockey matches. They would not doubt greet Pakistani soldiers with garlands if they conquered India. During the Indo-Pak wars the sympathy of every Muslims was with Pakistan'.[24]

Muslim communalists rebut this charge (but within the communal framework) by referring to the active role of "Muslims" in the freedom struggle and the two wars against Pakistan. Muslim communalists charge Hindus with sowing the seeds of national disintegration by always suspecting the integrity and partitionism of Muslims.

> ...Muslim loyalty is unimpeachable. There has not been a single instance of Muslim disloyalty to this country. In any case, we, Muslims, do not require a loyalty certificate from the likes of and the Shiv Sena. Thackeray has constantly made provocative venomous, tendentious and baseless remarks, which have poisoned the atmosphere against Muslims.[25]

In the same way, Sobat in its issue dated May 6, 1984, under the blatantly communal title "Muslims cannot live in Hindustan" published the following:

> The very concept of a nation is opposed to Quran. Therefore, if anything is to be placed for their not having any feeling-affection for this country it is Quran. The character of Quran-Shariat, i.e. the Islamic system of governance, is opposed to our Constitution and Laws. If we have faith in our Constitution, we will have to ban Quran and the Islamic system of governance.... The clear position is that to allow anyone other than the followers of Islam to live in this world is a crime to Allah and therefore to abduct women of those who indulge in idol worship or to loot their property or to kill them is no crime according to their religion.

These statements incite fears and hatred among members of one religious group against members of the other group which is perceived to be antagonistic and define nationalism in communal terms. So in this way the dialogue between communalists goes on.

Ruler-Centric Religious Based History

There has been consistent efforts on the part of communalists to reinforce the perception of communal monoliths and commonality or secular interest of all the members of a religious group irrespective of their economic and political

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[24] *Ibid*., p.304.

[25] Interview of G.M. Banatwala, President, Indian Union Muslim League, quoted in *Bhiwandi Bombay Riots: Analysis & Documentations* by Asghar Ali Engineer, 1984, p. 100.

status. This kind of interpretation has been used by communalists even to interpret history. The history has been divided into Hindu history, Muslim history and Sikh history. Its division reinforce separate and competing identities of different religious groups. In this rulers who happened to be Muslims were projected as 'expansionists', 'brutal', 'aliens' and rulers who happened to be Hindus were projected as nationalists.

Hindu communalism visualised the medieval centuries as a long period of alien Muslim dominance over the Hindus (the vast masses of the country's native people), the repeated attempts by the Muslim rulers to convert the Hindus to Islam or else to eliminate them and the heroic stubbornness of the Hindus in defence of their religion and the country's honour. Other stereotypes were also created: such as if the Hindus lost their battles to the Muslims, this was because of mutual dissentions; if medieval Indian history was a story of unrelenting conflict between the two major communities, this was owing to the Muslims' determination to retain and assert their separate identity unlike their predecessors, the Greeks, the Sakas, the Huns, etc. who also had immigrated from distant alien lands, but having once settled in this country had lost their independent identity in the mainstream of Indian (i.e. Hindu) life; Indian (i.e. Hindu) civilisation has always been known for its liberalism in embracing any element that comes to it with outstretched, friendly arms: it is the Muslims who refused to merge their separate identity in the mainstream of Indian (i.e. Hindu) life; instead they sought to forcibly change the course of this stream. This was the origin of communalism in India, etc. etc.

Muslim communalism, on the other hand, considered those reigns which overtly asserted their Islamic identity as the peaks of Islamic glory. However, the basic assumption of both Hindu and Muslim communal historiography (as also the British) constituted the unity of their thought: they all visualized the Hindus and the Muslims in medieval India perpetually in conflict, deriving their evidence from the arena of political, indeed dynastic history.[26]

Such kind of communal bias is blatantly reflected in some of the text books on history. To quote

> ...Turks were expansionists to spread Islam in other countries of Asia, they invaded India. They were plunderers who looted India's richness and went back. Turks succeeded in conquering India because being the followers of Islam, they had great unity among themselves. Everybody enjoyed equal rights. Hindus, who believed in division of functions on the basis of caste, had left the responsibility of defending the country on just one caste, i.e. the Kshatriyas, whereas all Muslims had a strong will to conquer other nations to spread Islam. Their unity

[26] Harbans Mukhia (1983), 'Communalism and Historiography', *Social Scientist*, p.61.

> and will made their victory easy. For Muslims, battles with the Rajputs were crusades and death on the battlefield meant martyrdom. Their religion was their inspiration and unity their strength. The Rajputs could not defend their land because they fought the battles as religious crusades not using any underhand means but the Turks were never guided by ethical and moral values... They adopted treacherous and underhand means to win battles.[27]

A study of "Medieval History" by Romila Thapar would perhaps take the readers of these textbooks out of the communal quagmire. She writes: "The Turks and Mughals were ruling Indians who lived in much the same way as Indians in the early part of the medieval period. The Turks and Mughals made India their homeland and became a part of the India's population.[28]

Misrepresentation of history is carried further. To quote:

> Mehmood Ghazni wanted to build a strong empire. He was a staunch Muslim who wanted to spread Islam. He required money to maintain his army. To collect money, he invaded India seventeen times. He looted and plundered temples. He conquered Punjab and whole of North India, but never stayed back. His notorious attach is on Somnath temple where he disfigured the holy idol. This defiling of idols made him a religious leader and won his great acclaim among Muslims.[29]

Communalism inflicted on young students through such history writing hardens communal attitudes. It has long been established that temples during the time of these invasions (i.e. 1000 A.D.) were not merely places of worship but were storehouses of State wealth. These temples were symbols of might and piety from where believers drew inspiration and their demolition may also have been resorted to demoralize the resisting armies.

Another instance of communal writings in history books is "...Mohammed Ghori vanquished the Rajputs by using all kind of tricks..."[30] it has deliberately been ignored that Mohammed Ghori first invaded Multan, a Muslim fiefdom. He conquered all small kingdoms which came in his way. It was not the unity among all Muslims which brought the fall of "Hindu Rajas". Instead, it was the weak rulers and inferior technology and war tactics which were largely responsible for the defeat of India's rulers in the medieval period. But such explanations are strangely missing from textbooks. Legends treated as history and reinforced through pamphlets, whose circulation even today would be more than the most erudite works of historical research. A brief description is

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[27] *Social Studies*, M.P. Pathya Pustak Nigam, Class VII, 1983, pp.25-26.
[28] Romila Thapar (1979), "Medieval India", *History and Civics*, A Text Book for Class VII, NCERT, p.3.
[29] *Social Studies* (1983), op. cit, p.21.
[30] *Ibid*, pp.23-25.

reproduced from a play 'Prithviraj Chauhan', authored by Nayadas Singh Bachan Dehlavi, which is allegedly based on Chandra Kavi's description of his patron, Prithviraj Chauhan's encounter with Shahbuddin Mohammed Ghori resulting in the death of the latter. This is a patent distortion of documented historical facts. It might be noted that Mohammed Ghori died in 1206 after which Qutub-ud-din Aibak inaugurated the slave dynasty in India and also that Prithviraj Chauhan met Mohammed Ghori only twice in the battlefield of Tarrain in 1191 and 1192. But the pamphlet mentioned above narrates a fantastic story of the magnanimity of Prithviraj Chauhan who pardoned Shahbuddin Mohammed Ghori sixteen times after defeating him in battles. But on the seventeenth occasion, the playwright says, Ghori emerged victorious but could not reciprocate Prithviraj Chauhan's large-hearted gestures.

However, the heroism of Chauhan is depicted by demonstrating how he was blind-folded and yet, on a cursory description of Ghori's position in his court, shot an arrow straight into the latter's head and killed him. Numerous examples like these can be found in textbooks prescribed for students of different classes in various other states of India. However, it should be noted that such interpretations of history are efforts to colour the past with animosities generated due to communalism in the present. Scientific historians know that rulers in the medieval or ancient period did not represent popular will, nor was the welfare of their subjects the prime concern of these rulers. The policies of these rulers were in response to the social, economic and political conditions of their times and were intended to preserve their authority or expand their kingdoms. 'Medieval history' is treated by communalists as "Muslim history" and the acts of the rulers are attributed to the whole religious "community".

The search which was initiated in mid-sixties questioned the use of communal categorisation. To quote:

> This was the period when research was initiated on new themes altogether in which communal categories did not enter at all. These were themes like rural class structure, forms and magnitude of exploitation of medieval Indian peasantry, the significant of zamindars as a class, production technology, trade and commercial organization etc. an important role in this shift of focus was played by research on what came felicitously to be called 'early medieval India' in Professor R.S. Sharma's terminology. This research made two significant contributions: one, it implicitly questioned the earlier, clearly communal, periodisation which divided medieval from ancient India at 1206 A.D., with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, for it, again implicitly, opened up the possibility of seeing an extensive continuum

> of social and economic history from around the seventh or eighth to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, even as important changed occurred within the range of this continuum; two, it decisively shifted the emphasis from politico-administrative to socio-economic history, where communal categories in any case lose much of their significance.[31]

In this context it should be noted that history cannot be broken into sectarian periods, such as the Hindu period, the Muslim period or the Sikh period. Similarly, there can be no Sikh history, Hindu history or Muslim history. Such a sectarian categorization of history fans communalism. It is a fact that each religion has grown in a separate age and environment. Hence it is possible that the history of different religions has its special features. But it does not follow that history can be misinterpreted to mean a separate history of different religious groups.

Ascriptive Based Collectivities

Communalists use ascriptive based collectivities as a basis of social discourse. In this, the practices of other religious group are frequently attached as irrational and corrupt. The emphasis is on the purity of one's faith, the condemnation of other religious group; and branding followers of other religious group as *kafirs*. For example, Muslim communalists often accuse 'Hindus' of being communal and brutal towards minorities. Hindu communalists strongly protest against such accusations and try to project themselves as magnanimous, by claiming that they have 'permitted' Muslims to reside in India ever after Pakistan was granted to them in 1947. On the other hand, Hindu communalists allege that 'Hindus' have been eliminated from Pakistan by 'Muslims'.

Similarly, Hindu communalists charge Muslims with being strongly organized and blind supporters of their co-religionists. Muslim communalists accept this charge and claim that if they do not defend their religion, Hindus will stamp out Islam from India. Further Muslim communalists project Islam as a socialistic and Hinduism as a capitalistic in outlook. To quote:

> There is also a marked difference in the economy of these two great communities. The Islamic economic system is socialistic in outlook. Islam is a proletarian faith which does not encourage the amassing of wealth. All accumulated wealth must be shared with the poor. Money should not be hoarded but kept in circulation. Through Zakat it ensured the distribution of wealth and circulation of money. With an organized system of Zakat an individual's locked up surplus must

[31] Harbans Mukhia (1983), op. cit., p.63.

> dissipate itself within a few decades. Islam does not permit usury. No usury means no banking capital. But Hinduism is a capitalist religion. The Hindus worship "Lakshmi" the goddess of wealth, and usury is one of their principal sources of income. Most of the capitalists and industrial magnates, as it is, are Hindus. In the two regions where they are in a majority, the Mussalmans are mainly agriculturists. Even there industry is mainly in the hands of the Hindus.[32]

Similarly Hindu communalists propagate Islam as a closed and intolerant and Hinduism as an open and democratic religion.

The communalists reinforce the sense of insecurity amongst their followers. For instance, a section of Muslims have a fear of assimilation, while a section of Hindus have the fear of being outnumbered by Muslims. In a pamphlet issued on November 14, 1983, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has highlighted data to prove that "Hindus will become a minority in India by 2151 A.D.

This stereotype proclaims that Muslims procreate faster in order to numerically outnumber other religious groups and thereafter establish a Muslim State in India. This can be challenged on the basis of facts gleaned from the census data. The decline in the percentage share of annual Hindu population average compound growth rate in India between 1961-71 and 1971-81 (-) 0.20, whereas it is (-) 0.63 in the case of Muslims. So the communal stereotype about a 'Muslim conspiracy' to increase 'their' population at a faster pace is denied by facts. But the influence of communal ideology and the sense of fear and persecution complex on the pace of population growth can also be hypothesized.

Nevertheless, communalists project the problems of human under-development as communal traps laid to destroy their co-religionists by the other religious groups perceived to be antagonistic. This helps communalists to incite the fears, insecurities and hatred of their co-religionists against religious groups perceived to be antagonistic. Communal propaganda, therefore, prepared the ground for increasing the plausibility of solutions like the 'elimination' or 'expatriation' of the religious group perceived to be antagonistic.[33]

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[32] Kazi Said-ud-din Ahmad (1947), *The Communal Pattern f India*, Pakistan Literature Series No.2, Lahore, p.4.

[33] P.K.B. Nair (1990), A Sociological Analysis of Communalism with reference to Kerala. Bidyut Chakraborty ed. *Secularism and Indian Policy*, p. 211.
Communalism is a pre-disposition (state of mind) of a person or a group belonging to a particular religion (or caste/community/sect within it) arising out of a feeling that a threat – real or imaginary – exists to his/their faith which should be combated by collective action of members of religion (or caste, community or sect).

Communalists claiming to represent those religious groups which are in a numerical minority call Indian democracy a form of 'Hindu domination'. The propaganda of these communalists is based on the assumption that since the Hindus form a numerical majority in the multi-religious society of India, the democratic principle of 'one person one vote', cannot yield seats of power to the 'Muslim', 'Sikh, 'Christian', 'Buddhist', or 'Jain', religious groups. Communal propaganda about the persecution of 'minorities' or discrimination against them lays the ground to save the identities of 'Muslims', 'Sikhs', 'Christians', etc.

Communal Competition in Politics, Economy and Society

Communalists operate within the framework that economic and political gains are distributed on religious, caste or other ascriptive group lines. And if protective reservation is sanctioned it would improve social and economic position of the whole "deprived" religious, caste or other ascriptive group. In order to reinforce a sense of discrimination, information on the representation in jobs, legislatures, etc. is collected and projected with references to religious, caste or ascriptive group. This kind of propaganda reinforces the fears, insecurity and generate competition for jobs and economic and political benefits on communal basis. Many middle class respondents during our field survey, found evidence to prove discrimination on religious group lines in journals, newspapers like *Muslim India, Marmik, Sobat, Organizer, Panch Janya*, etc. In this they project the individual gains of persons belonging to another religious or caste group to be those of whole of that 'community'. The gains so projected and exaggerated are posed to be the loss of their own religious or caste group. Interestingly, rival communalists accept this and a circular battle ensues between communalists. For example, if a politician who happened to be Muslim gets elected to parliament, communalists will project this to be a gain for all Muslims and the loss of other religious group. And this parliamentarian will be considered merely the leader of the Muslims. Further, if a vice-chancellorship of a university is conferred on an individual who happen to be a Muslim, the communalists will project it to be a gain of all Muslims and loss of other religious group.

Recent events in contemporary history show how dangerous this approach is. Sikh communalists bullied innocent members of the Hindu religious group for disowning Punjabi language and Hindu communalists harassed innocent believers of Sikhism outside. Punjab and the same communalists repeatedly propagated that Hindi was the language of the Hindus and Punjabi of the Sikhs.

The pro-Hindi section viewed the demand for linguistic demarcation of Punjab by Sikh communalists to be an attempt to create a theocratic state. Some of

the Sikh communalists owned this. And this in turn hardened communal attitude and transformed demagogy into a grave crisis. The net outcome of this confrontation was a flaring up between the two communalists groups at the cost of several innocent lives.

Similarly, the vociferous agitation for minority character for Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) sharpened communal cleavages. The accrual of minority status, it was projected, would benefit all 'Muslims' and deprive all 'Hindus' of an opportunity for higher education. This issue rocked Aligarh several times with intense rioting. Communal propaganda on this issue was fuelled by the emerging middle classes of Aligarh, from both Hindu and Muslim religious groups. The implication of such an understanding will be to pose one communalism against another. Such propaganda identifies the causes of deprivation falsely. Whereas, the discrimination or favouritism resorted to by communalists on the basis of religions is a by product of the pervasiveness of communal perception, it shall be a gross conceptual error to suggest solutions by taking by products of communalism like discrimination to be the cause of communalism.

Even employment outside the region and country and utilization of remittances, therefrom, have been interpreted communally by the sections of people. This communal interpretation of uneven economic development has further contributed to the propagation of communal stereotypes and exasperation of communal fear. For example, in Sikar district of Rajasthan the common notion amongst communal Hindus is that it is only Muslims who are migrating for work to Gulf countries. Further the Hindu communalists argue that a large part of remittance by these people are used for conspicuous consumption and promoting religious fanaticism. It does not confine merely to the perception of the Hindu communalists, but even district planning department of government of Rajasthan, further reinforces this notion. It argues that "The Muslim working class started going for work in Muslim countries since 1950 after being inspired by migration of Marwaris to the countries". However, our field survey indicate that it was not exclusively Muslims who had ventured out to the Gulf countries for work, but large number of Masons, Carpenters, Helpers, Labourers, etc., from amongst lower sections of Hindus have also migrated. This out migration is the result of the inadequate employment opportunities which act as push factors. While absorption outside is due to the requirement of certain specific skill in Gulf countries which are related to the level and nature of development in those countries. Further, the non-productive utilization of remittances is related to the relative absence of investment opportunities in local areas. Its utilisation does not have linkages with their religious group affiliation.

Our field observation further reveals that most of the remittances by workers in the Gulf and other countries who happen to be Hindus was also spent in items of conspicuous consumption, building temples, celebration of religious festivals etc. for example, the famous Rani Sati Mandir of Jhunjhunu is mainly funded by remittance of cloth traders of Jalaan sect who control large trading houses, in West Bengal and Bombay. Similar noticeable trend exists amongst the traders or workers who happen to be Muslims.

Further, even profits and losses are often misinterpreted. For example, iron and tin manufacturing in Indore is undergoing transformation under the influence of changing market conditions. As increasing and diversified demand for tin based products led to the improvement in the methods of production during the 60s. Before this the products were manufactured by nearly 42 traditional 'Lohar' families most of whom happened to the Muslims by using simple processes of production. The improved technology necessitated capital investments which were made by traders (most of whom happened to be Hindus) who began manufacturing agricultural implements, steel almirahs, etc. Further the traditional 'Lohars' entered the sphere of manufacturing drums, utensils, trunks, frames, etc. This marginalization of the 'Lohars' was interpreted, by them and certain self-proclaimed 'community' leaders to be conscious discrimination against Muslims.

Another instance of changes in the market conditions of a product which provide the necessary conditions for the social appeal of communal ideology is the case of *zari* and its allied products in Bhopal. Some of the *zari* items manufactured by artisans have lost their market e.g., *chappals*, and *purses*; with the introduction of plastics. There are around 200 families in Bhopal city which are involved in the zari household industry. The real wages of the household units have declined considerably compared to their previous earnings. For historical reasons the skill of making zari products happened to be possessed by craftsmen who were Muslims The overlapping of a religious group identity with a particular skill often provides an easy tool to communalists to interpret and propagate changes in the market value of particular skills, viz-a-viz the persecution of particular religious group.

Thus, communalists succeed in transforming a fight between themselves into one between religious groups. Using categories such as 'Hindu interests', 'Muslim interests', 'Sikh interests' and so on to dissect social reality is to analyse the problem within the communal framework. The repeated assertion regarding the existence of such interests by communalists and vested interests has even distorted the perception of some of the analysts and policy makers. To sum up, communal tensions are generated by the nature of socio-economic and political processes. But they are imparted a communal colour by communal stereotypes, distorted version of history, religiosity, operational

and unascertainable beliefs. These are pregnated with notions having sense of discrimination, deprivation and hatred for other religious, caste or ethnic groups perceived to be antagonistic. These notions have their basis in larger assumptions of social living and way of life. Therefore, it is necessary to understand and analyse these notions in their proper social, cultural and historical context.

The strategy to counter these notions must, therefore, question the basic assumptions from which they drive their life-force. For instance, the content of communalism has its basis in the understanding that societies are organized around religious and caste lines. A crisis of social and economic nature is interpreted by communalists to be specific to religious groups. In other words, social problems, political and economic issues are projected as matters concerning caste or religious groups. In a situation where caste and religious group identities overlap with secular identities the task of communal ideology becomes easier.

Dimensions of Communalism

To comprehend the phenomenon of communalism, it is also necessary to explore its various underlying and obvious dimensions. However, these dimensions are specific to situations in time and space. Descriptive categorization of social factors involved in the process of accentuation and strengthening communalism may help evolve a viable strategy to counter it.

Three main descriptive categories have been identified:

(a) Communalism – Conformist

(b) Communalism – Conformist and Incremental

(c) Communalism – Secessionist

(a) Communalism – Conformist or Victims of Communal ideology

The communalism conformist is those who conform to communal framework of thinking in practice. The interaction and discourse of the individuals or groups takes place within the framework of ascriptive based collectivities. They define their social position and role in the society, politics and economy with reference to ascriptive group affiliation.

These victims of communal ideology participate in communal activities out of justification which they perceive to exist in history, religious norms and well-accepted religious practices. This conformism gets reflected in their vision of a future ideal society which is “Hindu Rashtra” in the case of communal Hindus. “Darul-Islam” in the case of communal Muslims and “Khalistan” in the case of communal Sikhs. It is this normative rationale that guides their social interactions and also ascribes roles to them.

These communal groups try to universalise their faith and vision of the ideal society. This tendency in India is represented by Brahmana Sabha, Hindu Suraksha Samiti, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Jamait-e-Islami, Muslim League, Akhand Kirtani Jatha, Damdami Taksal, etc. Such groups, in their enthusiasm for theocracy, may curtail the liberty of others and thereby turn fascist. The victims of communal ideology "conform" due to their irrational impulses and fears. They are mainly drawn from skilled and semi-skilled workers, slum-dwellers, peasantry and a section of urban traders and while-collar workers. The possibility of victims of communal ideology belonging to other categories cannot be ruled out.

Communal Ideology – Conformist and Incremental

This variety of communalism is characterised by individuals/groups which on the one hand conform to communal ideology and on the other want to gain certain incremental benefits. These sections perceive that incremental gains such as more jobs, promotions in jobs, subsidies, licences etc., are distributed on communal lines.[34] Even professedly non-communal individuals have analysed appointments in public and private sectors on religious or caste group lined. These disclosures have great publicity value and are widely broadcast. For example, in Jaipur, the artisans in gem and jewellery, household industry (who are predominantly Muslims) felt discriminated against when the traders (who are predominantly Hindus) employed their co-religionists. Whereas the actual reason for the change in the pattern of labour absorption lies in the gradual switching over from household commodity production to manufacturing/modern industrial production. Nevertheless, this is not to deny that some of the employers themselves may be victims of communal ideology and thereby may have consciously discriminated against members of other religious groups.

The communalists have used those examples to feed the fears of neglect and discrimination of the under-represented religious or caste group. And in case of beneficiaries, communalists reinforce the notion that these gains have accrued on religious or caste group lines. Many organizations have mobilized people from incremental concessions on similar lines. The Indian Union Muslim League, Jamait-ul-Ulema-e-Hind Muslim Majlis (UP), Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (Andhra Pradesh), among others, have demanded the inclusion of Muslims in the list of backward "communities" and the grant of adequate reservations at all levels. Some among them have demanded proportionate

[34] Such as N.C. Saxena (1983), 'Public Employment and Educational Backwardness among Muslims in India', paper read at a Seminar organized by Aligarh Muslim University, Department of Economics.
A special feature in a monthly journal Muslim India is the Employment Column in which data on absorption of Muslims in Public and Private Sector is compiled.

representation through a constitutional amendment.[35] The Shiromani Akali Dal has also in one of its resolutions declared that "it shall raise its from voice against any discrimination against Sikh (or even others) employees of the Central or State Governments. The Shiromani Akali Dal shall also endeavour to maintain the traditional position of the Sikhs in all the wings of the defence department and the panth would pay particular attention to the needs of the Sikh Armymen".[36] Incremental concessions have been demanded by Brahmins and non-Brahmins, Bhumihars, Kayasthas, Reddys and Kammas and many other high castes.

The victims of this ideology are involved in a zero-sum-game where one "community's" gain is considered to be the other's loss. This section accepts the existence of "community interests" and presumed that such interests will merge with the large national interest in course of time. This section advocate and fights for reservation in jobs and separate electorates, and thereby showing its incrementalist nature. Such communalism is not very extreme and is satisfied with claiming to utilise available resources, institutions, etc., to maximize gains for the "community". It is most vociferous in raising issues and shaping communal ideology. It has social roots in the middle class, especially among those who look for jobs, subsidies, reservations and other benefits as their exclusive privilege. Profits and losses, employment or unemployment and promotion or demotion are rationalized by these individuals with reference to "Jagratas", "Satsangs" and the number of pilgrimages one has undertaken.

Another dimension of this brand of communalism is prevalent in some of the industrial houses also. Its operation is more subtle. For instance in some of the big industrial monopoly house, such as the Birla group, Kriloskars, DCM, etc. most of the top managerial staff is drawn from among the kin of owners. The increase and diversification of industries extended the distribution of such benefits from kinship to "community". This is not the case of entrepreneurs alone. Even in Government or semi-Government concerns, such trends have been noticed. A number of examples can be cited from various concerns. Not only this, incremental conformist communalism is used by industrialists to curb trade union movements. The employment of workers in industries from one's own clan makes it easier to suppress the working class movements and evade the provisions of the Factory Acts, etc. Kinship, caste and religious affiliations have been used to promote a kind of feeling that jobs are being given not on merit but on the basis of these affiliations.

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[35] Muneer Ahmad Khan (1982), 'Muslim Attributes' in a edited book, *Reservation Policy in India* by Sharma and Reddy, High and Life Publishers, New Delhi, pp.219-20.
Report for 1981-83, Hamdard Foundation of Business and Employment Bureau, *Muslim India*, April, 1984.

[36] Giani Ajmer Singh (1977), The Draft of the New Policy Programme of the Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar.

Communal Ideology: Secessionist

Communalism used in pursuance of secession derives its momentum from conformist- communal tendency. Such a tendency is backed by well-defined economic and political interests. On its own it may not have a mass base, but tends to use communal categories. Aware of the perception of competition between adherents or members of religious groups, the advocates of secession consciously exploit and strengthen the perception of discrimination. Such communalism derives its sustenance from the market mechanism geared to the profit motive for private capital accumulation. For instance, in Punjab, a class of this regional bourgeoisie (rural as well as urban), for want of penetration by the national industrial elite, provides the backbone to this tendency. This is so because emergence regional interests have to compete with the established and well-entrenched national industrial bourgeoisie for the market.

It has social support base from the urban intelligentsia, traders and unemployed youth and ex-servicemen. For instance, this tendency in Punjab is represented by the National council of Khalistan and the Dal Khalsa. It has social support from sections of urban Sikh intelligentsia, traders and unemployed rural youth and ex-servicemen. It has no fundamental ideological difference with communal-conformists except that the secessionist tendency is confined to certain territorial limits, whereas communalism-conformism is universal.

These dimensions of communalism co-exist and reinforce each other. It is in this context that various manifestations of communalism can be understood and analysed. Communalism may manifest in hatred suspicion and communal violence, including communal rioting. The extreme form of communalism is theocratic and fascist in its orientation.

SECTION 2

COMMUNALISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM DISCIPLINES

COMMUNALISM: PERSPECTIVES FROM SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES IN INDIA

Yogender Singh

When we look at and review the sociological literature on communalism and social tensions, which is what I would like to do in order to put across to you the sociological view point, we find three stages of the analysis by sociologists of communal problems. At one stage, which might be called the classical stage of Indian sociology, the debate on communalism, bears the imprint of the national movement, its ideology and values. We find it in the writings of historians, political scientists and other scholars.

At the second stage, sociologists, who constitute the pioneering generation, have dealt with this problem and it would be useful briefly to look at their contributions. One of them is D.P. Mukherjee. He wrote a very interesting book in 1942, which was reprinted in 1946, called *Modern Indian Culture*. In this work he dealt with the problem of Hindu-Muslim relationship and the problems of partition, which in 1942 was looming large on the political horizon of India. He offered some very interesting insights on the problems of communalism in our country. The other writings, called *Social Tensions* by a sinologist of the pioneers' generation, G.S. Ghurye, was published late in 1968.

Both these writings differ widely in ideological perspectives, yet they share certain common characteristics. These are their being embedded in historical methodology, their hazy and not very precise linkage with empirical sociology, the initiative bases of their statements without indepth observation of the social structure and its portrayal in the context of values and tradition. These studies deal more with ideas than social facts, and, to that extent, sociologists could say that the writings are more intuitive than empirical. But, it can be a matter of controversy. Ghurye has depended mainly upon documentary materials of the United Nations, clipping from newspapers and official records.

D.P. Mukherjees training both in history and sociology and his literary gift as historian and sociologist are reflected in his writings. So his literary creativity also manifests itself in his analysis of social phenomena. Between Ghurye and D.P., as a matter of fact, we encounter two opposite ideological perspectives on communalism. D.P. represents the mainstream thesis of cohesion on communal issue in India through cultural synthesis and integration in the process of nation building, whereas Ghurye takes more or less what one may call the 'communal line', a kind of partisan Hinduistic viewpoint on problems

of communalism in India. So, between the two, I think D.P.'s work is more interesting. It is interesting because it is a forerunner of several future contributions in sociology on problems of communalism. Very briefly, I would run through his main points for your own appreciation.

D.P. first emphasizes the role of tradition; that is, to him the issue of communalism cannot be abstracted from the issue of tradition. One has to understand tradition and the structure of tradition in a society in order to understand what is called the problem of communalism. Secondly, he points out that even during the Muslim period there was autonomy, religious autonomy, between urban areas and rural areas and what is known as the Muslim rule in India was largely an urban phenomenon and the rural social structure in India had its own autonomous existence; it had its own internal equilibrium. Therefore, whatever we may say about the role of social structure in communal ideology, looking at the medieval Indian tradition as such one does not find the structure promoting communalism; neither peasant nor the feudal structure promoted communalism.

Thirdly, D.P. also maintains that when we look into Hindu-Muslim relationship, there are three levels at which it should be examined. He calls them the primary level, the secondary level and the tertiary level. He says that one cannot talk of Hindu-Muslim relationship in an undifferentiated fashion, because then the very basic social phenomenon will be lost sight of. I think, here he was a precursor or a forerunner of latter day sociologists. It is an important insight that he contributed. The primary level is the level of economic interaction. It comprises of the roles of merchants, labourers, farmers and the concomitant economic relationships. It also includes the family structure, the institution of authority and its distribution in the family and kinship relations. It also implies economically related ritual structures, not its ideology but basic rituals. At the primary level of interaction between Islam and Hinduism, according to D.P. there has always existed a measure of partnership, a measure of harmony, so that the Muslim-Hindu relationships in the structure of their consciousness did not involve much disjuncture. The relationship functioned in a very harmonious manner. It is a very important structural perspective.

The secondary level is the level of polity – political ideology and leadership. At this level, there exists a differentiation, there is a dual role; one may even come across some degree of contradiction between the outlook of the representatives of the two traditions, the Hindu tradition and the Muslim tradition. Finally, at the tertiary level, which is the level of ideology, there existed between the two traditions a sharper contradiction in the perception of social reality and in the nature of their interaction. One point he makes is about the extent to which these different levels, as enunciated, could be taken

as truly representing the nature of the cultural and social division between the two traditions. Here the insight that we get from his observations is that the relationship should not be dichotomised as a Hindu-Muslim question, because then we would round-off a number of very important similarities in the relationship in the process of the abstract treatment of divide between the two ideologies.

D.P. was also Marxologically oriented. He said: I am not a Marxist, but I am Marxologist. He made a distinction between Marxism as a method of social analysis and Marxism as a political creed or ideology. Therefore, he does hypothetically propose in his work a methodological perspective on the analysis of communalism in India which is essentially sociological in framework. It also has a wider implication. He also deals with the emergence of elite and middle classes in Hindu society and the Islamic community and tries to show the contradictions and later the uneven impact of the character of middle classes in Islam in India on the educational processes and social and economic developments of this community.

These are some insights we get from the early sociological writings on communalism. One very important aspect of this analysis is the emphasis placed on the interaction between the folk tradition and the elite tradition in a dynamic process. In the analysis of communalism both the folk tradition and the elite tradition will have to be taken into consideration. This is a perspective that sociology began contributing since its early days and it marks the creative aspect of its development. In this phase, there is much discussion of the communal question and its elitist orientation. In fact, over-emphasis on this element led to a certain degree of exclusion or partial understanding of the dimension of this problem in the context of tradition and religion. This marks an important point in the sociological writings on communalism of the early period.

The second phase, after independence marks the period of empirical studies. In this phase, sociology made a big departure in methodology and it was almost assessed that any study which was not observational, not based on empirical data, not a portrayal of the structure in its totality was not scientific. So, sociologists began to look into the empirical foundations of the social structure of India. In this analysis, they particularly focussed on micro structures, such as caste, village and family. The study of township was not very fashionable, although some of the studies of towns which were made were sponsored by the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission had its own format for city studies. We find that in these studies the issue of communalism was not examined and if conducted it was done in a very implicit form, even though the problem of communalism is

essentially an urban phenomenon in India now, by and large. So, we do not get an insight into communalism from this set of urban empirical studies. We do, however, get a very deep insight into the rural social structure from the village studies conducted during the period of the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixty throughout the country, for instance, the Andhra village (Shamirpet) studied by Professor Dube, Rampur village in Karnataka studied by Srinivas, a Haryana village studied by Oscar Lewis, the U.P. village studied by D.N. Majumdar and so on.

Many of these studies have examined the Hindu-Muslim relationship and give us empirical insight into the pattern of social interaction that existed. Not all of them have, of course, gone into the question systematically, but one does get a certain insight, if we examine them to see how far they bear upon, what we today understand as the problem of communalism.

One very important insight that we get from these village studies is that both the Hindu and Muslim social structures are imbedded in the caste system; that is, internal differentiation on caste lines, as they used to be in the past with linkages with the Jagmani system. This is a very important insight. It implies that unless we recognize the ideological terms, we cannot define the category of 'Muslim' or the category of 'Hindu' simply on social structural grounds.

The second insight that we get from these village studies is that as long as village economy enjoyed a measure of equilibrium, either in the form of the feudal agrarian economy of integration with the mercantile capitalist economic institutions, thus, having elements both of mercantilism and feudalism, the Hindu-Muslim relationship was symbiotic and not communal. There was a greater degree of dependency, interaction, participation in common activity by both communities. The symbolic structure of religion and rituals was as yet non-ideological, in a very narrow sense. I am using the word 'ideology' in the context of communal ideology.

At this stage, this is a very clear distinction made between religion as a sub-cultural expression or expression of the ethnic tradition and religion as a political instrument or ideology. Religion does not still operate as a political instrument. But, as slowly and slowly the economic pace begins to differentiate, as the urban-rural contact increases, as the agrarian orientation is replaced by the mercantilistic relationships, there is an introduction of alien elements into the system. This alien element is introduced in the process of structural and cultural differentiations, either through the political leadership or through, the mercantile classes, or it comes from the politically – oriented religious leadership. By and large, these three are the important sources of the introduction of ideological elements in religious and cultural processes.

What follows is a period of manifestation of various form of communal expressions, where new symbols are introduced which try to supersede the early symbolic and cultural aspects of unity. Sporadic incidence of communal tension here and there are reported; sometimes serious communal violence takes place in a village or in a certain region. Inspite of this, there are various instances when the Muslims and Hindus joined hands in their class war against the landlords and presented a united front. In my analysis of village Chanukhra I illustrated this point in the context of Eastern U.P. But, on a smaller issue, against inspired by eternal elements the two communities get divided, for instance, on a dispute over the land for burying the tazia during Mohharam. It leads to communal tension, though without violence.

Both these examples, show that cleavages on communal lines get reduced when people are organized on class lines against their class antagonists. Some time people might be successful in their class movements and they might realise their objectives. On the other hand, they might in another instance get divided on communal lines. We see this social dynamics operating in different parts of the country. This dynamics explicates social relationships. There are levels of this relationship, what one might call the primary, secondary and tertiary relationships are complex in nature. These have their roots in ideology. One cannot easily give them a name, if we want to give, we may call them feudalism, capitalism, mercantilism etc. But what is essential to note is the process of external intrusions and inter-linkages which this stage sets into motion, as more and more economic differentiation takes place and there is an element of competition introduced into the previous pattern of relationships which was consensual in nature. This environment in the motivational and social structure of the people, both in villages and cities, sets the qualitative background for the penetration of communal ideology. This insight we get from most of the village studies of the fifties and sixties in India.

The urban studies conducted during this period bring out one or two very interesting insights which have a bearing on the issue of communalism. These studies show that the distinction between the rural and urban categories in India tends to be limited, except for the level of role differentiation, new ecology and physical and social complexities that urban activities, professional organizations etc. that we find in a city as different from a village. If we look into the ideological shape of the cities and their social structure, we find that values of cosmopolitanism and rationality (secularism) do not seem to be higher in cities as compared to villages. Often it is the other way round. The notion of rural-urban continuum, or rural-urban separatism was imitatively borrowed from Western sociology.

The communal consciousness, ideological symbols of caste, religion, kinship, exist and operate strongly in Indian cities, as compared to Indian villages.

What is different between the city and the village is that the pattern of relationship in the village is uni-model, based on the predominance of the agrarian economy, but in the cities this pattern is multi-faceted, because the nature of the economy is multi-faceted. Otherwise, inter-penetrating principles of social structure, kinship, caste and religion operate in both cities and villages. Of course, they perform different functions in the cities from what they do in the villages.

In the city, they tend to be complex and might become unmanageable sometimes explosive. This is so with regard to communal tensions. In the urban setting, the role of communal ideologies gets exaggerated due to the density of population, neighbourhood patterns and relative facilities for the manipulation of people by the vested interests which exploit religion for communal purposes. Their effectiveness and viability increases in the urban context. The social structure of the city and the profile of communalism have a very close mutual relationship. It is an important insight that the urban studies have given us.

Professor Kapadia, who studied the cities of Bombay and Navasar, used to say that Bombay is still a village, in terms of its neighbourhood pattern. The overlap in the social structure of village and city is noted in Sovari's study of Pune and N.K. Bose's study of Calcutta, etc. If we look into these sociological studies of cities we find that the assumption that the cities are more modern and the villages are more traditional is doubtful. The notions of modernity and cosmopolitanism in urban life are only of a limited significance, since the social enclaves in city life often tend to be more traditional and obscurantist in nature than otherwise, these studies, therefore, highlight that the principles of traditionalism are equally assertive in the city, as they are in the villages. That is yet another insight that urban studies have provided us.

This study in the value profile of cities makes it easier to understand why communal exploitation is widespread in the urban areas. The aggregation and density of the social structure works as a multiplier of communal impulses in the city and makes it easier for those who want, to manipulate, to symbolize, to ideologize on communal issues and give them a partisan character. This is an insight which the sociological studies of the fifties and sixties have generated. The characteristics of methodology and the theoretical issues, into which I do not want to go today, might not be of relevance at this stage.

There are also one or two limitations that we find in these empirically-oriented studies. One such limitation that one easily recognizes is that these studies neglect the sense of history and the role of tradition, both important ideas, which we find the works of the sociologists of the pioneer generation. Generally, these studies are conducted on functionalist methodological lines

and most of them have an artificially carved out motion of consensus in social structures. They do not recognise the role of conflict and generally they do not look at the village or the city in the context of their many macro linkages such as the concept of tradition as we find in the writing of D.P. and his generation of socialists, where the consciousness of history was present as a framework for understanding the present with insights from the past.

Finally, we come to the third stage of sociological writings. Here we find that the studies on communalism begin to be taken up by sociologists rather more directly as a central issue. Sociology again undergoes a new theoretical reorientation. By the end of the sixties many things had happened, which influenced sociological writings in India. The first was the decline of functionalism as a method not only in India but in the world as a whole. Most social scientists in India, during the fifties were influenced by the American tradition of social sciences.

After the Second World War, the United Stated emerged as the supreme leader not only in terms of power, but also of literary traditions. It marked a new transition. As some scholars have analysed, in the early twenties there was the pre-dominance of Russia, during the thirties that of Europe and from the fifties onwards the domination of the United States of America became overwhelming in the world of literature and science. Analysis has also been made on the index of the number of Nobel laureates from each country. He find that certainly America emerges as a very important power, as far as this indictor goes. The decline of Europe after the Second World War, led to migration of sociologists from Europe to the USA. The Nazi and Fascist movements contributed to the process. It coincided with the emergence of the empirical sociology during the period due to the war requirements of the Allied Powers. A great deal of methodological innovations in social sciences were made, in sociology, social psychology and social anthropology. The studies of group morale national character and cultural patterns and profiles become issues new strategic significance and these influenced sociology.

By the sixties, the United State of America and Europe were themselves passing through internal convulsions. It was a period when student and youth unrest were widespread; the Vietnam war had involved the Americans in an endless experience of failure or frustration. It was the period when anti-technology and anti-industry ideology was dominant in the value system of the younger people. They felt like rejecting the materialistic-utilitarian ideology of life and trying to find out new principles or new ideological anchorage for themselves.

It was about this time and Marxism once again began to emerge as an ideology and method of study of human sciences. It became a dominant

intellectual tradition from the sixties onwards in France, in Italy, in the revivalism of the East European and other European countries. The critical school of sociology gained ascendance and it had a deeper orientation towards Marxist paradigms. Indeed, all these developments were in the making, though in a dormant fashion, for some time, but by the sixties there were not only being articulated but also accepted as an element of the social science pedagogy and methodology in most universities even in the USA. So we find that Marxism, which was anathema during the period of MccArthy, after the second world war was not given a place in curricular and became an important component of the conceptual and methodological debates in sociology and social sciences. This change in the outlook, theory and methodology of social sciences also had its impact elsewhere.

Two developments took place. One, history and tradition became important parameters in the analysis of social reality. In the study of communalism, secularism, tradition and history were introduced as analytical contexts by sociologists. The conceptual structure and the terminology of Marxism alongwith those of structuralism influenced sociology. It defined the treatment of problems, methods of analysis and the operational exploration of social reality. Louis Dumont's work Homo Hierarchicus based the notion of dialectics, though in a structuralist sense, in his study of Indian civilization. His easy 'Communalism and Nationalism' offers a perspective on understanding the nature of communalism in the context of tradition as well as a critique of the Marxist approach to nationalism and communalism. In this essay, Dumont makes one or two interesting formulations.

We might not agree with Dumont's methodology, which is a different matter, but his treatment of Marxism in the analysis of communal problem of India raises some basic questions. He argues that 'communal' issue cannot be comprehended through deterministic notions of Marxist analysis. It has its roots in values and ideologies. In this context he criticizes, A.R. Desai's book 'Social Background of Indian Nationalism'. In fact, he is unfair to A.R. Desai in saying that it is not a scientific work. One may ask how is Desai's book not a scientific work? How to define a scientific work? The question essentially is of methodology, the historian's method, as against the method of social anthropologists. The historian develops his argument on the basis of documents, records, the social anthropologists develop their generalizations from the observations of concrete reality. There is a complementarity between the two approaches.

In Dumont's view the relationship between religion and communalism, or the notion of communalism cannot be explained from a purely economic perspective. Economic determinism becomes a self-defeating and a forced

argument. It is inadequate because it does not reflect the complex realities of the social structure, particularly in India.

Dumont would like to make a distinction between the concepts 'communal' and 'communalism'. He says one cannot understand communalism unless one has understood the notion of the communal and its meaning. It signifies a sacred and hierarchical principle. The communal principle is a basic characteristic of the Indian tradition and its social structure. The Indian socio-structure is communal in the sense that it is community conducted; in other words, it is hierarchical. The notion of hierarchy is basic to its understanding. What is hierarchy? As Dumont defines it, hierarchy is the encompassing of the utilitarian and individualistic principles of society by one that is sacred and communitarian. It has the supremacy of the transcendental principles in the value system and role definition in society. In a hierarchical society the transcendental principle defines the utilitarian. In an equalitarian society, it is the other way round. In India, according to Dumont, it is the transcendental principle, such as God, religion or whatever one might call it, which defines the utilitarian principle; that is, economy, polity, etc.

Contrariwise, when economics and politics begin to define the sacred principles, such as religion, then one has another model of society, a model not based on the 'communal' principle but one that is egalitarian, as is the modern Western society. He does not use the term 'communalism' in a preparative sense as it is done in most mainstream social science today.

Contrasting Western society with the Indian, Dumont postulates that in the former the predominant notion is that of the equalitarian man. In India the supremacy is of the homo-hierarchical or hierarchical or hierarchical man. The equality theory is a part of the European tradition where the notion of secularism belongs. The notion is not an integral element of the Indian tradition, because it is a hierarchical tradition. Secularism is a European concept, where the utilitarian rationality defines its fundamental principles. So, according to him, in order to understand communalism, one has to understand the role of ideology in a society's tradition; in order to understand the role of ideology, one has to comprehend the principles of social structure. There is an organic relationship between the two. This is where Dumont criticizes the Marxist formulation of secularism which establishes a mistaken causal relationship.

One will have to examine the problem of communalism, according to Dumont not in the context of the notion of secularism as such, but in the context of nationalism, because secularism in the context of Indian tradition is a foreign ideology. It is an ideology which does not have its native germination in the Indian soil. In Dumont's treatment we find a reiteration of the notion of

tradition in the analysis of secularism and communalism. This debate is still continuing in Indian sociology, especially through the contributions to *Indian Sociology* (New Series), being edited by T.N. Madam.

From a different perspective, the problem of tradition and the significance of religion in social life is raised by many other sociologists. In my modernization of *Indian Tradition*, I have devoted a whole section to the tradition of Islam in India. It was very important to look at Islam from the perspective of tradition. One point that is made there is that Hindu-Muslim relationship was a relationship of two largely homologous traditions, not heterogeneous ones, both being passed on the principle of hierarchy. It is very interesting to begin from this perception. If we examine the Hindu and the Islamic traditions as such, we find a large measure of convergence especially in terms of the fundamental role of the sacred; but, beyond a certain point there is basic divergence. The notions of community, the relationship between politics and religion, all tend to be different in Islam and Hinduism. But the inter-relationship, the adaptive response is what is most significant.

My main proposition is that fundamental values or transcendental values play a role in the social transformation of society. It is the instrumental values that change first and initiate the process of modernization. The fundamental values define the limits of this transformation. If we look at the problem of what is called 'modernization' in India, we find that communalism is a contradiction of this process in Indian society. Communalism could be seen as a result of the crisis of modernization. As the process of modernization exposes the system to rapid transformation and social change, the complexity of tensions generated by it increases and a strategy for the ideological management of the situation is required. If we are not able to manage it ideologically, then the structural dynamism of this social transformation, itself generates tension and communalism is one manifestation of this tension.

In my formulation, communalism is also an indicator of the contradiction of development. It is not a pathology that cannot be resolved. One can say that I am more optimistic with regard to the problem of communalism. I wrote about it long back; if I am to write it today, I will add a footnote here and there, but not reformulate it. What is my basis for saying this? To answer this question, one has to examine the relationship between value and social structure, or the relationship between ideology and social structure. This aspect is not often clearly examined. In fact, if we see the early writings of Marx, he has a very sophisticated style in which he inter-relates ideology with social structure. But later on, in many of Marx's writings, this extent of sophistication is missing. It is my personal feeling, that the level of treatment of ideology and social structure, that we find in many formulations of Marx are missing in the treatment of this problem in the Indian context. Especially, if we

read *Capital* we see what his notion of ideology and social structure is, especially as Marx enunciates it in the first volume of *Capital*. These values are treated as products of social problems and social developments.

In my own formulation, I have held that in the process of structural transformation, two types of changes take place. One type of change is the change in role-structures. This is a universal process. The changes in role structures follow successive stages of social transformation. The transformation of primitive economy into feudal economy, feudal economy into capitalist economy, the capitalist economy into post-capitalist economy or if there is successful revolution, into a socialist economy, makes changes in the configuration of role-structures and pattern of status. In a non-Marxists vocabulary one could call this change as the emergence of more and more complex, social structures leading society from the primitive to the pre-industrial to industrial and finally to post-industrial stages of development. This formulation is supposed to be value neutral, but it is devoid of the explanatory process of the kind that other (Marxist) formulations hold.

Whatever one might say, the story of social transformation in the world as a whole is going to be such that, despite universal similarities on the instrumental or the technological level, its internal cultural patterns will be different. As such, the pattern of transformation in India might not be identical with the pattern of transformation, say in Japan, or in Europe. Why should it be so? It is because, the ideologies are different. It is here that ideology becomes a fundamental issue. Otherwise, if we take economy or technology as a basic issue, then all societies should become uniform as a result of development. The cultural patterns of Japan and New England should be similar because both represent successful capitalist economies. Despite Japan being a modern example of capitalist development, its social structure is dissimilar to that of American society.

Indeed, it is a myth that all societies will become culturally uniform as they reach similar levels of modernization or social development. Structural uniformity will be there, but one should not envisage cultural uniformity for a long time to come. And what is the scale of that 'long time'? Logically, it is the time when the fundamental or 'transcendental' value cease to be autonomously relevant. That is, when God as a symbol becomes irrelevant. May be, a day will come when most of our human conditions, human existence, will be explained by our bio-chemistry and our whole life and its world view will be determined by it. When death would have been abolished! At that stage, one can possibly think of cultural homogenization along with structural homogenization. Otherwise, the social patterns, and their profiles will remain different.

In this context, therefore, what is the method of the management of communalism? How to resolve the problem of communalism? The answer is that we have to accelerate the process of adaptive social transformation in the process of social development. It wilfully rules out revolutionary transformation. In India, there is little chance of a revolutionary transformation. It does not seem to be a practical idea. So, one will have to have adaptive transformation. It is a difficult problem to spell out. There are people who believe that revolutionary transformation is possible, in India and they might be right. But, under the existing circumstances, looking at the national scene the class character of Indian society, the role of ideology in its social structure and the adaptive process of its transformation, it is possible to predict a successful though tension-ridden growth of modernization India. The adaptive transformation has compounded forms of relationships. It encapsulates certain forms of consciousness. One aspect of the result of encapsulation is the rise of communalism and communal conflict. The alternative that we require that we correct the adaptive process of our social transformation.

Many other studies on the problem of communalism were conducted during the sixties and seventies. One important development of this period was that several Muslim sociologists started studying problems of communalism. Similarly, Sikh sociologists began studying Sikh religion and society and its inter-face with communal and other issues. We find a large measure of objectivity in these studies. The religious background of sociologists does not make any difference in their objective analysis; whether the sociologist comes from the Muslim community, or from any other religious background, does not seem to bias his findings and his analysis, which speaks a great deal about the objectivity of such social research.

For instance, many studies of the existence of caste among the Muslims clearly illustrate the role that caste still plays in Muslim society. Among the non-Hindu sociologists there is a certain degree of self-awareness that Islamic sociology has not developed in India as much as it should have and the study of the non-Hindu communities has been, by and large, neglected. But substantive observations on the social structure, reveal a great measure of commonality between the findings of different sociologists.

Now there is a rise in self-consciousness which is important. By the seventies sociology showed a great measure of consciousness among its practitioners that other than Hindu communities must also be studied to diagnose social and ideological processes of change. Two types of consciousness have emerged and become prominent. One is the nationalist consciousness among the social scientists; whether it is economics, history, political science or sociology, there is a persistent view that it should be Indian in the orientation

of conceptual and methodological framework. The second emphasis is that, in order to understand the social structure of specific communities, the pre-existing models for their understanding will have to be changed. The model of the social scientists and the model of the people will have to be matched.

One observation is often made that there is a mis-match between the social scientists' model and the people's model of social reality because of the class character of the social scientists. There seems to be role of the class character in the study of religion and communalism. This issue has been raised by sociologists from the minority community and deprived classes. They do not link it with the question of religion, but class character. If one comes from the upper class, or the well-to-do urban class, it is assumed then that one does not understand the problem of the Dalit and the minorities. The mainstream sociological studies of the caste system in India, have been largely questioned on this count because it is felt that these studies used a Brahmnical model of social reality and have neglected what is called the counter-brahminical model of social structure of India. Such issues have recently been raised. It reflects a great measure of self-consciousness among the social scientists of this generation.

Finally, one finds in this period, seventies and eighties, that intensive studies of communal conflicts have also been conducted. Their relationship between the economy and the social structure and ideological factors has been explored. Some of their findings are that communalism has an urban character; it is related to the rise of the new Muslim middle classes along with those among the Hindus, who use it as arenas of their political and economic rivalries; communalism results from greater consciousness among the Muslim youth about their relative deprivation. This is reinforced because of the nature of the economy in which Muslim entrepreneurs are engaged, which is largely dependent upon the exploitation of the poorer segment of their co-religionist population. These studies have shown several reasons for it. The Muslims engaged in the task generally come from the artisan caste. Even when we look at the village, the Muslims are mostly artisans or belong to the mercantile or the trading caste; or handicraft and trade have been their traditional major occupations. They could not go into the professions in the same measures as the Hindus have gone, they belong to the poorer segment of population and could not go in for higher education; they also could not get into the civil services. The statistics of Muslims in civil services, public sector industries, in higher education etc. remains poor indeed. This due to poverty among the Muslims and lack of opportunities for them for mobility into these areas. Hence, they have to fall back upon avenues of employment in enterprises of their co-religionists. It leads to their social isolation and breeds a sectarian outlook in them as they find other opportunities blocked to them in society.

Nevertheless, some growth among the Muslims has taken place during the past few decades. They have mostly gone into areas of self-employment. Whether it is Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra, Western or Easter U.P. whichever region we take, the pattern of Muslim entrepreneurship is such that it, by and large, belongs to the handicrafts and trading sector.

Studies of Muslim entrepreneurial activity show that in the first phase they were employing along with Muslims the Hindu workers. The communal awakening bore this pattern. The community divide brought more and more religious exclusiveness in the population of workers. It comprises largely of young men and women who could not go to school or college.

They have been inducted into the work force of handcraft activity. In this exclusive environment they develop also a psychology a sub-culture which alienates them from the larger society and its 'secular' value system. They believe that the larger society would not do anything for them; whatever is done for them is only through the exclusive system run by their co-religionist entrepreneurs. This social situation reinforces the communal outlook.

The moral is obvious. More and more of such young men and women will have to be given opportunities of study, employment and participation in ventures run by the cosmopolitan sector of society. Yet, it shows that among the Muslims there has been some growth, there has been some social mobility. But this growth and mobility has reinforced the process of communal consciousness. It is the result of the manner in which the entrepreneurship structure and other opportunities have emerged in society. Once again we find that the relationship between communalism and the social and economic structure is an intimate one.

Sociologists have not studied other institutions, such as regional or territorial issues in the pattern of communalism. Dumont, in his essay on *Communalism and Nationalism* has emphasized the notion of territory in the use of the communal consciousness. He has however not developed this idea as to how far 'territory' operates as symbolic notion in reinforcing communal consciousness. He wrote this essay when we did not have the problem of the Khalistan movement, or the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling; yet this notion needs to be further evaluated to examine the nature of communal ideology.

Many sociologists have studied how communal riots effect on urban neighbourhood. Due to communal conflicts the heterogeneous neighbourhood gradually becomes homogenous in character as there is an exodus of one segment of religious group from the neighbourhood. As urban property values rise the temptation to trigger such a process gathers

momentum among communal elements supported by the well-to-do sectors of the leadership of the religious communities.

It leads to the well known process of ghettoization. It happened with the Jews in Europe. It might be happening with the minorities in India, if not nipped in the bud early.

The insight gained through observational studies of the social structure and its role in the rise of communal consciousness by sociologists, give us many leads. One could sum up these leads into the following issues. First, it is revealed that in order to understand communalism as an ideology, in a total or comprehensive perspective, it is necessary to analyse the relationship between tradition and social structure. As a corollary to this, the second inference is that in developing strategies for controlling communalism, the place of religion in social structure will have to be very clearly defined; the communal manifestation will have to be isolated from the religious one.

A measure of ambiguity lies in the assumption that if one could sort out the economic problems, then the communal problem would be taken care of automatically. I think that is not a valid assumption. It overlooks the very complex reality of the role of tradition, history of communalism in India. In order to develop a strategy for controlling communalism on a long term basis, we will have to define how to deal with religion. Indeed religion cannot be dismissed; religion will have to be accommodated. At what level should it be accommodated.

Sociologists have studied religion. A classical study of religion is by Emile Durkheim, who wrote a famous book called *Elementary Form of Religious Life*. In this book, he says that the idea of God is not essential for religion. One can have a godless religion. The important characteristic of religion is that it symbolically affirms social solidarity. Its other features are rituals and belief systems. From this viewpoint one has to delimit religion to its rituals and belief in transcendental principles only. These expressions affirm the principle of community without being communal and negatively sectarian. It should not transgress into other facets of life.

There are many domains of our lives, which are rational. A rational domain is where one is sure of how to optimize end-means relationships. If one knows how to optimize the end-means relationships it leads to a rational path to achieve goals. The economic action, for example, is a rational kind of behaviour. Despite its anchorage in ideology the management of the political systems is also largely in this domain. Many other facets of technology, science, etc., belong to the rational domain. As modernization proceeds a larger and larger part of human activities pass out from the religious or transcendental domain to the rational or the instrumental one. to establish a

proper role for religion in social life, divorced from communalism, it would be necessary for confine religion only to the transcendental belief systems and rituals and to dissociate it completely from all other domains of social life that deal with or have implications for the instrumental aspect of human life. This is essentially what is meant by the process of secularization.

The fight for secularism and against communalism in India has to be carried on, on two fronts. The first is the structural front. Here the distortions or unevenness of social mobility, inequality, injustice, etc. should be attacked through distributive justice. Simultaneously, an attempt will also have to be made to religious symbols, rituals and beliefs systems by limiting them to the relevant and circumscribed domains of their functioning. This can be done, not by force, but through education and proper policies of structural transformations in society. It has also to go along with well-orchestrated ideological movement. This ideological movement has to be reinforced through the politics of structural transformation such as principles of social justice and distributive justice, in favour of the deprived sections of minorities, scheduled castes, tribes and weaker and backward section of society.

COMMUNALISATION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY ON MEDIEVAL INDIA

J.S. Grewal

Communalism being a phenomena of the present or of the near past, to go to medieval India and to think of the relevance of what has been written on medieval India for the problems in the present might appear to be a little far fetched. But if we are looking for what is called communal ideology, communal thinking, communal attitude, the study of what has been written on medieval India is extremely relevant and in some ways also very revealing. If we could understand the sort of ideologies, or ideas, which were being put forth by historians when they wrote on medieval India we could certainly understand much of the legacy that we have inherited from the past and what we are facing today.

Talking of historical writing, we are talking in a sense of the second order history, or the history of ideas. But ideas do not exist in isolation. Ideas exist in relation to historical situations and they re-enter historical situations in modified forms. Those who appropriate ideas are sometimes unconscious of what they are doing. That is why it is extremely important to have a close look at historiography. In the historical writings on medieval India we have Communalisation of thought on a colossal scale. The historians whom we call scientific historians today are transcending the limitations of that inheritance. It does not mean, however, that every historian who is writing today is transcending that legacy to get rid of the ideology built into the kind of writing produced a hundred or a hundred and fifty years earlier.

The main emphasis in this article will be on historical writing and, therefore, on ideas and their logical connections and not on medieval Indian history as such.

To understand historical writings on medieval India we have to go back to the British historians who created a certain kind of tradition that became the given framework for the Indian historians. It is within that framework that some of them still write. The most important historians, however, have been able to discard that framework. I will not be referring to individual writers in detail but only to some of them to illustrate the points I wish to make.

First of all, I would like to take up the emergence of 'medieval India' a concept. The term 'medieval' for a period of Indian history was used for the first time

towards the end of the 19th century. However, a great deal of historical work had been done before the prevalence of the term medieval for a certain period of Indian history. This was really a great trick played upon us. European history in the 19th century had come to be divided into ancient, medieval and modern periods and the British historians who were writing on India simply accepted those labels and applied them to Indian history. In doing so, they used the label 'medieval India' for a period which their predecessors had labelled as 'Muslim India'. This is extremely important because there was no rational criterion for this periodization. What was called 'Muslim' earlier came to be labelled 'medieval' now, and a communal concept was introduced into the periodization of Indian history. In the minds of millions even today the terms 'medieval' and 'Muslim' are synonymous.

James Mill, whose book was published in 1817-1818 was the first British historian to use the word 'Mohammedan' for the middle period of Indian history. Writing on what the East India Company had done and what it should be doing as the ruler of certain parts of India, he extended the scope of his work to the beginning of Indian history on the basis of sources available to him, and divided Indian history before the rule of the East India Company into two periods: 'Hindu India' and 'Mohammedan India'. This was rather ironical, because James Mill was not a believer but an atheist. He was anti-religion, and anti-Christianity. Nevertheless he thought of Indian history in terms of 'Hindu" and 'Muslim'. This was because his predecessors had thought in terms of these categories. If you read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, for example, you would come upon a concept of Islamic civilization. Sir William Jones had used the term 'Hindu' for ancient India. With this background, James Mill divided Indian history into 'Hindu' and 'Muslims' periods.

This was an important as it was unfortunate. James Mill belonged to a school in British historical thought which is referred to as utilisation. In policy, he subscribed to the idea of democracy, and in economy to the idea of *laissez faire*. He gave a lot of importance to legislation as an instrument of social change. Utilitarianism was a particular brand of the movement called 'the enlightenment in Europe. The primary objective of the 'enlightenment' was to secularize life and thought, making the religious and secular mutually exclusive. James Mill, like the other utilitarians, was completely secular in his outlook. Secular progress and earthly happiness were basic values for him. Since he did not believe in the life hereafter, what mattered most was the human life on this earth. Many important thinkers subsequently have taken such ideas for granted and put forth their own ideologies or formulations of human history and human society. Nevertheless, James Mill's periodization created the impression that religious ideas were more important than any other criterion.

James Mill did something more which was even more unfortunate. He talked of 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' civilization in the abstract, and not as diversified empirical realities. Consequently, the Turkish conquest of northern India became merely an extension of Islamic civilization into India. Furthermore, Islamic civilization in India became a foreign civilization. If James Mill did not spell it out, there were others who did spell it out. From this to the idea that the Turks and the Mughals were 'foreigners' in this country was only a logical step. And this step is the first step now with many people. James Mill did not visualise that Indians would also be reading his volumes. But subsequently people learnt English in India and stared reading history books, accepting in the beginning many of the ideas put forth by European writers.

Yet another unfortunate aspect of James Mill's approach was that he did not simply describe civilizations but assessed them; he judged them from the viewpoint of utilitarianism, or the greatest happiness of the greatest number on this earth and not in the life hereafter. As a result, religion and theology were really thrown overboard, possessing no value. He was not anti-Hindu or pro-Muslim, but a few of his predecessors had admired what they called 'Hindu civilization' with the implication that there was no need to change Indian society. James Mill wanted change, radical social change introduced in the territories of the East India Company. Partly for this reason too, James Mill argued that the achievement of what was called 'Hindu civilization' was virtually nothing. It was comparable to pre-historic societies, like those of ancient Egypt and the Middle East. Mill argued that Islamic civilization was much better. In Gibbon's work, the Islamic civilization was better than the Christian, and James Mill referred his reader to Gibbon's work in support of his argument.

In the Indian context this comparison was introduced between 'Hindu India' and 'Muslim India' with the implication that 'Hindu India' was inferior in civilization to 'Muslim India'. Some of the British writers themselves started saying later that 'Hindus' had suffered and 'Hindu civilization' had declined precisely because of the dominance of the 'foreigners', 'Hindu civilization' began to decline with the advent of the Turks. This thread was picked up by some Indian writers and politicians with grave implications for the Indian social order.

Mountstuart Elphinstone, who published his work in 1841, accepted James Mill's periodization of Hindu and Muslim India. But he was different from Mill in some important ways. Elphinstone was a deist believing in an impersonal god who did not interfere with the Universe after its creation. He subscribed to the idea of toleration, particularly religious toleration. Furthermore, Elphinstone imbibed the influence of the Romantic Movement in Europe which underlined the importance of cultural nationalism. In the context of

historical writing on India we can trace the influence of this movement in the work of Grand Duff writing on the Marathas, or in the work of James Todd writing on the Rajputs. Later on, we can find the relevance of this movement for the work of J.D. Cunningham writing on the Sikhs. They explicitly used the word 'nation' for the people about whom they were writing. Elphinstone was also influenced by the ideas of the Romantic Movement, the ideas of nationalism and cultural nationalism.

The ideas of the Enlightenment and of the Romantic Movement in common enabled and induced Elphinstone to given a new interpretation to Indian history, including 'Muslim India'. He emphasized that once the Turks, and later on the Mughals, had come to India to settle down and some Indians also had accepted Islam, there was a great deal of give-and-take between these two societies in the spheres of politics, economics, culture and religion. With Akbar and his policy of rapprochement and reconciliation, Elphinstone actually thought of Akbar as a 'national king'. The policies pursued by Akbar were later discarded by Aurangzeb, with the result that there was a reaction against Aurangzeb, which brought about the decline and fall of the Mughal empire. Elphinstone's ideas too were accepted and elaborated by some Indian historians.

Before the mid-19th century we come upon a historian who from our viewpoint is more crucial than the two we have mentioned. With him we come to the Communalisation of Indian history on a grand scale. He appeared to be more impressive and set the tone for a very large number of British and Indian historians subsequently, and there developed a tradition which became rather strong. This historian was the British administrator, H.M. Elliot. He decided to publish extracts very largely from the Persian chronicles of medieval India who, in his opinion, did not know how to write history. Nevertheless, he allowed them to speak for themselves in the *History of India As Told by Its Own Historians*, eventually published in eight volumes. In the process, history was equated with past politics. Since the evidence presented dwelt on 'Muslim' rulers, past Indian politics got equated with 'Muslim' politics in India. Furthermore, Elliot equated 'Muslims' with rulers and, by implication, with 'foreigners' and he equated 'Hindu' with the ruled natives. It is difficult to find communalisation of history on such a colossal scale.

In this process of communalisation, communal monoliths were created and it was assumed that the interests of each communal monolith were common and if there were any differences they were less important that what was common. If they recited the *kalima*, 'there is not God but Allah', for example, this was much more important than the fact that one of them happened to be a ruler and another a slave.

Coming to the Indian response, we find that many of the Indian historians accepted the framework created by the British historians. In the given colonial situation they could not suddenly adopt an approach which had nothing to do with what they found around them. We can understand why they started writing within that framework. At the same time communal thinking, communal considerations, communal attitudes in actual life in India were also gradually taking roots. It does not come to us as a surprise that some of the Indian historians became more communal than the British historians. In fact many politicians, like the historians, began to equate 'community' with 'nationality'. It was on this assumption that the myths of Maharana Pratap, Shivaji and Guru Gobind Singh were created as 'national' heroes.

Fortunately, many of the Indian historians gradually started modifying their inheritance, but without discarding the framework. First of all, we have logically the historians who argued explicitly or assumed that 'medieval' India cannot be equated with 'Muslim' India simply because during the period called 'medieval' there were also people called 'Hindus'. They based their argument particularly on the existence of 'non-Muslim' states in the country during the medieval period. The equation of 'medieval India' with 'Muslim India' was being modified to 'Medieval India' equal to both 'Muslim' and 'Hindu India'.

At another level, history was not equated with past politics. Whether the state was 'Hindu' or 'Muslim", the activities of rulers were not the whole of history. The scope of history was extended to government and administration, and then to the people, their ideas and their beliefs, to culture, religion and arts, and to the patronage given by the rulers to painting and architecture. In other words, history was no longer equated with past politics, whether 'Hindu' or 'Muslim'. However, by merely widening the scope of history they could not really get rid of the communal framework. Instead of talking of 'Hindu India' at an earlier stage and of 'Muslim India' at a later stage they thought of 'Hindu' civilization and 'Muslim' civilization during the medieval period itself. These civilizations or cultures could be presented in terms of confrontation or rapprochement. Obviously, they did not discard the framework itself. One could adopt the position of Elphinstone and say that history was not past politics, that medieval India was not merely Muslim India; there was Hindu society and there was Muslim society; Hindu culture and Muslim culture; they came together and there was give-and-take, mutual understanding and rapprochement. But by doing this one could not discard the framework. In support of 'nationalism' it was suggested that in medieval India a composite culture had been evolved. This idea was different from that of rapprochement.

The idea of rapprochement is based on cultural co-existence and mutual appreciation. The idea of composite culture implies the evolution of a common culture that cuts across the communal lines of division. This idea was

expected to buttress Indian nationalism. But our difficulty, as students of history, is that this idea flounders on the rock of empirical evidence. If we try to explain the developments of medieval India in terms of composite culture we can explain only a segment of those developments and not really the period as a whole.

Who then are the historians who have really transcended the communal approach and presented Indian history in different terms. The people, for whom belief is more important than material conditions, divide populations into vertical segments on the basis of beliefs; these beliefs are primarily religious beliefs; and therefore, they look upon a social order in terms of religious communities. On the basis of religious beliefs, again, communities are divided into sects. However, there are also historians for whom the material conditions, or objective conditions, are at least as important as any beliefs or ideas. When these historians look at a society, when they look even at a community, they try to study the differences based on the material means at the disposal of the various segments of the society. In other words, they look for horizontal divisions or social stratification due to the varying distribution of production. They talk of classes and not merely of communities or religious groups.

During the last thirty or forty years Indian historians have paid more attention to the economy, to the structure of political power, to social strata based on or related to differences of economic means. They have taken interest in agrarian history or in urban economy, and they have set aside the differences of communities or differences based on religion. In the studies of medieval India which relate to the study of the ruling classes one will see the difference. If one looks at the studies relating to the cultivators, the peasantry, one will see the difference. If one looks at the studies of artisans and craftsmen one will see the difference. There one is not talking of beliefs. One is talking of the economic structure and how different sections of the population are related to that economic structure.

How do we approach religion and religious ideas and how do we try to relate religious movements to history in general? Religious ideologies do not develop in a vacuum; they are related to the social situations, particularly the social stresses which result from social changes. Socio-economic changes leading to social stresses give rise to certain religious ideologies. In this way we can understand the religious movements better. The new religious or socio-religious groups which come into existence in such situations react to the social situation around and try to enter secular history as well. The classic case of the revolts against the Mughal empire can illustrate this point well. Professor Irfan Habib's explanation takes into account not only the new religious ideas but also the agrarian crisis that developed in the Mughal

empire during the reign of Aurangzeb, and adversely affected the condition of the peasantry. Indeed, simple peasant revolts were rather uncommon in medieval India. Peasant discontent could be exploited by the intermediary *Zamindars* who were ambitious enough to assert their own independence. The ties of caste also could provide the cohesive link for a peasant revolt. Similarly, the cohesive ties of a religious ideology could unite the oppressed peasants against their oppressors. Here, ideas and material conditions enter into a dialectical relationship.

From this brief discussion it is clear that it is possible for a historian not only to transcend or to discard the framework of communal historiography, but also to treat 'religious' movements as an integral part of 'secular' history. To do so in not to deprive a 'religious' movement of its significance, but to add a new dimension to its importance. The historians' objective is to understand the world of action as much as the realm of ideas.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLITICS: COMMUNITY – A TREND REPORT

Moin Shakir

The present essay is an attempt to analyse social science literature in India on the theme of community and its relationship with political processes. The perspective and framework of the analysis is mainly political. This, however, limits the scope of this essay. Those studies conducted by social anthropologists and sociologists which have no bearing on politics and politics realities have not been taken into account. Another aspect which narrows the scope of this study is the manner in which I define the term community. The term community has vast connotations – it can indicate social, political, cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional and tribal collectively. It may be used in the sense of a nation, sub-nation, nationality or an international grouping. We have used the term community in a restricted sense, i.e. a social collectivity based on religion. Therefore, this essay is a study of religious minorities or of religious pluralism in India.

At the outset it should be noted that community studies have not attracted much attention from social scientists in this country. In village studies, some reference to communities or communal relations is made, but it is certainly inadequate as it is "incidental to other interests",[1] or is a by-product of these interests. Political Science literature in the seventies, produced by professional and non-professional writers, reveals the acute sense of importance given to community in politics.[2] This shows, in a way, an end of the hangover of the pre-1947 national movement and of the fifties and early sixties political perceptions when emphasis on community interest or community identity articulation was termed as "communal" in a pejorative sense. Now there appears to be an agreement among social and political scientists about the validity of the existence of the community category as a social factor and as one of the bases of Indian politics. Politics, therefore, cannot wish away community and its particularistic problems. It is also realized that "the religious communities also happen to be economic and political communities. Religious ethnic and class lines do not cross-cut each other as in many Western societies but from distinct configurations of social groups".[3] Besides, these communities expand their perception of disadvantage to include ethnic factors.[4] This makes community study a complex and complicated problem. It involves the question of theoretical framework as well as methodology.

The dominant theoretical framework of political scientists, Indian as well as non-Indian, who attempted to study the problems of different communities in the seventies has been "instrumentalists"[5] or "apologetic pluaralistic"[6] which refers to that perspective among scholars of ethnicity which views ethnic groups as "primordial groups" emerging into consciousness than as cultural categories transformed into self-conscious communities by leaders, elite groups, or the State and seeking to provide social, economic and political advantages for the groups in question.[7] This framework tends to reject a dichotomous conceptualization, i.e. paired opposites such as ascriptive versus secular, primordial versus civil, parochial versus universal, nation-building versus political fragmentation or traditional versus modern. These were considered as "analytically useless".[8]

The "instrumentalist" approach was employed to grapple with continental diversity and multiplicity of divisions. These diversities are vertical and horizontal. Unlike many "plural" societies, these have a territorial basis and run through the entire body politics. India is not a Western type nation but a civilization[9] and in the given plural set up the segregation of community cannot be considered desirable. The pluralist option is "to recognise, accept and institutionalize" ethnic distinctiveness through sanctioned autonomy in the areas of "religious and cultural life, but within the framework of common economic and political institutions".[10]

Apart from the plurality of Indian society the nature and evolution of the pattern of Indian politics provides a centrality to community. It is argued that "people pursue their interests by forming groups and selecting identifications that maximise their advantages in the competition for scarce jobs and economic resources and for political power".[11] The religious identities are called upon to play a major political role owing to the nature of the democratic process and a weak party system. The economic and political changes, or the process of modernization, instead of undermining the importance of the community, have provided a new lease of life to "primordialism" and have sharpened community consciousness. Education, knowledge of history and the ability to communicate heighten a sense of self-awareness among the people.

The lacuna of an "instrumentalist" approach is the neglect of the role of class, ideology and other economic organizations which undermine the factor of religion or ethnicity. The governing principle of this approach is a defence of the status quo and the doctrine of liberalism. Those who do not subscribe to "instrumentalism" may be descried as "critical pluralists" who recognise the diversity of ethnic groups, cultural divides, non-homogeneity in social and cultural circumstances and as a cumulative consequence, a wide-ranging disparity in beliefs and ideologies.[12] They characterize Indian society as "heterogeneous collection of intermeshed" "civil societies" with many points

of friction. There is a multiplicity of contending civil societies each with an ethos, forms of consciousness, philosophy, morality, religion or neo-religion, ideology, political institutions and culture of its own. The roots of multiple civil societies go very deep.[13] Mobilization in the community and friction with other communities results especially when "exploiters and power seekers fan the flames to secure economic and political power for their own civil societies".[14] The process of the modernization of economic and social life "has not made the rough edges of diverse Indian civil societies smoother. Still less has it fused them to form a grand syncretic Indian civil society".[15] Modernization is not only consolidating civil societies but is also creating new ones. The citizens are not yet "fully released as individual political actors free to associate in class-based politics".[16] The "critical pluralists" recognize the community feeling to be an enduring and powerful factor in the political life of the people. But they also perceive, it the context of socio-economic developments, the formation of conflicting classes within each community and the factors which hamper class polarization.

It is argued that the ethnicisation of politics and politicisation of community provides dynamism,[17] creates interest groups, establishes political parties,[18] helps in selecting candidates at the time of elections, promotes inter-communal collaboration,[19] and perpetuates the exploitation of the weak in religious communities.[20]

Even if religion is accepted as the basis of a community's identity the political scientists encounter a number of difficulties in explicating the nature and ethos of such communities and in determining the pattern of interaction between community and politics. The question is whether the framework used to understand the social basis of politics, in the context of religious, communities, is or is not applicable to all the communities. All communities display considerable variations in matters of historical experience, response to contemporary challenges and social and economic interests. How about a substantially large community which professes Hinduism? Do the Hindus constitute a community or a nationality whose boundaries are co-extensive with the country? For centuries the Hindus have been considered synonymous with India. Indian history merges into Hindu mythology. Therefore, they are a "mainstream" community. It is now realized, by professional and non-professional writers, that the Hindus are a community, like any other religious community, and that they are increasingly realizing their sub-national and transnational character. The assertion of awareness on the part of other communities is "unmistakably moulding Hindus into the most important and distinct sub-national identity of India, zealous of its rights and seeking safeguards like any other community instead of merely asserting that everybody should merge in the mainstream".[21] Not only that they are a

majority community with a minority complex.[22] Paul brass and Rudolphs do not subscribe to this view, mainly on the basis of the absence of pan-Indian Hindu consciousness among the people. Paul Brass argues that Hindu nationalism and Hindi sentiment are largely concentrated in some Northern States. His conclusion is that "Hindi sentiments and Hindu nationalism are, therefore, as regionally based as are other linguistic cultural attachments in the Indian Union".[23] S.H. Rudolph and L.I. Rudolph's argument is more interesting and more important. They hold that the Hindu majority is "illusory". On the basis of census data they point out that 17 per cent of the population is not Hindu, 15 per cent of the Scheduled Castes are not susceptible to political appeals based on Hindu identity; 5 per cent of the tribals are not available for party appeals to Hindu interests, and a fraction of uncertain magnitude of the remaining 63 per cent of the population shares a Hindu identity that has political saliency. More important, the Hindu majority is more fragmented and competitive along class, caste and regional lines of cleavage that are India's minorities.[24] According to Rudolphs, the political support base for a Hindu confessional politics is located, for the most part, among "the traditionally literate, spiritually initiated (twice-born) upper castes in the relatively backward Hindi-speaking heartland States of northern India".[25]

The burden of Paul Brass' and Rudolphs' argument is that the Hindu community is "divided" while the other religious communities share common economic conditions, have a greater propensity to vote en bloc and suffer simultaneously from poverty, discrimination and powerlessness. This appears to be quite far-fetched. The religious communities and minorities do not operate as monolithic blocs. One reason for this is that no community is socially well-knot and homogenous. The Parsis, who are comparatively more homogenous than others, are politically and economically a divided lot. Recent researches on different communities indicate the extent to which every community is socially stratified in following the rules of endogamy, exogamy, ranking, and also in terms of cultural, linguistic and regional division.[26] The economic divisions within each community are real. Therefore, it will not be correct to describe any community as "backward" or "forward". The fact is that there is a certain amount of "interpenetration of class and community and each community contributes its share, "both to the bourgeois-landlord as well as to the proletarian, semi-proletarian peasant classes".[27] There is a mixing up of class and community factors with each other.

Social scientists rightly ask the question as to whether the social stratifications and other divisions permit any community to function as a pan-Indian community with pan-Indian consciousness. Imtiaz Ahmed, Suneet Chopra and Balraj Puri argue that the Muslims do not constitute an all-India community

because the social practices of the community reveal more diversity than common features. Historical experience and geographical factors divide each and every community.[28] Irfan Habib, Iqtidar Alam Khan and Gopal Singh and Javed Alam concede the fact of the divided nature of the community but hold that a common religion, communal violence, cultural discrimination, psychological makeup and the political processes have a great potentiality to create pan-Muslim consciousness and turn the community into an all-India community.[29] The same is true of other religious communities. The Christians are segmented by caste, language, region etc., but the Hindu-Christian riots in South India, the mass stir on the issue of the so-called Freedom of Religion Bill and the articulation of the North-East through Christianity impels that its distinct all-India identity shall have to be reckoned with. Recent works also suggest that owning to political factors, religious consciousness in almost all communities is being sharpened, but it is only serving "to reinforce rather than weaken or eliminate" social disnctinctins.[30] Social scientists, however, have not paid sufficient attention to the problem of co-relating the fact of social stratifications with the political process at the regional and national levels. Mattison Mine's study of Muslims gives a good account of social integration of the community and the lack of political unity in Tamil Nadu. Because of the local situation and the absence of a perceived external threat, Muslim political behaviour to some extent parallels that of the Hindu'.[31] The rural-urban situation of the community influences, perhaps determines, its socio-religious and political identity articulation. In the rural areas the community members feel that their identity is ascribed by birth. They are much concerned with establishing personal status and prestige. Their identity is determined not on the basis of religion but by birth. While in the urban areas or in an open society the identity of the community has to be based on attitudes and appropriate religious behaviour. In the case of Muslims in Tamil Nadu or the Sikhs in Punjab, the rural-urban factor determines the idiom and the content of politics.[32]

Mention should also be made of the debate over viewing the community question as national or nationality question. It involves the issue of community as a nation and nationality as a historical category emerging at a certain stage of social and economic development. If nationality is a historical community with its own language, territory, common culture and rudimentary economic ties,[33] then many of the religious communities cannot be described as nationalities. Even the fairly well-defined nationalities like the Assamese or Malyali etc., are vulnerable to communitarian considerations. Regional nationality-based movements have a propensity to take the form of communal disharmony.[34] The case of the Sikhs is different from other religious communities partly because they constitute a majority in Punjab and possess a distinct identity consciousness. Paul Brass suggests that the Sikhs are a

"subjectively self-conscious nationality, occupying a position of political dominance in a compact territorial unit created by their own political efforts."[35] He further notes that the Sikhs have become a "nation" as a result of "social mobilization and political organisation".[36] in this sense the Muslim or Christian communities cannot be viewed as nationalities. But it is suggested that the Meos, Moplahas and Kashmiris are nationalities.[37] The U.P. Muslims are also included in the category of nationality. According to Javed Alam, "owing to interlocking of factors, in given contiguous territory, which have historically been potent in oppression, persecution and discrimination, such factors have, or can create incipient tendencies towards nationality formation. Such a tendency obviously cannot operate in all regions, for example Kerala and West Bengal or Tamil Nadu, where language and cultural distinctions are absent".[38]

The interaction between community and politics is inherent in a competitive democratic set up. The assertion of a community's identity in politics is considered as communalism in political science literature. In the fifties and early sixties communalism was characterised as a sign of sickness of the polity, as something undesirable which must be got rid of. Communalism was looked upon as the anti-thesis of integration and modernization. In the seventies, there appears to be a change in approach on the part of social and political scientist. The general trend has been to analyse the phenomenon in the context of social and economic developments and in all its empirical complexity. Instead of concentrating their attention on religious cleavages as the source of communalism, the social scientists attempted to reassess historical part, the imperialist approach and post-independence politics and economics in order to explain the persistence of the phenomenon of communalism of both the majority and the minority communities. Not that the element of religion was completely ignored but it was interlinked with non-religious factors which give rise to communalism.

Gopal Krishna, Ratna Naidu and Prabha Dixit view communalism as competitive group solidarity based on religious identity which is as basic and enduring as class conflict.[39] According to Naidu, "the communal situation is characterized by tension between culturally distinct but geographically intermingled communities. Economic competition, religions and cultural antipathies and memories of past conflicts and humiliations under-lie these tensions".[40] In those plural societies, argues Prabha Dixit, in which communalism in inevitable, the phenomenon turns into a political doctrine which makes use of religio-cultural differences to achieve political ends. Thus communalism arises out of a deliberate choice made by a people to use social and cultural differences to achieve some political end. Communalism emerges and grows under the pressure of nationalism and democracy.[41]

Competitive political parties also reflect ethnic and communal antagonisms. The communal tensions are "essentially fed by the political process of modern times which transforms the individual from being a subject to a citizen, and makes his conscious of his rights through the electoral mechanism".[42] But the process does not threaten the stability and integrity of the political system itself. If the national institutions explicitly recognize and accommodate existing communal divisions and interests, the objective of integration can be achieved. In the recognition of communal solidarities lies the possibility for larger loyalties to strike deeper roots.[43] Paul Brass also notices the tendencies towards segmentation and inter-communal collaboration in the politics of Punjab. Community in politics, Brass further argues, has promoted "politics of accommodation in which a premium is placed on political communal coalition-building".[44]

Satish Sabarwal,[45] Bipan Chandra and P.C. Joshi[46] dispute the dominant role of religion in promoting communal cleavages.

Bipan Chandra and P.C. Joshi argue that communalism does not reflect religious conflict or clash of cultures because they are not the points of socio-economic demarcation or separation between Indians. Rather, it 'masks' the politics of classes and social groups arising in secular and non-religious spheres.

Harbans Mukhia, Zoya Khaliq Hasan and Javed Alam see the roots of communalism in the surviving pre-capitalist structure and in the politics of the ruling class and of state managers. Mukhia says that the basis of communalism is not found in the history of medieval India as the relations between the communities were not characterized exclusively by strife and confrontation. Communalism, in modern times, has become an ideology used by the "secular" ruling class to buttress the existing social organizations rather than for upliftment of community or nation. In this sense communalism has a "secular basis" as it is a part of broader anti-revolutionary, that is anti-socialist, ideology whose objective is to preserve the existing social organization. It is the "second line of defence" of the Indian capitalist class to divide the people. Mukhia further notes that as Indian capitalism has refused to use violence to destroy the basis of feudalism and compromised with it there inevitably has been the rise of communalism. In Italy and Germany, the capitalist social structure and the absence of violence against feudalism gave birth to fascism and Nazism. India has to encounter a similar challenge in the form of communalism.[47] Similarly, Zoya Khaliq Hasan refers to the incompleteness of the anti-feudal revolution which created conditions of backwardness in which communal ideology found a fertile soil to grow. She adds that the political and economic crises of the system produce conditions in which intra-class and inter-class rivalries and competition are aggravated. Therefore, the ruling class

resorts to communal strategy to conceal the weakness and fragility of the system.[48] Different segments of the petite bourgeoisie are more susceptible to communalism and communal arguments articulated in the populist way with the background of economic stagnation and rising unemployement.[49]

The communal problem continues to remain alive on account of the persistent socio-economic backwardness of the masses, the continuing hold of the landed gentry and certain bourgeois element's alignment with these forces. The problem is not of obscurantism and revivalism but the complicity of the ruling classes as well.[50]

Closely connected with communalism is the question of communal violence. The problem of violence is explained in the context of cultural identity, political realities, social change and economic development. According to Ratna Naidu, in the making of communal riots, conflicting cultural and socio-psychological factors play a more important role than economic and other factors. "I have not come across any evidence.... wherein one might point to the economic variable as a direct explanation for the eruption of a riot, although it can explain some of the incidents of particular vengeance which take place during the course of a riot".[51] Since the religious minorities are more sensitive to the felt threat to self-respect, identity symbols and cherished values, "inevitably it is the minority community which in a moment of defiance commits the first act of aggression."[52]

Baldev Raj Nayar, Owen Lynch and Imtiaz Ahmed feel that what emerges as a general statement about riots in the States is that there is a political culture of violence in India.[53] A riot is not an irrational action but "there is order in the disorder, culture in the confusion, and rationality in the riot... urban violence can be orderly, culturally normative,, and national".[54] Lynch further says that in the Hindu world view, violence and destructive forces are essential aspects of nature and reality...Indeed violent beings are needed to control evil forces in a culturally constituted world where no strict dichotomy between human and divine exists".[55] Imtiaz Ahmed arrives at the same conclusion but on the basis of different assumptions. He relates the eruption of communal violence to "the prosperity and economic visibility of Muslims in the cities". This economic muscle eventually extends into the political arena. Therefore, communal riots are not an indicator of social breakdown but are actually a sign of the dynamism and the secular changes that are taking place in Indian society as a result of economic development and modernization. Communal riots are not an illogical and irrational complex of actions or senseless deeds; they are, sociologically at least, "clearly directed, goal-oriented social action, whose logic and rationality is clear to those who engage in them".[56]

K.F. Rustamji and B.G. Verghese see the roots of communal violence in economic rivalries which have to be covered up with the cloak of communalism. Rustamaji says that "a riot does not occur in a sleepy little village of Uttar Pradesh where all suffer equally, nor in a tribal village of Madhya Pradesh where all live safely in their poverty. It occurs in Moradabad where the metal workers have built up a good industry, it occurs in Aligarh where the lock makers have made good, it occurs in Bhiwandi where power-loom rivalries are poisonous, it occurs in Hatia and Ahmedabad and Jamshedpur where there are jobs to get, contracts to secure, houses and shops to recapture, it occurs in Agra and Firozabad and in all other towns where economic rivalries are serious...."[57] B.G. Verghese regards the political element unimportant and considers economic and social facts which give birth to the phenomenon of communal violence as "a facet of struggle going on among the submerged masses of India".[58] He further contends that "the educated unemployed and lumpen elements among these disadvantaged groups are locked in competition, one against the other, for the few positions or opportunities open to either or all of them. They are the so-called anti-social elements who collide with the thugs and hirelings of the upper classes and castes who have made good by whatever means and would like to keep it out of further competition."[59]

Social change and economic development are the factors emphasized as the source of communal violence by Asghar Ali Engineer. Violence is inevitable if change and development create structures of oppression and injustice.[60] The degree of conflict and violence is directly proportionate to the creation and institutionalisation of these structures of oppression and injustice.

The role of the ruling class, party managers, the bourgeoisie, competitive politics and communal parties with the support structure of the petite bourgeoisie are considered to be the main factors behind communal violence in order to divide the poor belonging to the different communities. Communalism provides "false consciousness" and communal violence strengthens communal solidarity and renders "revolutionary" elements ineffective. It is also suggested that it is not the lumpenisation of politics which is the sources of communal violence but the neo-rich in the rural and urban areas who have a vested interest in diverting the attention of the poor from the real issues and which they find useful in order to maintain a bourgeois hegemony in the system. Thus it is the nature of State power, the contending political forces and communal chauvinist groups which determine the extent and level of communal violence. Other situational factors are of secondary importance.[61] On this basis an attempt is made to formulate a theory of communal violence. Asghar Ali Engineer notes that to develop a comprehensive theory of communal conflict for contemporary Indian society,

one will have to take "macro as well as micro factors into account". Among the macro factors are the countryside socio-economic changes that result from following the capitalist path of development, the politics pursued by the ruling political parties, both at the Centre as well as in the States, the alliances struck by the so-called secular parties, the reckoning of caste and communal groups for ensuring victory at the hustings, deliberate attempts to encourage religious fundamentalism by the ruling classes in order to manage the deepening economic crisis through other means, etc. The ruling classes as a whole are responsible for encouraging caste and communal identities, thus aggravating communal conflict... At the micro level one must take into account factors like the proposition of the Muslim population, the nature of economic competition between the two communities, the history of communal riots in the area, election politics to local bodies, the role of the anti-social elements, local political alliances etc. In any riot situation both the micro and macro factors play important role, of course, varying in degrees from place to place.[62]

The politics of the religious communities is an area which has attracted the attention of several Indian and foreign social scientists. There is also a lot of journalistic writings on the subject. Still this area continues to be prejudice-ridden to an extreme degree. The theoretical viewpoints of the pre-1947 days still command respect and influence the assessment of contemporary developments. Besides, there is a tendency to identify certain viewpoints as progressive or "communal" on a priority basis without taking into account the specific logic and underlying it. Moreover, the variety of politics among different communities is so vast and the trends of political developments so diverse that any generalization of community politics runs the risk of oversimplifying facts and of opening the analysis to the charge of nairvety.[63]

Writers like A.B. Shah and N.S. Sexena,[64] who subscribe to the dichotomous conceptualization of the Aristotelian logic of either/or, believe that religion is the most important determining element of the politics of religious minorities. Religion provides the idiom, style and content of politics. Therefore, religion-based politics is bound to be communal, backward looking, traditional anti-modern and anti-democratic. In the seventies this viewpoint is seriously questioned and disputed. It is argued that religion is one of the many influences on the community. It is argued that in fact it is politics which influences far more effectively the orientations and motivation of the community. This interaction between social infrastructure and politics had completely changed the nature of the communal electorate. It is "no longer a collection of numerous caste and religious groups or village and urban communities which polities can use for building winning coalitions with the use of power, patronage and help from local influentials, irrespective of prevailing public sentiments. Rather it is one large political community which

acts collectively as a rational entity, rewarding and punishing one or the other action."[65]

Political and electoral processes have immensely influenced the attitudes and behaviour of the members of the community. Here religion appears to be quite insignificant. The secularizing tendency of politics prominently stamps political attitudes and perceptions. This kind of behaviour is in keeping with the general trend in the polity. The process may be slow, but it is definite. Electoral studies conducted in the seventies indicate that the community electorate is "heavily penetrated by secular forces" and competitive politics and the process of modernization have inevitably begun to create a differentiated political opinion.[66] The voters commitment has been towards secular and democratic parties. They do not exercise their vote en bloc.

The community voters', increasing participation in the competitive politics of the States and the nation convinces them that their active involvement is not unrewarding. The political process is integrating them with the broad framework of the system and breaking communal solidarities to a great extent. Consequently, substantial segments of the Muslim elites (64 per cent) and non-elites (57 per cent) writes Bashiruddin Ahmed, "believe that non-Muslim political parties are sympathetic to Muslim needs and interests. Both groups also perceive that the Government is contributing to the welfare of the Indian people, including Muslims, and it does so more or less in the same proportion as their Hindu counterparts. Such a similarity is also seen in the sanguine expectations about the progress of the country in the future".[67]

Peter Meyer holds that unnecessary emphasis is laid on religion in the politics of the community by those who employ inadequate approaches like that of the Koranic political culture, of Islamic political theory and of the "crisis" of contemporary society. His data suggest that ordinary Muslims are "active participants in regional cultures, whose perspectives they share. The views of contemporary Indian Muslims have been found to be more diverse, more complex, and better integrated with those of Indians of other religious beliefs than the statements found within the corpus of received opinions on the subject suggest".[68]

A number of political scientists now find that the process of secularization is tending to reduce the fundamental utility of religion as an instrument for economic gains. Even the so-called communal parties are constrained to speak in terms of secular and economic programmes. A party like the Akali Dal is described by its leaders as "progressive" and "secular" and which strives for a secular, democratic and socialist society of the vision of Guru Gobind Singh. Most of the demands of the party are socio-economic and regional. In 1979, the Akali Dal contested the SGPC elections on political and constitutional

issues regarding more powers to the States and won 95 per cent of the seats. Those who contested on religious issues were routed.[69] This is analysed in terms of the social origins of the leadership of the party and the compulsions of the emerging polity.[70] The Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973 does speak of the "nationhood" of the Sikhs and of "Panth in danger" and articulates the demand of State autonomy. But it seems to be more seriously concerned with the demands of capitalist farmers like fixing remunerative prices for agricultural produce, abolition of food zones and power facilities.[71]

One of the facets of "community in politics" is the effect of modernization on the institution of religion which makes it perform several new social and political functions. It assimilates the community into the functioning of a bourgeois society generating class differentiation and the articulation of economic elements of different classes. The demands might be couched in religious terms, given the level of consciousness prevailing at a point of time in the community. It also hastens the process of the gradual abandoning of rituals and practices of religious life, which also provokes reaction in the form of religious fundamentalism.[72]

The institutionalization of religion also acts as one of the facts in politics. Thus the institution of SGPC is regarded as the "single most important event in the institutionalization of Sikh politics"[73] and whose superintendence now extends to over 772 shares. Its budget for 1981-82 was Rs.6.5 crore. It has "a well-organized staff consisting of preachers, priests, baptisers, musicians, attendants, drivers and mechanics. The Akali Dal, with its control of the SGPC, enjoys access to an unmatched source of funds and committed workers for the regular dissemination of its propaganda, whether for electoral support or for participation in agitation"[74]. The SGPC is not merely the "religious parliament" of the community. The dynamics of this sub-system revolves around the relations between contemporary political parties and groups.[75] It is also noted that Sikhism is the only religion which permits its religious shrines to be controlled democratically. This popular basis of religious leaders provides a unique kind of importance. It re-establishes the legitimacy of Sikh leadership through SGPC elections.

The different classes within a community view the question of religious identity differently. They use religion and religious identity or cultural cohesion and solidarity to serve their interests – economic, political and social. It is the rural, Tamil Muslims or rural Jat Sikhs who seem to display more concern for political and regional identity than the urban merchants or the urban higher caste Sikhs or Muslims. The latter feel a sense of insecurity in their social situation, which makes them resort to religion and religious solidarity, while the work situation and kinship relations of the rural masses turn them towards regionally oriented demands.[76]

It is also argued by social scientists that non-redressal of genuine cultural grievances and discrimination on the part of either the Central Government or the State Governments helps in the persistence of ascriptive symbols. The religious minorities consider such attitudes as a threat to their cultural identity.

This results in solidifying communal consciousness, which in turn is used to counter "integrationist" or "assimilationist" policies. The administration's discrimination against the minorities' educated section in matters of employment, both at the Central and State levels, and the victimization of the poor belonging to these segments at the time of the eruption of communal violence sharpen religious identity consciousness. The disillusionment of voters belonging to the religious minorities can also be noticed. Their increasing participation in the political processes has not helped in ameliorating their conditions. They have been turned into "pawns of electoral contests" as they are looked upon more as voters than as citizens. This is bound to continue so long as power is vested in the "landlord castes". In the given socio-economic and cultural set up, the religious minorities do not view their future as bright.[77]

Such community assertion cannot be explained in terms of the "religious communalism" of Muslims or the "mindless militancy of the Sikhs" or the "traditional weaknesses" of the Hindus.[78]

Mention may be made to the literature on national integration. In the fifties and the sixties, the problem was discussed in terms of religion and religious understanding, and inculcating nationalist orientations or secular attitudes. Linguism, regionalism or religious communalism were denounced as they were believed to be the sources of disharmony and disintegration. In the seventies, the question of integration was analysed in the context of the State system, the political processes and the dynamics of economic development.

The disintegrating forces now cannot hope to succeed because of the developed State structure which has "consolidated its dominant social role through the acquisition of an additional coercive capacity. This fact is of vital importance, in the perspective particularly of the existing cultural and social diversities in the country and the potential for turbulence associated with them."[79] Apart from this State structure, another factor which operates to preserve India's integrity is the horizontal spread of economic ties and their increasing multiplicity, both territorially and across the various sectors of economic life and activity. The expansion of communications, the growth of industry and the change in the character of the agrarian economy over the years have all contributed to this transformation. While there are many unsatisfactory aspects to this transformation it has nevertheless helped to

bring into existence a truly national market for goods and services.[80] Equally helpful to the process of integration is "the long lasting consensus on the Constitution and structure of governance it establsiehed".[81]

Paul Brass suggests that the "consequences of ethnic politics in a regime of competitive parties may be, but are not necessarily, catastrophic. The possibilities of political solutions to ethnic-linguistic conflicts and of inter-communal collaboration for political advantage are very great and are the rule rather than the exception. Secondly, political parties and political leaders do not simply reflect pre-existing ethnic cleavages. In the process of political competition, they shape and moderate them as well. In a word, ethnic politics are as much subject to the manipulative abilities of party politicians as they are influenced by them".[82] Brass also points out that in a competitive democratic framework, complete polarization of political parties is not possible on account of the presence of different community groups, for whose support all political parties compete. And no party has succeeded in monopolising the support of any single community. Thus the party system in India contains the features of "segmented pluralism" and "consociational democracy".[83]

Alternative strategies in political and economic development also presuppose the existence of an integrated polity. It had to be strengthened through democracy, class struggle, for-reaching socio-economic transformation and socialism. Since the political, economic, administrative constitutional unification of India is a fact, political power could be used as well as captured, in the end, only on a national plane".[84]

In the regionalization of politics, Balraj Puri sees a greater possibility of the satisfaction of the aspirations of the different community groups and better prospects of national integration. He considers regionalization as an antidote to communalism. In Kashmir, the flood-gates of secession are closed because of the regionalization of the Kashmiri identity. In Punjab the integration process received a set back because of the denationalization of politics. The solution, according to Puri is in regionalization and not in dealing with the problem on a communal basis.[85]

It is argued that integration is not threatened by community assertion in politics but what is dangerous to it is the failure on the part of the ruling class and the State managers to evolve an imaginative and effective cultural policy. The maximization of cultural differences should not bother anyone so long as economic disparities are minimised and every form of cultural arrogance is curbed.[86]

Concluding Remarks

It may be pointed out here that the existing political science literature is characterized by the near absence of indepth community studies. What we come across are sketchy and inadequate attempts to study different aspects of community life, without any political perspective. There exists a theoretical vacuum and no definite framework. The dominant approach has been of "apologetic pluralism" which conceals vital realities of the structure of a community and perception of the interaction between community and politics.

One may explain this phenomenon in the context of the absence of field work tradition in political science, which has had an adverse result on its growth and development. it has alienated, argues M.N. Srinivas, political science from grass-root reality and led to fanciful assumptions about the behaviour of ordinary people. It has resulted in woeful ignorance about the complex interaction of economic, political and social forces at local level. Srinivas further says that one of the consequences of this is the implicit and absurd view that people are like dough in the hands of planners and government".[87]

Whatever field data have been collected by the social scientists, Rasheeduddin Khan characterizes such studies as an example of non-creative research.[88] In community studies, the questions of theoretical rigour and methodology are of critical importance. Neglect of this aspect may lead to wrong formulations and disastrous conclusions. There is a need to rigorously define the structure of community and the different levels of stratifications. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of studies on the various sub-sects of communities.

There is a need for macro-level and micro-level studies of the problem of communalism and communal violence. Emphasis on a multi-disciplinary approach to understand these phenomena is quite imperative. Extremely few studies attempt to relate them with the class character of the State and the accepted pattern of a mixed economy. One of the neglected areas of research here is the absence of a comparative perspective.

Another area which requires to be further researched into is the variations in the pattern of interaction between community and politics in different parts of the country. There is no one definite and set pattern. Such studies should be conducted on regional and sub-regional levels.

There is paucity of good studies on national integration from the perspective of politics. Political scientists have not yet systematically identified the sources of integration and disintegration in polity. The subject still continues to be researched by 'historicists' and the 'religionists' who hardly pay any attention to the logic of economic development, its effects on different segments of a

particular community, the community's response to the limited opportunities available, the unhealthy competition generating communal and class rivalries, and political alliances, keeping in view electoral alliances, all of which are closely connected with the question of national integration.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Satish Sabarwal, gives a list of important village and community studies and shows their inadequacy in understanding the problems of communities and communal conflict. See his 'Elements of Communalism', *Mainstream,* March 21, 1981 pp. 27-28.

   S.P. Jain in his *'The social structure of Hindu Muslim community*, Delhi 1975, shares Sabarwal's judgement pp.2-3 but his own work does not satisfactory focus on the political aspect of community relationships.

2. Still one feels that excepting a few good works on the Muslims, Sikhs and the Buddhists the situation of other religious minorities like the Christians, Jains, Parsis, are not subjected to rigorous social science analysis. Even the Muslims or Sikh or Buddhist studies suffer from a "lack of adequate theoretical perspective" and "comprehensive and integrated approach". There is also "poverty of authentic empirical material". This pint is made by P.C. Joshi; The Economic Background of Communalism in India' in B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Essays in Modern Indian History*, Delhi, 1980 p. 168 in the context of the study of communalism from a macro-sociological and political standpoint. It is also an apt description of community studies.

3. Ratna Naidu, *Communal Edge to Plural Societies: India and Malaysia*, New Delhi, 1980, p.87.

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5. See Paul Brass, 'Class, Ethnic Group and Party in Indian Politics'; *World Politics*, April 1981, p-451.

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10. Bashiruddin Ahmed, n.7, pp.12-13

11. Paul Brass, n.5, p.454. See also Balraj Puri, 'Subnational Identities and Indian nationalism', *The Radical Humanist*, August 1983, p.49.

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13. Arun Bose, 'Diversities in Own Politics', *Seminar*, August 1983, p. 19.

14. *Ibid.,* p.19.

15. *Ibid*.

16. Atul Kohli, 'Economic Growth and Inequality in India's Development', *World Politics*, July 1980, pp. 635-36. See also E.M.S. Namboodriped, 'Caste, Classes and Political Parties', *Social Scientist*, November 1977, A.R. Kamat, 'Struggle for New Society', *Mainstream*, April 25, May 2 and 9, 1981.

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19. Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, New Delhi, 1975, p.433 and Rajni Kothari, 'Design for Alternative', *Seminar*, August 1977, p.16.

20. E.M.S. Namboodripad, n.16, p. 25 and also I.R. Grigudevich, *Ethnocultural Processes and National Politics in the Modern World*, Moscow 1982, p. 268. Atul Kohli, n.16, p.436.

21. Balraj Puri, n.11, p.52.

22. Nirmal Mukherji, 'Hindu Problem', *Seminar*, January 1982, p.38.

23. Paul Brass, n.19, p.16.

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hold fifty to sixty Bigha land bought from the Assamese from 1958 onwards. In most of the cases these Bangla Deshi Muslims hold fifteen to twenty Bighas of land out of this by way of mortgage. The needy and other Assamese pledge their land for Rs.200 to Rs.300 per Bigha. The first thing they did on the day of massacre was to have set fire to the mortgage papers. This is a significant fact which comes out after very probing questions. "It was in a way a class war also though in a distorted form" (Mimeo). See also Gohani Hiren, 'Origins of Assamese Middle Class', *Social Scientist* (13), August 1973. Kar M., 'Muslim Immigration to Assam', *Social Scientist* February 1980; Kar M., 'Assam's Language Question in Retrospect', *Social Scientist*, September 1975. Guha Amalendu and Das N. Arvind, 'A comment on Origins of the Assamese Middle Class', *Social Scientist*, (18-19), Jan-Feb., 1974 and Myron Weiner, 'Assam and its Migrants', *Demography India*, June 1975.

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models. We have to remember that we are participant observers. We are part of the total situation.

"For us the so-called 'neutral' qualification based on supposedly 'detached' and coldly 'objective' studies are sterile exercises into academic nonsense. They may satisfy the animated ignorance of the outsider and the non-involved indigenous observer. Or it may serve the excited fancy of the highly pampered and clandestinely financed foreign-area experts and their ...characterised local clients justifying their uncritically borrowed models, concepts, categories and tools of research by expensive adventures into dubious and distorted empirical studies", Perspective and Prospects, *Seminar*, February 1974, p. 19.

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SECTION 3

COMMUNALISM IN MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

COMMUNALISM: THE DRAGON'S TEETH

Moonis Raza

The complex social phenomena of communalism, which is acquiring colossal proportions in the country, has not, unfortunately, attracted adequate attention of social scientists.

The Poisonous Weed in Colonial Pastures

Before taking up the central theme, I would like to make some introductory statements, which would enable me later to develop the system of intellectual constructs that I propose to present for your consideration.

First, the term 'communalism', as we understand it in India, is a typical product of British colonialism particularly in the Indian context. Elsewhere, the connotation of the term is generally positive and it is taken to mean a commitment to community rather than personal welfare. But everywhere under the shadows of the most crafty and seasoned of imperialist powers – be it Nigeria, Cyprus, Palestine, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka or Malaysia – one finds that the 'communal problem' is a vital negative element in their current politics. I do not, however, infer from this empirical statement that British rule is the cause of communalism as a phenomenon. At this stage in my argument, I am positing only an associational and not a causal relationship.

One of the questions that students of comparative politics should take up for deeper analysis, may be stated as follows: why is it that communalism, as we understand it, is generally prevalent in erstwhile British colonies? Can it be defined as a poisonous weed that grows in the soil of under-developed economies under the climatic conditions of British colonialism? This statement reflects the empirical reality. Whether the two are casually related is one of the major research questions which it would be intellectually exciting to examine.

Second, communalism is a parasite which thrives on the distorted and anaemic process of modernization of a traditional society. It should be distinguished from religious wars and persecutions of ancient and medieval times. The two phenomena do have some elements of thought and action in common, but they are qualitatively different from one another – processes which are different in *kind*. Modern communalism, as a poisonous weed, which has been and is continuing to pollute the social ambience of modern India, is a function of the imposition of rootless modernization on fossilized

tradition. Since this formulation is quite basic to my argument, I would like to develop it a little further. Contradictory pulls of tradition and modernity constitute the dialectic of social transformation. The contradiction is resolved by the modernization of tradition itself through a simultaneous process of the rejection of the moribund, the dead as well as the obsolete in tradition, and of the assimilation of its live, vital and relevant elements into the modern. This is how astrology transformed itself into astronomy by, for example, rejecting the egocentricity of the solar system; but assimilating some of its mathematical formulations. The modern does not generate in a vacuum; it grows in the womb of tradition. It does not replace it; it transforms it. The modern is modernized tradition, a new wave in the ocean of time. If the modern rejects the whole of tradition it ceases to be modern: it becomes rootless and anaemic; a spurious product – glossy but ephemeral-destined for the dustbin of history. If tradition does not eschew the obsolete by modernizing itself, it ceases to be tradition; it becomes sterile, a stagnant poll of decay and degeneration.

From this point of view, the tragedy of colonial India lay in the fact that, with the advent of colonial rule, the quintessence of millennia of social experience was, so to say, frozen into immobility, became sterile, atrophied and fossilized. The obsolete, the backward looking and the decaying elements of tradition were not allowed to die a natural death, fertilizing the soil for the sprouting of newer shoots. The colonial powers preserved the festering sores of casteism and communalism, parochialism and obscurantism, so as to pollute the atmosphere of national resurgence and to induce ideological debility in the system. Over this oozing sub-stratum of decaying tradition was superimposed a thin veneer of rootless modernity imported from across the seas. These structural inadequacies expressed themselves most sharply in the sensitive sphere of educational under-development while the *pathshalas*, *gurukuls*, and the *madrasahs* continued to teach the outdated doctrine of egocentricity as late as in the first half of the twentieth century, Macaulay's educational system could produce only graduated flunkeys. While tradition was dying, modernity was powerless to be born.

Modern renaissance in India, as in most colonial countries, was, therefore, neither really modern nor substantively a renaissance. It is, no doubt, true that the anti-imperialist struggle for national independence inspired the search for alternative models of development; but, perhaps, with the possible exception of the intellectual contributions of Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru, the tradition-modernity gulf could not be satisfactorily bridged.

The distorted and anaemic modernization of tradition led to serious consequences in the political arena, for it polluted the ethos of India's struggle for national liberation. The holistic process of modernization got fractured and

its political and social aspects not only got dichotomised but quite often got arrayed, one against the other.

In many cases, an anti-imperialist and politically progressive position was accompanied by a socially reactionary platform. On the contrary, not infrequently, a pro-imperialist and politically reactionary position combined with a socially progressive platform! Syed Ahmed Khan was socially progressive but politically a reactionary. This could be said with equal justification of many a revered name of the so-called Bengal renaissance. Therein lay the contradiction, Westernization was easily confused with modernization! The opposite camp, in its turn, 'searched' for national roots and got neck deep in the quagmire of quasi-religious obscurantism.

I vividly remember the Aligarh of the forties, which Mohammed Ali Jinnah designed as 'the arsenal of Muslim India'. The Congress meeting would generally be held in a mosque after the *Nimaz-i-Isha*; and one of the most erudite of the theologians, quoting profusely from the Holy Quran would exhort the Muslims to join the Congress, because Islam called upon the followers of the book to fight for freedom against the British. Next day, in the Stretchy Hall of the Aligarh Muslim University, a clean shaven man having a Parsi wife, and clad in a three-piece suit, tailored in Saville Row and dry-cleaned in Paris, would speak immaculate English in an Oxonian accent and present a communal and an essentially pro-British platform in a modern idiom. The Mulla lost!

Therein lay the tragedy of modern India- that social and political modernization did not go together, supporting and sustaining each other. The Mulla in the mosque said, 'Fight because the Holy Quran teaches us to fight the British'. Once this argument was accepted, another Mullah would come up and say, 'Fight the Hindus for the Quran teaches us to fight the infidels'. If one accepts that genre of arguments, one gets enmeshed in communalist logic and it is open for any demagogue to come on the scene and call upon the flock of the faithful to do something else because the Holy Book so ordains!

The Muslim variant of communalism, which I have described above, became strong because the national movement itself did not clear the cobwebs of communalism from itself. The Hindu religious idiom was allowed to creep into the innermost recesses of the movement by, may be, well meaning nationalists, who wished to reach the depth of the Hindu peasant psyche by setting up cow protection societies, Hanuman akharas or by celebrating Ganesh festivals and Durga pujas. The movement got a broader base, no doubt, but in the process the minorities, and particularly the Muslims got alienated from it. The idiom, which broadens and deepens the base in one section of the people, also acts as an impermeable layer which keeps other

sections out. The tragic consequences that flowed from such a policy did not unfortunately lead to its rejection by the national leadership. In fact, they were further compounded by espousing the cause of the caliphate at a time when the people of Turkey were fighting for its abolition. This was done with the fond but rather naive hope that as the Hindu idiom had broadened the base of the Congress among the Hindus, the Khilafat idiom would broaden its base among the Muslims. These castles built on sand were bound to crumble down as they did!

The basic mistake lay in the sectional approach to different communities – if the Congress does this, the Sikhs would joint it; if it does that, the Muslims would join it; if it does the other, the Hindus will join it. Instead of the platform of united anti-imperialist struggle, intertwined with the struggle for the rights of the toiling masses – the united movement of all communities for social transformation, obscurantism and decaying elements of tradition were not only allowed but sometimes even encouraged to seep in and poison the ethos. Communalism of various hues and colours was a direct outcome of this serious infirmity in the national response to imperialism. The lesson of the history of the national movement is clear and unambiguous. Modernization is a holistic phenomenon. It cannot be fragmented. Fragmented modernization is the anti-thesis of modernization

I cannot resist the temptation of quoting from a forgotten piece by Jawaharlal ('Reality and Myth' in the *Recent Essays and Writings*, Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1934):

> Communalism is essentially a hunt for favours from a third party – the ruling power. The communalist can only think in terms of a continuation of foreign domination and he tries to make the best of it for his own particular group. Delete the foreign power and communal arguments and demands fall to the ground. Both the foreign power and communalists, as representing some upper class groups, want no essential change of the political and economic structure; both are iterated in the preservation and augmentation of their vested interests. Because of this, both cannot tackle the real economic problems which confront the country, for a solution of these would upset the present social structure. For both, this ostrich-like policy of ignoring real issues is bound to end in disaster. Facts and economic forces are more powerful than governments and empires and can only be ignored at peril.
>
> Communalism thus becomes another name for political and social reaction, and the British government, being the citadel of this reaction in India, naturally throws its sheltering wings over a useful ally. Many a

> false trail is drawn to confuse the issue; we are told of Islamic culture and Hindu culture, of religion and old custom, of ancient glories and the like. But behind all this lies political and social reaction, and communalism must, therefore, be fought on all fronts and given no quarter. Because the inward nature of communalism has not been sufficiently realized, it has often sailed under false colours and taken in many an unwary person. It is an undoubted fact that many a Congressman has almost unconsciously partly succumbed to it and tried to reconcile his nationalism with this narrow and reactionary creed. A real appreciation of its true nature would demonstrate that there can be no common ground between the two. They belong to different species. It is time that Congressman and others who have flirted with Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or any other communalism should understand this position and make their choice. No one can have it both ways and the choice lies between political and social progress and stark reaction. An association with any form of communalism means the strengthening of the forces of reaction and of British imperialism in India; it means opposition to social and economic change and a toleration of the present terrible distress of our people; it means a blind ignoring of world forces and events.

The impact of the fracture of the social condition in colonial India, as discussed, was further strengthened by the accompanying process of the fragmentation of national space. The process of dysfunctional development, linked as it was with the projection of metropolitan interests located across the sea, was concentrated in the three port towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras which operationalized external integration and internal fragmentation. This led to the marginalization of the heart-land which had been the cradle of Indian civilization over millennia. From Harappan times, the Indo-Gangetic plains had constituted the source area of our cultural traditions. Takshila and Nankana Sahib, Indraprastha and Ujjaini, Varanasi and Ayodhya, Vaishali and Pataliputra, Sirhind and Deoband, Firangi Mahal and Phulwari Sharif – spread over the length and breadth of the Indo-Gangetic (plaints) provided the intellectual matrix of the composite culture of the Indian people. This process continued till the arrival of the British on the scene. The colonial masters established the new nodes of development, not in this heart-land but on the peripheries at the port towns. The traditional organisation of national space in India was thus inverted. The traditional core area became an adjunct to the port-based suction mechanism, rather than being an integral part of the process of social transformation.

The anaemia of the port-based renaissance and its inability to further synthesise the composite tradition of the country is essentially a consequence

of this hiatus. The hear-land was economically reduced to the status of hinterland of primary production and its agriculture crumbled under the heavy weight of the Zamindari system. Education decayed, and for decades the colleges in this vast tracts remained affiliated to the University of Calcutta – allowed to perform the soulless task of covering the course, prescribed by some external agency and preparing students to be examined by an external agency. Literacy rates went down at an alarming speed. The area which had sustained the Indian psyche for millena and had produced Nizamuddin Aulia and Khusro, Nanak and Kabir, Tulsi and Sur became a cultural backwater. The dichotomy between fossilized tradition and rootless modernity got reflected in the fragmentation of national space, wherein the former was entrenched in the heart-land, and the latter eked out its ephemeral existence at the peripheries.

The Dream of Hope and the Nightmare of Despair

The independent state established in India, was a glorious promise as well as a challenge. The country moved haltingly towards the fulfilment of the promise. The forces of minority communalism beat a hasty retreat in the wake of the partition holocaust; and as a consequence of the mass anger against the martyrdom of the Mahatma at the hands of a Hindu fanatic, majority communalism went 'underground'. The rejection of the theocratic principle and the establishment of a secular state was a decisive step in the right direction. The general elections of 1952 and 1957 showed that adequate representation can be given to the minorities without separate electorates or communal reservations. The communal parties were unable to win the confidence of the electorate. Large numbers of persons belonging to the religious minorities were elected on the tickets of all the important political parties, even from constituencies where the overwhelming majority of the electorate belonged to a different faith.

Persons belonging to minority communities held important offices at the centre and practically all the states as ministers, judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts or as members of the Public Service Commissions. The same was true of the political parties as well: the minorities were fully represented on the leading bodies of the Congress, the Communist and the Praja Socialist Parties. Despite the absence of any communal reservation, members of minority communities were selected in considerable numbers in the administrative, diplomatic and other services. Thus, in all walks of public life, members of the minority communities were enabled to play an adequate role. As will be shown later, there were still forces of communal discrimination at work. Not infrequently, members of the minority communities were made victims of discriminatory practices. Inspite of such lapses, the situation

appeared to be on the whole hopeful and India was speedily marching along the path of secularism.

The crucial lapse on the part of the elements of the national movement, which were either running the government or were in the opposition, however, continued to be their inability to eschew the sectional communalist approach. As the in adequacies and infirmities of socio-economic development alienated sections of the people, the old formulae of the pre-independence vintage once again came to the fore. The election arithmetic brought back the competing religious idioms and the enervating communalist calculations. Even Maulana Azad had to be fielded from constituencies with a significant number of Muslim voters – either urban Rampur or rural Mewat. The bearded mulla, the sword wielding ragi, the tilakdhari babas of different hues and colours were brought back to the scene to persuade the faithful to vote for this or that secular party. The temple, the dargah and the gurdwara, echoed with nationalist slogans in combination with 'Bajrangbali Ki Jai, 'Allah-o-Akbar' or 'Raj Karega Khalsa'. The final act of providing a secular robe to communalism was committed by no less a party than the Indian National Congress itself, when it entered into a pact with the All India Muslim League in Kerala, to begin with, for the achievement of the 'revolutionary' objective of overthrowing the duly elected communist government and later on to run a 'secular' government in coalition with the Muslim League.

It is said that Jawaharlal was rather unhappy with this development (as he reportedly was with the removal of Sheikh Abdullah!) but the Chinese had already stabbed him and his country in the back and his voice had already been by then muted effectively. In defence of this volta face, it was said that the Kerala Muslim League was different from the parent body even though it carried the pre-partition designation of All India Muslim League. Very few protested against this betrayal. The communists, who were the losers in the game, soon learnt the same tricks of the trade, turned the table on the Congress and set up a coalition government with the same Muslim League. The communist 'out manoeuvred' the Congress, no doubt; but the stamp of respectability of communal politics was further deepened. The nemesis for the National Congress came, when the Achutya Menon-led government, in which it was the major partner, had to remove an essay by Jawaharlal on communalism from a school text book under the blackmailing pressure of their crucial coalition partners – the Muslim League. Jawaharlal was thrown out to keep the Muslim League in Jawaharlal must have turned in his grave while Namboodripad laughed din his sleeves.

The political melodrama turned into a farce when Namboodripad produced an alternative Muslim League – the two secular parties now having a Muslim League each of their own. Before we leave the Kerala scene, it would be

worthwhile to note with great satisfaction that the process of legitimising communalism which started there also appears to have been stemmed therein. The decision of the CPM not to have any truck with communal parties during the last assembly election is a most welcome one, particularly because this was done at the cost of a minor split in the party. The victory of the united front led by CPM in these elections, along with the simultaneous victory in J&K of the Congress-National Conference United Front against the front of Muslim communal parties on the one hand and the Hindu communal BJP on the other, are portents of positive developments on the Indian political scene.

Picking up the thread of our narrative to take note of the recent retreat of communalist forces in Kerala and J&K, it has to be painfully recorded that the legitimization of the Muslim League in Kerala opened up the floor-gates for communalist groups of various vintages to make their right royal entry into the political mainstream. The Sanyukt Vidhayak Das (SVD), in fact, provided a model for secular parties to come to terms with the RSS-led Jan Sangh in the Hindi heart-land. The 'non-congressist' fold now included the most explicit spokesmen of Hindu communalism. The emergence of the Janata Party and the setting up of the Morarji Government in 1977 was the culmination of the SVD process, wherein Chandra Shekhar and Golwalkar, Jagjivan Ram and Atal Behari Vajpayee, Madhu Dandavate and Mahrani Scindia, George Fernandes and Advani joined hands to usher in the Eldorado of a secular India, wedded to Gandhian socialism and genuine non-alignment. India had come full circle – the party that created Pakistan was a constituent of the ruling coalition in Kerala and the comrades of the murderers of the Mahatma ruled the country!

The nightmare did not last long and the re-emergence of Indian National Congress, as the leading party of the country in the post-Janata phase, in a way, reflected the rejection of the communalist as well as the separatist platforms by a great majority of the Indian people and a re-assertion of composite nationalism and the nation-state. Only the communists, among the national formations, were able to stand up to the Indira stream roller. But there were forces operating beneath the surface for quite some time and the eighties became the period of new trials and tribulations. Hindu communalism, which had already tasted power through governmental participation and blood through a spate of communal riots, launched a nation-wide offensive against 'undue' concessions to the minorities, for the restoration of temples desecrated by 'Muslim invaders' and of dignity to the Hindus in 'their land'. The proliferation of Rath Yatras, particularly for the restoration of the Ram Janmabhumi and the emergence of a new militancy under the auspices of *senas* armed with trishuls – this dangerous anti-national phenomenon has been mistakenly designated as the 'Hindu backlash'. The

grim reality is that it marks a new phase in the development of communalism characterized by the emergence of fascism on Indian soil.

Muslim communalism, as we have already noted, began asserting itself in the post-1947 phase under regional forms – Muslim Conference or the *Moe-Muqaddas* Action Committee in the Kashmir Valley, Ittehadul Muslemeen in Hyderabad, the 'All India' Muslim League in Kerala and Tamilnadu. Dr. Faridi's group in Uttar Pradesh, or Mymensinghi Vote Bank of Assam. The Jamaet-i-Islami tied to knit together this motley crowd into an all India movement with the tacit support of the nationalist Muslims of the Jamaet-ul-Ulema headquartered in the Abdul Nabi Mosque. The restoration of the 'minority character' of the Aligarh Muslim University, a demand to which Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad had already given his tacit support, provided the typical elitist slogan for this purpose. The University Act which was framed by the triumvirate – of Jawaharlal as the Prime Minister, Abdul Kalam Azad as the Education Minister and Zakir Hussain as the Vice-Chancellor – was thrown in the dustbin. So was the Education Minister who was both a nationalist and a Muslim but not a nationalist Muslim! The 'nationalists' joined the communalist bandwagon; the CPI was not far behind. It must be said to her credit that Indira Gandhi was the last to succumb to this 'consensus'; and that, too, rather reluctantly. The Majlis-e-Mushawarat, in which nationalist Muslims participated and to which the Jamaet-i-Islami provided intelligent and crafty leadership, became the nucleus for the emerging all India consolidation.

The Code Bill agitation further consolidated this process. The opening of the closed would of the Babri Masjid – Ram Janmabhumi controversy by a legal stroke provided the much needed emotional platform of 'Islam in Danger' or 'Hinduism in Danger'. Communal riots flared up like a forest fire. With the Sikh-Hindu tensions already reaching alarming heights in Punjab at the geographical periphery, the qualitative transformation of Hindu-Muslim conflicts in the Ganga basin – the traditional heart-land – from an incipient to a chronic phenomenon, calls for a serious appraisal of the nature of communalism in India, as well as for a critical assessment of the 'secular' response to the same.

GANDHI, NEHRU AND COMMUNALISM

Ravinder Kumar

In this presentation I will analyse the sort of changes which Gandhi brought about in the freedom movement in the domain of both the ideology and social content of the movement. When I deal with Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru and also their contribution to the liberation movement, I shall particularly focus on their perception of the communal problem and its resolution. I shall also touch very briefly on the implications of this historical perspective for the present situation in our country.

If you want to look at the structure of Indian society at the turn of the present century, the only legitimate way in which one can do so is to call it a civilization.[*]

A civilization has to have a number of attributes. Indian civilization also had specific social and political institutions which developed over time. I cannot go in detail at present but these institutions had a specificity in relationship to India though in the 18th century some basic transformations were made in our political and social institutions. Still there is continuity and specificity of the social and political institutions of our civilization, which give it a unique and very distinctive character. For instance, the state form was not very well developed in our society. We did not have a well structured system of bureaucracy of the type, for instance, the Chinese civilization had developed over a thousand years. The first institution which we can really call bureaucracy, as we understand the term today was created by the British in India in the 18th century. We had only proto bureaucracies before that. In addition, we had institution like *jati* and *varna* in various forms.

Among the other important attributes of a civilization are a mode of generating wealth, of a set of social and political institutions and a network of social values which give a specific identity to it. The specificity of Indian civilization was a multiplicity of religious forms, interacting at various levels, particularly at the popular agrarian level, if I may use the term. I think these religions were very distinctly articulated at the apex of the social system. But if one proceeded from the apex to the basal level, that is, the agrarian classes

[*] I feel we can look upon Indian civilization as among the half a dozen autonomous civilizations which make up the world community.

which constituted the bulk of our society, these religions had developed a modus vivendi of mutual toleration ad of mutual influencing.

We can, therefore, look upon Indian society as an ongoing civilization of great historical antiquity if we define civilization as a unit of human society resulting on a mode of production, resting on specific social and political institutions and resting on every specific articulation of values. It is the mix of these three which are used to define the identity of Indian civilization.

This civilization can be studied from the standpoint of a social scientist, through here modes of stratification. If one examines the economic stratification of this civilization in the hypothetical year 1900, one can talk of landlords or zamindars, of kisan-like land-owning peasantry, of agricultural labourers, and of tribal communities partly drawn into the agrarian zone and partly living outside the mainstream agrarian zone of our society and involved either in extractive industries or in pastoral activity and at times even in hunting activity. One can also think of very substantial commercial communities which were distributed spatially across the land. By the year 1900 in some of the urban locales, modern industries had come into existence in some pockets of cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad. Cities in the interior had very substantial professional classes, pockets of the religious intelligentsia and substantial pockets or populations of artisans and craftsmen. This was one way of looking at this vast reservoir of population that we call Indian civilization, the economic stratification that existed in it.

This civilization could also be examined in terms of the plurality of religions which articulated themselves in the social system. Here one would have to make a distinction between two kind of religions – those of the Semitic mould like Judaism, Christianity and Islam. I think I would also include in the first category of the Sikh religion, in which sociologically as well as ideologically the membership or the religious community is very clearly defined and the notion of a congregation and of a sharply articulated ideology exists – and also a religion which for want of a better word, I would call the Hindu religion, in which both sociologically and ideologically and corpus of the religion is very loosely defined – although there is in Punjab an attempt to redefine Hinduism in the mould of the Semitic religions.

There is yet another way in which one can look at this civilization in the year 1900, i.e. various regional and linguistic cultures which had articulated themselves. The point of origin of this articulation was really the work of medieval folk saints who expressed some of the classical religious concepts in powerful literature of the folk in such a manner that the identity of Indian civilization, as far as the bulk of the Indian people was concerned, was

expressed through these folk religious movements, in Maharashtra, in Punjab or in the Hindi belt, in Tamil Nadu, in Karnataka or whatever.

I would like to think of this civilization of great antiquity resting on an agricultural mode of production, having a specific set of social and political institutions, with the articulation of religious values in the manner which I have tried to indicate. Then one can think of this civilization as stratified in terms of the production of material goods and also as stratified and organized in terms of the articulation of values and culture. This really is the social amalgam on which we have to work when we look at our country.

The imperial stranglehold in the 19th century created new institutions like bureaucracy, a relationship of subordination and supper ordination between a western economy in a little island, which then and still calls itself Great Britain and that an eastern economy. The purpose of this relationship was the establishment of the domination of Great Britain over India as well as the extraction of a very substantial amount of the surplus generated in our economy of a vast country like India. As a result of this, a new movement was triggered off in our society, which is called the freedom struggle, which I would like to call the liberation movement, for the simple region that the term liberation movement pertains as much to the economic, social and intellectual domain as to the political domain. The purpose of the liberation movement was two-fold. The immediate purpose was to break the ties of political subordination to Great Britain. Equally important was the purpose of building a new political unity in the country of a kind which had not existed before I think the political institutions which belonged to the country before the imperialists established themselves, created for brief periods very tenuous all India unity. It was not a firm political unity that existed in the country. The liberation movement, apart from liberating the country from foreign yoke, also thought in terms of establishing a modern system and also dreamt of transforming an agricultural society into an industrial society and at the same time transforming the traditional culture of our land into a modern scientific culture. This is the full embrace of the liberation movement which established itself in our soil in the 19th century.

The historical origins of this movement have to go back to the 1830's and 1840's when sections of the intelligentsia, particularly those section which were educated in the institutions which the imperialists created in our midst, imbibed the value of nationalism as it was understood in Western Europe in the 19th century and tried to disseminate this value within our own country. They were also supported by elements drawn from liberal sections of the landed aristocracy and landed gentry and were also supported in this endeavour by sections drawn from the mercantile and commercial groups. If this particular line of historical evolution is traced, one finds that from the

1830s onwards local groups in the cities grew into regional groups and then developed more and more linkages with similar groups and by 1885 an organization which looked upon itself as a parliament of Indian nationalism and called itself the Indian National Congress was created. Yet this movement did not affect more than three to five per cent of the population which was then about 400 million. It affected only the apex of this vast and complex civilization. Outside this charmed circle of five per cent who came together under the great presumptuous title of Indian National Congress as a Parliament of Indian nationalism, not as a party, you had great bodies of discontent among the people. What do I mean by the people? By people I mean the ranks of our peasantry, the tribal communities, the developing industrial working class in some centres like Bombay and Ahmedabad, and also the artisan populations which were particularly important in the interior of the Indo-Gangetic valley or elsewhere.

In the late 19th century one finds two unrelated strands of the liberation movement in India. One strand was well-organized and relatively sophisticated in its articulation and ideological expression, expressed itself organizationally as the Indian National Congress, was very much infiltrated by western ideas and notions of organization but did not affect more than three to five per cent of the population of India did not go out beyond the charmed circle of the intelligentsia the educated classes, sections of the business and mercantile communities, liberal and emancipated sections of the landed gentry and the aristocracy. The bulk of the population, made up of the rural classes, the peasantry, the agricultural labourers, the tribal communities, the developing industrial working classes in some of our industrial centres, also made up of the artisan populations in our cities was also very hostile to British rule but that hostility stemmed from what I like to call economic deprivation as well as patriotism as differentiated from nationalism. Patriotism I look upon as the natural love which people have for the region or locality in which people live and if an eternal element imposes itself on them, there is a rejection of it; on the other hand, nationalism is the ideology developed in Western Europe in the late 18th and the 19th centuries and though in terms of a well-organized modern political states, organized political parties, popular participation in politics and so on.

What I am arguing, taking this panoramic view of the Indian situation is that the liberation movement was, by the time of the first world war, sharply elevated to a westernized sector which existed at the apex of our society, and the bulk of our people, the peasants, tribal communities, sections of the religious intelligentsia which were looking back to the other forms and value of our society, was just as hostile, probably much more hostile than the western educated classes but the expression which their hostility found was of a very

different order, normally expressing itself in fragmented and sporadic uprisings at times violent, against imperial rule in our country. I think 1857 is one great example of the coming together of the hostility of the people of this land, headed by old feudal rulers of our society who had been displaced from their position, also headed by sections of the religious intelligentsia, against imperial rule.

The problem, if one can put it in these terms, before the leadership of the country was to forge unity between these two strands.

I am using the world Gandhi as a short code now. I think it is a matter of historical record that the integration of the elite with the popular integration movement was really brought about in the 1920's by the action of this individual who, in a way, appraised the scene around him very much in terms in which I have tried to present it. If you read some of the Gandhian literature of this time, you will not use my language but the perception which will spring before you will probably not be very different from the one which I am brining before you.

Here I want to dwell a little on this remarkable individual who, I think for good and for ill, had both aspects intermixed in what he did and the results of his action for our society. Gandhi developed his ideology and mode of functioning from South Africa. If you turn your attention to South Africa of that time, two or three things are very interesting. The first is the nature of the Indian community in South Africa. It was made up of two or three distinct groups, a lot of merchants from the region of Gujarat with also a section of the Gujarati peasantry, but mainly merchants of the Muslim community from Gujarat and Bombay on the west coast of India; then there were very substantial numbers of agricultural labourers or landless labourers from Tamil Nadu; and there were an equally substantial number of landless people from Eastern U.P. So the Indian community in South Africa was made up of these three culturally different groups, coming from different parts of the country with different cultures and values. When Gandhi was functioning as an organizer of the Indian community in South Africa, he had a good glimpse of the cultural and religious diversity of our country.

The he was also operating in a situation where objectively the Indian community had very little power, being sandwiched between the small but dominant European community and the disorganized but numerically very large South African community. It is a fact that in his writings in South Africa he never mentions the black community. I mean he was never really aware of the interests of the black community. What this meant was that he was operating in a situation where the amount of power available to the Indian

community was very minimal and the objectives which it had to meet had to be met through the situation of minimal power.

I will not go into the analysis of Gandhian ideology. But I would like to mention two points that he develops: an ideology and a mode of functioning in a situation where little concrete power is available to the Indian community and the political objective of this community is sandwiched between the Europeans, who are numerically small but powerful and the divided, inarticulate yet potentially very powerful black community. He was able to gain a measure of success, though very limited in the agitation which he launched there. But this is on record that a person called Smuts, who later became a very important South African politician and was the Attorney-General or Law Minister at that time, is supposed to have said, when Gandhi returned to India in 1951, "The Saint has left our shores, I hope never to return because he had made life rather difficult for the dominant European community there."

After Gandhi came to India he literally went around the country for the first year and he talked mainly to the middle class educated intelligentsia which was already very active in the liberation movement, in the Indian National Congress. In the course of this year he got a clear idea of the political climate of the country at the middle class level throughout the country. That is the difference between him and other people.

What happened then was really strange. This is part of the mythology of the Indian national movement, but I do not think we have fully absorbed the significant of that. Three groups, a peasant from a rural district of Bihar called Champaran, then some of the industrial workers from the city of Ahmedabad, and some peasants from a Gujarat rural district called Kheda, came to Gandhi and asked him to lead their agitations. In the case of Bihar it was against the British plantation owners; in the case of Ahmedabad against Gujarati capitalism, and in the case of Kheda, which was a Ryotwari district where taxes had been revised upwards against the Bombay Province Government. After getting a sense of the middle class opinion in the country, people from the peasantry of Bihar and Gujarat and people from the Ahmedabad industrial class – who came to him, he did not go to the, he led their agitation through the new technique of politics called satyagraha which he had devised. The people who approached him from Kheda were substantial peasants, not agricultural labourers or those at the bottom level. The group from Champaran was something that you would call the middle peasantry in Marxist terminology.

Gandhi led these agitations with a measure of success. In any political movement one does not achieve the objective fully but I think the interesting

thing is the glimpse Gandhi gets of political sentiment, political feeling and the potentially for a mass anti-imperialist movement among the rural folk and the working class of India in a way others had not seen. I think that is the important moral which one can draw from this.

The other equally important moral – and I will come to that point against – is that he realizes that if you are leading an anti-imperialist movement on an economic platform, India is a very divided society because there are capitalists, workers, middle class, zamindars, peasants, agricultural labourers, tribal communities and artisans. It is very difficult to find an economic package which will unite all these groups. So, after gauging the deep sense of the anti-imperialism and the economic disquiet among the people, he pulls away from this and uses what I like to call moral or romantic slogans, emotional ideas. For these emotional ideas he turns to popular religious values which are very widely distributed among our people. For instance, around this time and the Muslim community in India, particularly the artisans and peasantry, is very upset over an onslaught on Islam both in West Asia and by what they though the British in India. This results in what is called the Khilafat movement in history books. He also turned to the Sikh peasantry which, quite independent of what Gandhi was or was not doing, was quite concerned about the control over the holy shrines associated with the Sikh religion. In the Hindu community, mainly among the middle class and business community, he senses a lot of disquiet against imperialism on economic grounds. He also senses among the intelligentsia and the educated classes the desire for nationalism. He turns to the Hindu peasantry through the folk religious symbols which were part of their cultural make. On these basis he tries to cement an alliance between different religious and social groupings in India against imperialism. The result of this is reflected in the agitation which he launched in 1919 called the Rowlatt Satyagraha which remained largely an urban uprising but which spread throughout India.

In Lahore and particularly in Amritsar, this was one of the most powerful movements ever launched against the imperialists. In 1920, 1922 and later on he brings together Hindus, Muslims and Christians on a great anti-imperialist platform.

I think the operative thing about the Gandhian anti-imperialist front was that quite consciously it did not rest on economic slogans, because he would not think of an economic package which would unite the different sections and classes in India. He deliberately turned away from this and spoke to the people in terms of cementing religious alliances and drawing them together on issues which affected the popular religious sentiments which were entrenched among the people for centuries. His notion of Indian unity rested on the belief

that by invoking the popular religious values one could bring all that was creative and valuable in the Indian character.

It gives rise to a very important question: how did Gandhi try to solve the communal problem. He tried to solve the communal problem and the national problem in one and the same stroke by relaying on all that was truthful and noble and creative in popular religions in India, among Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, - among all religious groups – and he thought that through the method an overarching bond of national unity can be created among our people.

Was this the only method, the only approach to cementing national unity and to creating a cohesive polity out of an age-old civilization that was operative at that time?

I think there were two answers to this question. If you turn to the year 1920, which is the magical year that I am talking of, when the Gandhian alternative of sensing the economic quiet among the people, turning one's back on it and using the values of popular religion to bring different religious groupings together in the hope that this would cement national unity was adopted, and I think this strategy has shaped politics in our country for the last 60 or 65 years, with both the achievements as well as the shortcomings of that politics. I would be the last person to say that this politics has been without achievements and this politics has not been without its shortcomings and I think in some respects the shortcomings of this politics have hit us much more brutally in the face today than the achievements have, but that is a different story. But I think there were two other alternative ways of cementing unity in India.

One of these ways was articulated by people who were both inside and outside the Congress and hence a part of the wider liberation movement. These were the people who dreamt of industrializing India in a very conservative way, where private properly would not be sacrosanct and industrialization of India would be done completely like industrialization of England or the USA in the 19th century – namely, through the operation of private capital. These are the people whom, in our political jargon, we call the liberals. They would not have broken up the zamindaris or the landed estates because their politics rested on the notion that private property was sacrosanct, that political, no less than economic, institutions functioned on the notion of private property and that one must build a modern capitalist society with full protection to private ownership and private capital. This was one option that was being presented to the people of India.

The other option was presented partly within the Indian National Congress and partly by those who stood outside, to the left of it, and yet formed a

constituent of the liberation movement as a whole. Within the Congress this option can best be illustrated by people like Jawaharlal Nehru or Subhas Chandra Bose in the twenties and outside the Congress it can best be exemplified by the parties of the left, specifically the Marxist party, but also by the various socialist groups which were active then. They argued that it was a very grievous mistake to bring together the Indian people on the basis of religion, it was playing with fire, a wrong way to try to create unity. What we should do is to pick upon issues which supported the interests of the India people, whether they belong to the peasantry, the landless labour class, the industrial working class, the artisan and craftsman categories and use issues impinging on their concrete interests to integrate a national movement. They argued that to use religion would be a very divisive tactic in the liberation movement.

I think within this group there were those who were willing to carry economic rationality to the ultimate and those who were not so willing. For instance, if you take the stance of a person like Nehru he would argue that the way to tackle the communal problem was to go to the people, which meant the peasantry or the working class or what have you, on issues which affected their livelihood and at the same time respecting their religion in the private sphere. But there were those radicals who wanted an all out attack on religion also. Yet what cemented this group together was the belief that the Gandhian tactic of cementing unity would create grave problems, in terms of heightening tensions between religious groups in terms of locating economic power in the hands of those who already controlled a lot of power in Indian society. I think this was the other alternative which was posed before the Indian polity.

On the historical part of my presentation I will end up by saying that one of the striking things about our civilization – I am still finding my way in this and there are a number of sociologists who have gone much farther, particularly sociologists who are involved in looking at our society from some perspectives – is that we do not necessarily try to resolve every contradiction and tension in our society as a matter of principle. I do not think any society resolves all conflicts and tensions, but I think in our society there was a deliberate policy in leaving tensions unresolved in the belief that there could be such a thing as creative tension also. My feeling is, if you take the liberation movement from the 1920's onwards, the tension between what I call the Gandhian approach and the radical approach in its more moderate form expressed by Jawaharlal Nehru, and in its more extreme form expressed at that time by people like S.A. Dange, to mention one - I am not talking of the Dange of the present but the Dange of the 1920's – I think was never resolved. Both these views continued to co-exist within the liberation movement. If for instance the content analysis

of the electioneering speeches made by Congress candidates in 1937, during first, major provincial elections in our country, when ten per cent of our adult population was enfranchised, you will find that the contradiction between the Gandhian approach for solving the communal problem, the pious hope that an appeal to the people on the basis of all that was truth and noble in their religions and constructing a strong policy out of such appeals, on the one hand, and the appeal to the people on the basis of economic and class interests on the other hand – both these are there, I am using an Indian word, a kind of 'khichri' approach to the situation where dal is separated from rice, but you deliberately let them mix in the hope that khichri is better than either rice or day by itself.

I do not think this has changed after 1947. I think this is a part of our political spectrum. But basically what underlay it was the Gandhian approach, not the Nehru approach. The tension remained between these two approaches but the more basic approach was the one evolved by Gandhi which was very successful in creating what we call mass mobilization. If you look at the mobilization of the twenties and thirties and forties, I think you are hard put to find post-1947 mobilisation of that sort though in regions and on specific issues now we can have much more intense mobilization, but no across-the-country mobilization comparable to that. So this approach of not separating the grains of rice from the grains of dal was very successful, of letting everything deliberately continue in a state of unresolved tension, flux and contradiction because of the nuance and structure of this civilization.

As we are becoming more and more developed as an industrial society in which capitalism is playing a substantial part – I am not suggesting that is the only stream of organizing production available but it is a dominant stream – I think that the old policy of not separating the grains of rice and dal is refusing to pay any dividend. To make a personal observation, I would be happy if religion is altogether abolished from out polity. I am one of those to whom religion does not mean anything. Yet I think it is important to remember that for vast sections of our people the values which have held our very complex civilization together without the political linkages which were created in other polities – I always go back to the ample of Chinese civilization where you have a bureaucratic model operating at least for a thousand years, of a sort we never had had – I think the only way in which we can solve our "communal problem" is to turn to a situation where issues pertaining to the economy and pertaining to the maximisation of interests of the largest number of people in our society, whether they dwell in villages as peasants or as landless labourers or whether they dwell in cities as industrial workers or as craftsmen or even as sections of the while-collar community, I think unless we integrate politics on this basis, we are in for very serious trouble as a national polity. I think we

must continue to extend all possible regard to the religious views the people nurture in the private domain, but spill over into the political domain; my very frank view is that all this is going to create more and more problems to which we will have no easy solution in the foreseeable future. If such a programme is acceptable, I think we have the massive task of consciousness transformation in our society. That is the only word I can use. Though I share the view that educators and educational institutions have a very powerful role to play in this consciousness transformation, just as political activities have a very powerful role in it, I think an equally if not a more powerful role is played by the culture of the domestic situation and that is probably the most difficult of all to change. I think it would take a package combining all these things approaching both the past and present of our society with a certain degree of intellectual boldness and intellectual honesty, so that we can lay the basis of a society - I do not use the word harmonious, I do not think harmonious societies exist in any polity in which there are seven hundred million people – otherwise, there will be lot of conflicts and I think the conflicts over what sort of gods you worship are probably the most pointless conflicts for a society which is involved in the business of giving a measure of material dignity to its citizens.

INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND COMMUNALISM

Bipan Chandra

In 1880 Lokmanya Tilak used this phrase that Indians are a nation in the making. In the nineteenth century, the British told the Indian nationalists that you are not a nation. Therefore, you do not deserve to be an independent country. The Indian nationalist never claimed that Indian was a nation. They were of the view that India was increasingly and gradually becoming a nation. Even a man like Bipan Chandra Pal wrote that in Sanskrit there is no word for nation, the very concept of nation is alien to our past. Bipan Chandra Pal further pointed out that this concept had been alien not only to the European world but also to the entire world till recent centuries. This was a very positive approach and this found expression in a phrase, which now the politicians have cheapened, but continues to remain profound i.e. unity in diversity. Present day political leaders use it without fully understanding what it means. The Indian national movement was from very beginning built on this concept that we are a people of great diversity and without losing that diversity, we have got increasingly to get unified into a single people.

Similarly, he leading nationalists of India, from the days of Dadabhai Naoroji to Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru were basically modern and secular in their outlook. This I think was a very positive feature of our national movement and social development. Hardly any major leader till1936-37 dared opening proclaim that communalism is a positive value. There was hardly a single major intellectual, academic or non-academic who would not be ashamed of communalism and even if he was communal in his ideology at heart, publicly he would proclaim that he was a secular person. It is only after 1937, Jinnah in his published speeches, would be decrying communal hatred and promoting a secular outlook, only demanding that Muslims as a minority should be given protection. In fact he always condemned the notion of Hindus and Muslims in any way being different or separate or antagonistic to each other. The same was the case with Lala Lajpat Rai or Madan Mohan Malviya who, in their communal phases were quite communal and yet they would publicly criticize the notion of mutual hatred and say that all Indian people should increasingly move towards a single nationhood.

Among the intelligentsia it was even more so. We did not have a single major intellectual who was publicly a communalist till the middle of nineteen-thirties. It was only after 1936 that Iqbal took up communal postures, and even then he went on privately writing to people deserving narrow-

mindedness and communalism. It was in 1936, I believe that R.C. Majumdar, who was not a very great historian, presided over Hindu Mahasabha's meetings. But generally the intellectuals of India in any field were extremely secular.

Even in the heydays of communalism in the nineteen-forties, the number of communal intellectuals was very nominal. There were communal politicians but communal intellectuals were rare. This was true even at a time when a large number of people were beginning to vote for communal parties.

Further, from the very beginning, the Indian national movement was built around secular ideology. Whatever the other weaknesses, and I shall discuss some of the major weaknesses later the dominant ideological thrust from the very beginning was secular, i.e. religion should be kept out of politics. Religion should be confined to the religious sphere and should not intrude into the secular sphere, that is, it should not enter the economic, the political, the social and the cultural fields. To my understanding this is the heart of secularism. People usually indulge in semantics. But I think the common definition of secularism on which one will get the widest-number of people to agree, would be that religion should not introduce into politics in any manner. This basic concept was the heart of the Indian national movement from the beginning to the end. It was never questioned and this concept was widely propagated. It is this which was responsible for an illiterate backward society like ours successfully maintaining and I hope we will continue to successfully maintain our secular values and secular polity to a large extent.

This was as true of Dadabhal Naoroji as it was of the communalists. It was even true of Gandhiji who otherwise said that religion cannot be separated from life and yet also propagated that religion should in no case intrude into the political or economic field. People wondered how these two viewpoints were reconciled. When Gandhiji talked of religion being an inevitable part of life, he meant morality. He did not mean Hinduism or Islam, Christianity or Sikhism. He meant moral values. But so far as religion in the proper sense, that is, Hinduism or Christianity or Islam or Sikhism is concerned, Gandhiji against and again said that religion must be kept out of politics.

The positive aspect was that the national movement never made an appeal against British rule on religious grounds. We interviewed nearly twelve hundred freedom fighters from Amritsar district to Kanyakumari last year. The political activists at the lower level and the national leadership at the top level did not make any appeal against British rule on religious grounds or in the name of religion. This was even true about people whom I am going to criticize later, such as Aurobindo Ghosh and Tilak. Even they did not say that British rule should be overthrown because it was Christian rule. Tilak never said that,

or that it posed a threat to Hinduism. His entire critique of British colonialism was socio-economic and cultural. In the era of mass politics the conscious nationalist cadre ever said that British rule was Christian rule, oppressing our religion. That was done in 1857 when Hindus and Muslims united, the appeal was religious, that our religion is in danger. This kind of appeal was never raised by the modern national movement upto the very end. This is not only a remarkable aspect but this is one of the reasons why our secularism has deep roots.

Further, from the very beginning, the national movement showed complete openness towards the problems of minorities of all sorts, whether the minorities were of castes or religion or ethnicity or linguistic. From the very beginning the national movement accepted and propagated that in India there are all sorts of minorities and their interests must be protected. However, that in the process of protecting interests of all sorts of minorities, they might have indirectly encouraged communalism is a different story.

As early as 1888, the Indian Congress passed a resolution that if a majority of delegates belonging to any religion, Hindus, Muslims or Christians did not want a resolution affecting them to be passed, the said resolution would not be passed. This was an assurance and a recognition of the fact that people belonging to a minority religion might be fearful that the majority would try to tinker with their religion in some way or other. In 1889, I think in a way wrongly, they passed a resolution in which they assured the minorities that they would not get a lesser number of seats in municipalities and legislatures than their proportion of population. In fact there was some concession to communalism by the national movement, because the leadership was over sensitive to the question of minorities.

The test came in 1947 when a large number of people in our country fell prey to communalism in the north and butchered people of other religions on a scale which is fantastic in world history. But I think the positive features of our national movement, viz., secularism, also came out at its best in 1947 when Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru and entire Left, and individuals like Mridula Sarabhai, Subhadra Joshi, thousands and thousands of the nationalist cadre stood firm against the greatest of provocations and risked their lives to fight against communal carnage. I am saying this in order to fight against the notions of pessimism like ‘all is lost’ or ‘what can be done’. In other words, the mass of our people remained secular despite weaknesses in their secularism. I may be saying something unpopular, but I believe that throughout 1947 and also after that there have been great weaknesses in India’s secularism and the secularism of our people. I think it is one of the greatest achievements in world history that our people and our national movement, in the extremely difficult circumstances of 1947-49, succeeded in drafting a secular constitution

and in giving shape to a secular polity. It is a great tribute because the circumstances of 1947 were exceptional.

Despite these exceptional circumstances, India did not give birth to a Hindu state but a basically secular state, and the leader of independent India was Jawaharlal Nehru, not Vir Savarkar or Golwalkar, not even N.C. Chatterjee or Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. One can say that this was the greatness of Gandhiji and Nehru. I do not accept that individuals matter but not to that extent. I think this was a great tribute to the secular mindedness of the Indian people. When a detailed research is conducted into the history of Punjab one will find thousands of people who risked their lives in 1947 in order to save the minorities, whether they did so in the Pakistan part or in the Indian part. After all, if lakhs were butchered, millions successfully migrated and the role of the secular-minded people in this cannot be overlooked. Only five years back, we were interviewing a farmer of Ludhiana district, near Nakodar. He had a fifty acre farm, two or three tractors, a big fish farm and all that. He told us that when he and others were in the Multan camp they were saved by the colonel of the Army who was a Muslim – Pakistan Army at that time – and when the communal crowd came, he shouted at them 'I will butcher all of you but I will not allow these people to be touched till I am dead.' This type of true stories of secularism one can find in thousands.

The secular, rational, democratic and humanitarian elements in our country are still quite strong. To me these are the four basic forces which are responsible for the fact that despite horrible communal riots – and they are the negative side – we still have the predominance of secular, rational, democratic and humanitarian elements in our society. In fact one of the problems of politics is how to bring these elements together and how to bring them together to face the communal beast in a tough and uncompromising manner.

Then there is the negative side of the record of the national movement. As I said, the positive side has been getting eroded since 1947, year after year, and the negative side we have failed to change. The question immediately arises, while itself being secular, why did the national movement fail to overcome communalism successfully? It did overcome by 1937 casteism in politics, provincialism, regionalism. What were the weaknesses in the handling of the communal problem that it could not be successfully overcome? What were the weaknesses – I am not going to discuss them but certainly this question arises – in the handling of the caste and provincial regional and linguistic problems that many of these which were overcome in the thirties came back to hit us again and again from the early nineteen-fifties onwards? How is it that despite the great and glorious struggle we waged against caste oppression, it is still very much with us? How is it that casteist politics is still

with us? Anyway, we will discuss why is it that the national movement could not even at that time fully overcome the communal problem?

I would say that this is because of several reasons. First, the national movement and the intelligentsia failed to comprehend the character of communalism, especially as an ideology. They would see communalism as communal hatred which is bad; they could see the role of communal politics in elections and mobilization; but they never were able to fully understand the character of communalism as an ideology. They would criticize communalism at the level of 'do not hate'; they could say 'do not vote communally'; but they were not able to get at the communal ideology because they did not understand what communal ideology is. Here was an intellectual challenge which was not met. Gandhiji, for example, was extremely secular in practice but he was not able to have any understanding of what communal ideology is. I shall come back to that.

I think there were some individuals in the nineteen-thirties – Jawaharlal Nehru, K.M. Ashraf, and under his influence W.C. Smith; there was that very unknown Indian who had to commit suicide because of unemployment in 1948 one of our great intellectuals, K.B. Krishna, who presented a brilliant thesis at Harvard on the subject; there were people in the Socialist Party and Communist Party, who did have some understanding of what communalism really is and what its social roots are; but on the whole were not able fully to analyse and spread the analysis of communalism as an ideology. In fact this shows, how in complex societies, intellectual effort has to be a basic part of social development. I miss no opportunity to emphasize the fact, not only because I am a teacher, that intellectuals should not denigrate their own roles. They have a crucial role to play in politics though they are very small in number. It is said about a world leader – I will leave him unnamed – somebody said to him, let us make a concession to the Vatican or the pope so that he may support us against the fascist forces in the Second World War, the great leader said, "How many divisions does the Vatican have? Zero. Therefore why bother? But the fact is that the ideological forces at the communal of the Vatican were very very important. Intellectuals can probably be wiped out with one big gun in a city or a state and yet they are very significant. Here is an example. If an intellectual effort had been successfully made to analyse communal ideology then the national movement, unlike today, would have had the capacity to spread this understanding; but this effort was not made.

Above all, the biggest failure was – and this flows in a way from the failure to develop an intellectual effort – the inability to wage a political ideological struggle against communalism. The only ideological opposition to communalism came in the form of humanitarian appeals, a *bhai-bhai* approach or appeals to nationalism and class solidarity. But mere emotional

appeals were not adequate. There was no regular political ideological struggle against communalism as such ideological struggle would mean bringing home to the people the falsity of communal assumptions, of communal logic, of communal answers

Communalism could not be opposed successfully without liquidating the communal ideology. This ideology had been inculcated among our people actively since the eighteen-sixties and eighteen-seventies. It had been actively promoted through the school system and the press, etc. It was an ideology on which people had been brought up for several generations. It was not possible to defeat communalism unless an effort was made to uproot or liquidate that ideology.

One of the major weaknesses of nationalist approach to the communal problem was that it tried to solve it not through a political and ideological struggle, but tried to solve it through negotiations with the communal leaders. I call it the strategy of negotiations at the top. In other words, efforts were made to solve the communal problem through negotiations i.e., conciliation and co-option incorporation of communal leaders. Thus, in 1916, when the famous Lucknow Pact was signed between the Congress and the Muslim League, nearly all the existing communal demands were accepted. Those who are students of modern Indian history might remember that this Pact was between Lokmanya Tilak and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The newspaper headlines, with which we are now familiar, said 'Problem Solves', 'Accord Signed'. They did not use the word accord, they called it agreement, pact, but it is the same.

As the Round Table Conference failed and it was wrecked mainly on this question. Efforts were made by Gandhiji as the sole spokesman of the nation to accommodate all the communal leaders from the Hindu Mahasabha to the Muslim League, the Aga Khan to Ambedkar, and so on. From 1937 to 1946, Gandhiji, Nehru, Subhash, Azad, Rajagopalacharya – these five people – spent thousands of hours in trying to placate Jinnah. 'Come to the negotiating table, let us meet, let us negotiate, what do you want, if we can only negotiate then the problem would be solved. From 1952 till 1946 the Communist Party carried on a massive campaign all over the country – Gandhi-Jinnah must meet. They would meet, but there would be no agreement.

This could not succeed for several reasons. Above all, if one communal leader was satisfied, however powerful and strong he might have been some other leader will emerge and accuse him of having sold out. This will happen as long as the communal ideology is there. For instance, you have had a similar situation in Punjab in the last two or three years. It looks as if the drama has been played earlier, as they say – Marx said it, but he quoted somebody else I

forgot who – that history always repeats itself, first time as an event and the second time as its caricature, just as in the circus the real character comes once – the main or woman who walks on the wire or does some trick – and then the joker comes and says 'I will also do it,' and does it and he falls down and people have a hearty laugh. But the fact is that the joker can do it, but it is his job to fall down so that people may feel happy after the tenseness of the walk.

This happened in 1916. The Muslim League was not dissolved after the Lucknow Pact. It continued and it had a resurgence. In the 1927-29 negotiations agreement was reached between Jinnah and Motilal Nehru. One aspect was however, not accepted and Jinnah said alright, this is a minor issue. But as soon as Jinnah came out, there were protests from Mohammed Shafi and company and Jinnah found that his own leadership would be questioned and consequently, backed out. Then he put forward fourteen demands, adding two more to the earlier twelve demands.

We have seen this in Punjab also, by the way. In 1948 the Akali Dal merged with the Congress. The Akali Dal was dissolved. This is a rare instance of communal party dissolving. They said, 'our demands are accepted, so why do we need to continue'? After six months another group of Akali leaders emerged. S. Swaran Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, S. Baldev Singh and many other Akalis joined the Congress, but somebody else became the Akali leader. Then in 1958, again the Akali party got all its demands accepted because the theory then also was, as has been propagated by many intellectuals, *The Tribune* and the *Express* being the leaders in this respect, that the Akalis want power and if you give them power the problem will disappear. So the Akalis were brought into the Congress cabinet and given all the powers, and Baldev Singh first and then Swaran Singh were brought to the Centre. After six months another group of leaders emerged. There is never any deficiency of leaders. As long as there is an ideological base for communalism it will go on finding leaders.

Secondly, often in these negotiations the communal leader finds that he cannot give a concession, for otherwise, he would be accused of betrayal. So you are not able to meet all his demands, the negotiations fail and communalism increase. The objective basis was laid down in 1928. We tried our very best to negotiate; out of fourteen demands thirteen were accepted but the communalist could not be satisfied without the full demands being accepted. He had his base to look after. On the other hand, if you tend to accept their demands there is the other communalist who immediately says we are betrayed. The Motilal Nehru Committee found this to its cost. Every time it tried to stop giving concessions to the Muslim League, the Muslim League cried 'murder'. Every time it said it would accept the Muslim league demands, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Akali Dal cried 'murder'. It accepted,

for example, the Muslim demand for 33 per cent seats in Punjab assembly. Then the Sikh communalists took up this position in 19280 – it looks a very secular position – we do not want reservation in Punjab, but if you give reservations to the Muslims then you must give it to us also, Appeasement will give rise to another communalism either within or without.

The ultimate price of compromise would have been to destroy the secular identity. In 1937 Jinnah put forward the demand that he would negotiate with the Congress leaders only on one condition. I mention this because many popular writers say this – I do not read *The Tribune* regularly, but it must have come in *The Tribune* also many times – that Nehru was guilty of not making a united front with Jinnah in 1937. Jinnah's condition was, Nehru recognize Muslims league as the voice of the Muslims, which meant that Congress was a Hindu body. How could the Congress accept that it was a Hindu body? Luckily it did not accept this position. If it had, then we would have been living under fascism after partition. Communalists usually insist on acceptance of demands of this type, in Punjab too. The basic question is that you must accept 'that we represent the panth'. If you represent the panth then whom does the Congress represent? In fact, to negotiate and compromise and successfully compromise on such demands means to destroy the very basis of secularism in society and in the country.

Another problem of this approach of negotiating at the top is on what basis do you negotiate and with whom? The negotiations are normally held with communal leaders who are taken as the leaders of Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs. In other words, people gradually learn to accept this notion of communal leaders being the leaders of the followers of a particular religion or what they call communities. Also, there is a gradual acceptance of the concept of religion-based communities existing in India and having separate interests as such. Even a man like Gandhiji, or Nehru or others, socialists, Marxists and others, in the thirties and forties, as also now, started using the phrase 'Muslim community', 'Sikh community', and Gandhiji would say 'we must set aside the leaders of the communities', without fully understanding the ideology. As I said he was very weak in his understanding of communal ideology. He never asked, how the Congress could be speaking for the Muslims, if Jinnah was speaking for the Muslims at the same time? Or, if Jinnah represented the Muslim community, the Muslim community existed, which meant you accepted that there was a sold objective basis for communalism. Once you accepted that, then communal leaders were seen as representing these communal interests, while national leaders were seen as representing the national interests.

This particular weakness was to continue after 1947, especially when it was applied to minority communalism and it was extended to caste leaders also.

We have been freely using such words, especially in the press; Akalis were recognized as Sikh leaders, Muslim Leaguers as Muslim leaders. Only recently on the Shah Bano Bill a Minister said in Parliament, 'We consulted the leaders of Muslim opinion and they said that they want this bill to be passed.' Arif Mohammed Khan has given an interview that he did not resign on the question of the Shah Bano Bill because he said 'I am democratic enough, I have expressed my opinion before my party.' No member can say only this bill should be passed or his understanding should be accepted. Shah Bano Bill, is anti-woman, it has nothing to do with communalism. But publicly he resigned because Ashok Sen had said in Parliament that, they had consulted leaders of Muslim opinion and all of them were in favour of the Shah Bano Bill. He said to the Prime Minister, that means that I do not represent the Muslims. You say you have consulted the leaders of Muslims. Who am I? Who do I represent? Do I represent Hindus? Am I a Hindu communalist? A large number of secular Muslim leaders are unhappy precisely because they see a repetition of what happened before 1947.

In Punjab this has been going on for the last seven or eight years. I have not heard of any Congress leader resigning and saying, 'Why are you calling me an anti-Sikh leader? I also happen to be a Sikh.' Because here also, the accord has been signed on the understanding that the Akalis represent the Sikhs. So this theory has been accepted: It is generally accepted that somehow these people are the spokesmen of their particular castes. Luckily for our country nobody yet refers to a Hindu leader. *The Triune* has screaming headlines about Sikh leaders and Jat leaders, but luckily when it describes Atal Behari Vajpayee or L.K. Advani as Hindu leaders, our country would be half on the road to ruin. Deoras is also called the RSS leader. He is not yet called the Hindu leader. But you can see the logic of what I am saying.

Our press in this respect was extremely guilty before 1947. In Punjab, more damage was done by the press than the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha, before 1947, and the main guilty party was *The Tribune*, not a communal paper, but a paper which was secular, but adopted communal terminology and spread it wide. I personally think that the matter of nomenclature could have been so easily solved without any harmful consequences, if some were to be described as Sikh communal leaders. Instead of saying that we are giving these concessions to Muslims if we were only to say that we were giving thee concessions to Muslim communalists; instead of negotiating with the Sikh leaders if we were to say, it is a bad thing to do, but we were being completed to negotiate with what it is worth and what it is all about.

Another aspect was that the constant effort to negotiate with and conciliate communal leaders weakened the position of secular leaders. This was

particularly true about Muslims and Sikhs. Constant negotiation with Jinnah, recognizing him as a major leader of the Muslims gradually undermined the position of Maulana Azad and other nationalist Muslims among the Muslims because they saw that Gandhiji recognized the communal Muslim leadership. Therefore, when Jinnah said that Maulana Azad was a paid agent of the Hindus and the baniya, even if they did not believe it, at least they did not get angry about this.

The experience of the national movement shows that compromise, concessions, conciliation and co-option of the communal leaders did not lead to the ending of communalism. I should have pointed out earlier, but I shall do so now, that the effort to incorporate the Sikh communal leaders, Akalis, and Hindu communal leaders, such as Jagat Narain and company unofficially into the Congress did not put an end to communalism in Punjab. What it did do was to reduce the Congress to one-third Hindu communalists, to one-third Sikh communalists and, hopefully, one-third secular element. A chief minister of this province once met some intellectuals of JNU in 1982 and asked, 'What should we do?' A very radical professor replied, 'Put all the communalists in Jail.' He said 'I am a very moral and religious man. If I must put communalists in jail, I must first put two-thirds of my cabinet in jail. Since I cannot do that I cannot put in jail those who are outside.' This was Darbara Singh. The fact is that compromise with and conciliation of communalism destroyed or mostly destroyed the Congress, but it did not put an end to communalism. It is our experience that such concessions, conciliations and co-options lead to aggravation and escalation of communalism, to the popularization and spread of communal ideology, both among the minorities and the majority.

Another aspect of the national movement, from which we should learn is that constant negotiations with the communalists give legitimacy and respectability to communalism. One of the strongest ideological weapons against communalism is that people dislike it even when they are half communalists and it is an illegitimate word. People are ashamed of being communalists. Even a communalist when he speaks says, 'Do not misunderstand me, I am not anti-Hindu or anti-Sikh or anti-Muslim.' So at least there is a feeling of guilt. By constant negotiations with communal leaders you legitimatize them and remove this guilt feeling from the people, so that people then are ready en masse to go over to communalism. This is what has happened in Punjab in the last three or four years. Communalism has always been deep-seated among the middle classes, whether Sikh or Hindu, but there was always this old culture and, therefore, people hesitated to go forward to communalism. But in the last two and a half years the legitimacy of communalism has been established and people have been willing to move over unashamedly to the communal grid. In fact this had happened earlier also.

All the evidence that I have seen and gathered, talking to people of the thirties and forties, shows that as late as 1941 it was the nationalist candidate who won the presidency of the students' union at Aligarh, inspite of Jinnah's lectures delivered a few weeks before these elections. The Muslim League candidate was defeated. Till 1943 in Lucknow University it used to be a secular candidate who used to win. Sardar Jafri, for example, was the general secretary, which is the main office of the students' union. It was only after 1942 that the position changed. When I went to Lahore in 1942, the majority of my class fellows were either apolitical or nationalists, and the few who were included towards the Muslim League were ashamed of saying so in public. By 1945 nearly all of them had become open Muslim Leaguers.

One major reason was that the Communist Party had declared in 1942 that the Muslim League was a nationalist party representing the nationality of Muslims in Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Bengal. They said Pakistan was a legitimate demand, not a communal demand but the legitimate demand of the nationality of Muslims of Punjab, North-West Frontier province and Bengal. Once the communalist is given legitimacy in one form or another, by joining with him, aligning with him, negotiating with him, then others have no problem and difficulty, especially the middle class youth, in joining it. One is ashamed of being a communalist, but there is the pressure of communal minded uncles and aunts and cousins, if not parents, to push one in that direction. But if communalism is legitimatized one can meet both the worlds; one can be a decent person and satisfy cousins and what not. This is what happened in 1943, 44, 45.

To some extent this is what has happened in Punjab in recent years. In fact I would say that those who tried to make communalism respectable should be dealt with in the way in which Bhagat Singh dealt with Lala Lajpat Rai. Lala Lajpat Rai was the founder of the National School and College where Bhagat Singh had studied. He was the founder of the Dwarakanath Library which was the university of Bhagat Singh and his comrades. All the knowledge they acquired about world history and socialism and Marxism was acquired from Dwarakanath Library, and they respected Lajpat Rai. When Lajpat Rai became a communalist, Bhagat Singh, criticized him as he could not tolerate the idea of Lajpat Rai using his prestige to spread communalism. So he published a poem by Browning with the title 'Lost leader', and he did not publish one word apart from the poem. It goes something like this: 'Just for a handful of silver he left us'. Browning wrote this about Wordsworth because he had changed his stand on the French Revolution and attacked it. What Bhagat Singh did was to publish this poem as pamphlet and put Lajpat Rai's photo on the front page. Lajpat Rai was furious, Congressmen were furious. They asked Bhagat Singh, why he has done this?

Bhagat Singh, I think, is the only leader, to my knowledge, and Gandhiji to some extent who held the view, 'Communalism is as big an enemy of this country, as colonialism is. I will not distinguish between these two. One dominates our country, the other can destroy our country and I will not make any compromise with either.' Of course later, when Lajpat Rai was killed, Bhagat Singh avenged his death. Some people asked him, why he avenged the death of Lajpat Rai even after branding him a communalist. Bhagat Singh said 'Lajpat Rai had two faces. The British killed not the communal Lajpat Rai which I condemned, they killed the nationalist Lajpat Rai so I am avenging the death of nationalist Lajpat Rai, not the communalist Lajpat Rai'. This is how people who make communalism respectable should be treated. They should be attacked sharply for making communalism respectable, even if they are secular, though one should honour them for their secularism.

The nationalist movement suffered from another major failure. It did not carry out any mass agitation or movement against communalism. It condemned communalism; it was itself secular; but no mass campaign was carried out. When communal rioting erupted, there would be condemnation and propaganda meeting held for one or two weeks or one month; Gandhiji would go on fast; peace marches would be organized. It was not realized that the riot was the result of the communalization of the previous five years. No mass political campaign was carried out against communalism. This is what I mean by saying that they carried on the negative tradition. Not even a single campaign against communalism was organised where somebody said that we are going to carry on a mass campaign against communalism, all over the country, or even all over Punjab or U.P.?

In fact the only major leader in India who was aware of the fact that the communal problem was to be tackled in this fashion was Mahatma Gandhi. He is the only one who placed the struggle for Hindu-Muslim unity on the same plane as the fight against colonialism. Remember, when he came on the scene in 1920, he said Hindu-Muslim unity, anti-untouchability and charkha are the three basic campaigns of the national movement. Unfortunately, Gandhi had no clue about what is communalism he did not know how to fight against communalism. He could only fight for Hindu-Muslim unity on the slogan 'Hindus and Muslims are brethren. In our culture they have always been united, they must not fight each other.' He would make appeals, he would go on hunger strike, and you know he endangered his own life in Noakhali. But he could not carry out an ideological campaign. This is the great tragedy. No other leader was aware of the true nature of this problem. Nehru, who held quite a sound understanding of communalism, unfortunately, except for one and a half years in 1935-37, got too busy with other aspects, fighting against imperialism, spreading the message of socialism, and did not carry out any

sustained campaign against communalism. Nor did anybody else do it. Consequently, communalism was able to have the field to itself.

The nationalist answer to the communal problem was to preach 'bhai-bhai'; when a communal riot occurred or tension built up they organized a peace march – Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs – now they show them on the TV, in those days the press used to come out with photographs of people undertaking a peace march; fraternization; Hindus and Muslims together celebrating Holi and Id; telling people that religion does not preach hatred; using good religion against bad religion; using the broadmindedness of all religions against the narrow-minded religious bigotry of the communalists; and quoting Gita and Quran and Gurbani to the communalists and saying that these three are opposed to communalism.

I want to mention one point. These remedies which might be called Gandhian remedies or liberal remedies are certainly extremely useful. I am not the one to decry them. They have the great merit that when there is communal tension which might led to violence, peace marches, bhai-bhai preaching, appeals to humanitarianism, to the healthy voices of Gita or Quran or Bible or Gurbani are certainly helpful, because they defuse communal tension. These moral, humanitarian and religious appeals certainly would be part of a wider ideological campaign. I am not the one to sneer at these. Some of my radical students would sneer at them and say, 'What are you saying? Gandhian remedy, peace march.' How will it solve the communal problem? It must be class struggle or some ideological struggle.'

When in 1984 the November riots were occurring and in our area already the shops had been burnt and houses set on fire, five very revolutionary students – CPI, CPM, Naxalites, Socialists – came and said 'We want your co-operation. We are organizing a peace march, first on the campus of JNU and then in the Vasant Vihar-Munirka area.' I laughed and asked them, 'What is this peace march, the Gandhian remedy? It is bogus, it has never succeeded, Gandhiji failed, how are you going to succeed? They said, 'We cannot do anything just now, but this will have a healthy effect.' Of course, they were right, I agreed. I am not the one to sneer at it. But these steps do not get rid of communal ideology, do not provide any long term or basic solution to the problem of struggle. For that it is necessary to attack deeper, social and ideological roots of communalism on the basis of a scientific understanding.

The problem with the left was that they were sternly secularist, but the remedies they proposed were mechanistic, economic and deterministic in their approach. For example, it was believed that if the anti-imperialist struggle takes place then communalism will disappear. The finest appeal was made in 1947, when the country was already burning, when some people said,

do not accept transfer of power, start anti British struggle and peoples' mind would turn towards anti-imperialism and communal passions would die out. Nehru was a great champion of this particular view that if only you start an anti-imperialist struggle then communalism will somehow disappear. They never paid attention to the case of one of the greatest heroes of the nationalist struggle of Amritsar, of the Jallianwala massacre (after all our nationalist movement took its birth off the Jallianwala massacre, the movement against what you call the two great heroes, Saifuddin Kichlew and Satyapal).

We know that Dr. Saifuddin Kichlew was one of the major communal leaders from 1922 to 1927. He was the organizer of the *tabligh* and *tanzim* in Punjab and India. Later he came back to secularism. Do you know that Lajpat Rai, the Sher-e-Punjab, was not only the president of the Hindu Mahasabha – it was not so bad at that time – but he was the organizer of *shuddhi* and *sanghatan* in Punjab from 1922? Do you know that one of the great leader of Punjab, against for whom so many Bhavana are there and a big road also is there in Delhi and who was a great nationalist, Baba Kharak, was a major Sikh communal leader in the nineteen-twenties? In other words, people who have not only fought in the anti-communalist struggle, but were leaders in the struggle, they too became communal, because the anti-imperialist struggle could not guarantee that you would not have communal ideology. It might be helpful in fighting communal ideology, but it does not guarantee anything.

The other version as that Nehru and the left had to wage class struggle. If you wage class struggle, communalism will disappear. But what happens is usually the other way round. It is the class struggle which disappears, under the impact of communalism. In 1928 was fought the greatest struggle that the Indian working class had ever fought in its history and one of the greatest struggle that the working class had ever fought in world history, the famous Girni Kamgar struggles – six months' strike by the lowest paid workers in the world, a record; the (GIP) strike in 1919, and again the textile strike in 1929; and then came the biggest, most rotten communal riot by the same working class in early 1930, when Muslims and Pathans were butchered in the streets of Bombay, by the working class, in the working class areas. Of course one could go on giving examples of Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Indore, Ahmedabad and what not.

The biggest economists' error was the view that economic development, industrialization, spread of education and of science and technology would gradually weaken and extinguish communal and casteist thinking. 'After all, if you have studied science, you know what the world is all about. How can you be casteist and communalist?' Find out how many science graduates and MSC's are there in the communal politics in Punjab today. The fact of the

matter is that these are all honestly held views, but without the realization that there is no automatic road towards extinguishing communal ideology; that the communal ideology will disappear only when it is bluntly, directly opposed, criticized and overthrown. There are no indirect methods.

Take for example, education. Nehru believed that once education were spread there would be less of communalism. In fact, so long as there was little education in the villages of Punjab, communalism was under control, but as education spreads, communalism grows. Education per se cannot remove communalism, it depends on what is the content of the education. If education teaches, that there is such a thing as Sikh history and Hind history and Muslim history; if it teaches that Hindus could do no wrong; the only wrong was why they tolerated others, then what sort of ideology would be inculcated? Our school books of history, sociology, political science, literature are full of these things. Take Bhai Vir Singh's novels. Great literature no doubt, but he is completely communal person in his novels. If you teach the novels of Bhai Vir Singh without simultaneously commenting upon them by saying that this is great, but do not accept communal part of its ideology. You teach Bankim Chandra's novels to the neo-literates, or Prem Chand or most Hindi writers; they glorify the struggles of Padmini versus Allauddin or somebody or the other, Partap Narain has written a few novels in forty, fifty years of his life, in which the *goonda* is always a Muslim zamindar or *nawab* who is lusting after a Hindu woman and there is a patriotic struggle against him. What can come out of it? I was brought up on, Hakikat Rai's stories. How much effort it took me to get Hakikat Rai out of my blood-stream. If education means you give the children or the people a calendar showing what the so-called Muslims have done, the so-called massacres, from this war to this and that, one is better off without such education or literacy.

About this I will tell you a story which one of my American professors used to tell. He used to say, 'What do you expect in free India?' I said, "Sir, we will have literacy.' He asked whether that would solve our problems. He said, 'Bipan Chandra, pay attention to the fact that the most highly literate nation in the world, with the largest number of Ph.Ds, the largest percentage of schooling and the largest number of per capita newspaper and journals, with the great culture of Goethe and company, Germany, chose as its leader Hitler. On the other hand, the semi-literate society of the Russians chose Lenin. The totally illiterate society of India chose Gandhi. The most oppressed and ignorant people of China chose Mao Tse Tung. Please pay some attention to the fact, whether literacy is such a good thing, unless you know what literacy will do and what it is all about don't be taken up by this notion that literacy per se is very good thing.'

In fact, not only the content, but the quality of education also matters. We have never paid any attention to this. In my university there were some students who used to say, 'You talk about high quality of education, it is to preach elitism.' Today we spread education, people get their degrees and yet they cannot read a newspaper, cannot interpret what they read. So they can understand the communalist who appeals to the lowest denominator of intellect; but when somebody more sensible comes and tries to deal with history and politics and some ideology they do not know what it is all about; they cannot follow him. It is not a question of language even. You speak in Punjabi, they will not follow you. Once the quality of education is poor, then the very poor quality of education hits you back and produces all such ideologies which then become destructive of society.

SECTION 4

CAUSATION, CONTENT AND FORMS OF COMMUNALISM

SOCIAL ROOTS OF COMMUNALISM

Bipan Chandra

All ideologies, all thoughts, all politics have social basis or social roots. That is, all of them are based upon objective social factors. They do not arise just out of the heads of people. They may, but then they die a very natural and early death. Therefore, there are social factors which find reflection in different ideologies or different ideologies come to represent them to a lesser or to a greater extent. The real problem is, does an ideology or thought or politics represent the social soil in which they arise, do they represent them truthfully with greater validity or with greater falsehood? In other words, in our view communalism has no social truth in it, that is, what it says, to be social reality is not the social reality; what it says to be the causes are not the causes; what it says to be the solutions are not the solutions; that is, it does not reflect the social reality correctly, but communalism does have social causation. It does spring from a social soil. There are causes of communalism.

There is a social reality behind communalism but it is presented by communalism in a distorted manner. For example, unemployment of youth may find a distorted reflection in the form of saying that Hindus are responsible for our unemployment. In Bihar they may say forwards or backwards (caste-wise) are responsible. In 1977 there was a massive movement of the backwards against the forwards and forwards against backwards, so much so that in Muzaffarpur University even the teaching faculty was divided on caste lines. This was reflected even in the day-to-day interaction. For instance, in coffee houses, there was a clear demarcation in their sitting pattern.

Communalism is the same species of ideology as racialism, anti-semitism or fascism. It is very much like the rise of fascism or Nazism. There was the social reality of Germany which had been humiliated in the Treaty of Versailles. There was the social reality of the Weimar Republic which failed to make a dent in the lives of the people. There was, above all, the massive reality of the depression which created tremendous unemployment where thirty three to fifty per cent of the population was unemployed. It was this type of social situation which led to the rapid growth of the Communist Party but even more rapid growth of the Nazi party. This was the social basis of the rise and success of Nazism. Instead of capitalism being held responsible, Hitler was able to convince people that the Jews were responsible. The Treaty of Versailles was also portrayed as a conspiracy of the worldwide Jews. So there was a social reality but it was being reflected in a totally distorted manner.

The social situation in India, which was responsible in the late twenties and thirties for the rapid growth of socialist ideas and the trade union movement, the same social reality was also giving birth to communalism and its rise. The tragedy for this country is that instead of nationalism or socialist forces growing it was the communal forces which grew in some parts of the country.

The second point that I would like to make is that one may distinguish between the origins of communalism and the reasons for its growth and spread. I may probably be very wrong and many may differ with this, but I believe that the basic question is not the origins of communal ideology or communal politics. What happened in the 19th century was that India was developing in a very new direction, economically, socially and politically. In the 19th century, India was being increasingly unified administratively, economically and politically. It had never happened before. Even under the Mughals or earlier under the Ashoka, the empire was imposed from above, the unity that was provided was only the unity of the empire. As soon as the unity of the central empire broke up, the country split up again into its natural regions, politically and economically and culturally. In the 19th century, for the first time, under colonialism, India started being unified in a structured manner. Its economy, its administration started getting unified to a much greater extent than under the Mughals. Intellectual life became much more unified through the spread of modern ideas and modern education. Similarly, modern politics entered. Until now politics had been either the politics of the courts, father and son fighting against another zamindar for becoming a raja or a nawab; one subedar fighting against another; one outside conqueror coming and fighting against the indigenous ruler. Or, the other politics were the politics of the people: peasant revolts, sudden revolts occurring blindly to oppose the structure, not the structure so much but just to overthrow the contemporary oppressor, and, successful or unsuccessful resulting in the restoration of the same system. Whether the victors were of the new system or the peasant rebels, they established some sort of new zamindaris and new states.

What happened in politics? From the second half of the 19th century modern politics entered India: the notion that sovereignty belongs to the people, that people have a right to have their own politics. They have a right to criticize the government and evolve common policies and programmes. They have got the right to organize politics openly, democratically in a public manner – not secretly for an armed struggle – but can openly organize modern politics critical of the regime, for change of policies or even against the regime itself, based upon the doctrine of popular sovereignty. Who were these people to be mobilized? How was the mobilization to take place? These were the questions. Similarly, if people were getting unified what were to be the new identities? In

the rest of the world the new identity that had come up was that of the nation. Whether the nation was small or big, increasingly there has been this struggle for identity.

In India too the people felt the urge for new identities, especially those who moved into politics; those who were politicized; those who were newspaper readers; members of new associations, who were to act as public opinion. As you know, the word public opinion has always had a historically fixed meaning. In the 19th century public opinion meant *Landon Times.* In the 18th century British people talked about Englishmen and English patriotism and 'we English', but they meant only the gentry, the aristocracy and the bankers and merchants of London. They were the only Englishmen. The others were referred to as riff-raff or rubbish; they were not called Englishmen and, therefore, did not have the right to vote and normally did not form part of politics; they were not even part of the English people as such.

So, in India too, when people moved into modern politics of mass sovereignty, what did 'people' mean? A small, but an increasingly growing number of people. But modern politics had to be organized not on the basis of a town or a city or a village or a group of villages, but on a much larger plane. Whether it was the municipal elections, or the mobilization of the Congress, or mass meetings of the peasants of Bengal on the question of the Bengal Rent Bill, modern politics demanded new identity. Where would the people look for these identities? Some of the intelligentsia, studied and trained in Europe, brought in the identity of the nation. When this identity of nation was brought in there was a great deal of confusion. Tilak, for example, one of the most brilliant intellectuals of the late 19th century, in his early writings, used the word nation for Maharashtrians, the Maratha nation of Shivaji. Sometimes he used the word nation for Hindus – the Hindu nation. He also used the word nation for Indians which included Muslims, Sikhs, Bengalis, Maharashtrians and Punjabis, all in one. So the word nation itself got confused and was used in a confused manner by people at different times. But basically the concept of the nation was imported. It was a new identity. A large number of people found it very difficult to follow it as is the case with all new identities. You tell a worker that you are a member of the working class he will not know what it means. He may acquire an identity of living in a particular locality. He may say I am from Kangra, I am from Palam or I am from Rohtak. He may acquire the Hindu identity, the Punjabi identity. The chances are that working class identity he will acquire the notion of only after a great deal of listening to lectures, trade activity, and so on.

So people knew that they had to have a wider identity because life was forcing a wider unity on them, and yet what was this new unity? People naturally everywhere go to older concepts for new identities or new ideas. Invariably

people try to see the new experience in terms of something with which they are familiar, which they have handled. What were these identities which were already there? First, let me remind you that there was no political identity before this, because people were not in politics and, therefore, it is not true that people thought that they were Hindus or Muslims or Jats for political purposes. There was no such identity. But when new political identities had to be looked for, some people said, well, we speak the same language, so maybe we are Bengalis. Some people said, we have the same religion, maybe we are Muslims. After all religion was something which people handled everyday in their life. So some people identified with caste, some with language, some with religion. So people tried to deal with modern politics in terms of older identities. Therefore, I believe that communalism developed, inevitably. It was bound to arise, because people tried to grapple with the need for widening their identity with the help of older identities with which they were familiar.

A social situation is never spontaneously grasped. In fact that is where the role of the intelligentsia becomes crucial, though people are in the habit of downgrading the intellectuals' role. They themselves, downgrade their role. The fact is that the people could grasp reality only gradually, as the intelligentsia grasped colonialism and spread this understanding among them. Otherwise, people only know the British as bad because they were foreigners or they had a white skin or because they were Christians. But gradually people began to understand, not spontaneously but through experience and education, the new social situation of colonialism. Similarly, the reality of new identity formation was not grasped spontaneously. But many false identities developed in India.

Let me give you one very interesting example. In U.P. and Bihar, particularly in Bihar, the first nationalist newspaper that came into existence was called 'Kaisth Samachar'. Its first editor was Sachidanand Sinha who was a graduate and bar-at-law from Britain. Gradually he changed the name. He said, it is too narrow. He called it 'Hindustan Samachar' around 1904. Even in the case of Dadabhai Naoroji, who was also a Parsi reformer, the first newspaper he started was a nationalist newspaper, 'Ras Goftar', which was also a Parsi newspaper. This is how life develops and grows. But these identities were gradually overcome. Casteism was overcome. Linguistic identity developed very fast. But the linguistic identity also was gradually overcome by nationalism. As the national identity spread more and more other identities were narrowed down.

It happened with communalism also to some extent. But communalism was a new identity based upon an older identity which nationalism was not able ultimately to overpower, and the result was the partition of the country.

Therefore, the question that should be raised, in my view, is not why does false consciousness arise, but why does false consciousness grow and prosper and even overpower.

This, in my view, depends upon the social, economic, political and ideological factors. Take Punjab today. The birth of communalism in Punjab, which took a Muslim form, Sikh form, Hindu form, came at or near the end of the 19th century. It sometimes mounted, sometimes declined after 1947, since the form that communalism took in the Punjab was Hindu and Sikh communalism versus Muslim communalism. Hate the Muslims, and hate the Hindus and Sikhs. Hindus and Sikhs are brothers. People thought that in 1947 all the Hindus and Sikh came over to this side of Punjab, hating the Muslims, and they kicked out the Muslims from Punjab and, therefore, Hindu and Sikh communalism were always allied. So people thought that now communalism was over in Punjab. Nobody could possibly think that it would take the form that it has taken in the last three or four years and today. Therefore, I believe that it is not the birth of communalism which should today exercise us. What should exercise us is, why is it that Hindu and Sikh communalism have grown so rapidly in the years after 1947 and particularly in the last twenty years or so, especially after the formation of the Punjabi Suba and the acceptance of Punjabi in its Gurmukhi script as the official language of Punjab.

I believe that the strength of false consciousness depends upon two features. One is the extent and availability of a correct analysis of the social situation. That is, availability of valid consciousness. In my view, conditions were quite ready, after 1947, for the disappearance of communalism from Punjab, except in its minuscule variety of anti-Islam, which was dying out, and we saw the process of gradual disappearance of the Jan Sangh in Punjab. In my view, given the right type of education, right types of political parties and political movements and activities by the intelligentsia, there was nothing in the objective situation which indicated that Hindu-Sikh communalism should reach these proportions. If false consciousness is propagated and if it is not contradicted in the school, on the radio, in the newspapers, in the family, in personal conversations, at various levels, then it would have a tendency to grow.

Secondly, more important, certain social groups, strata, class, may find that an ideology which has served others before it is serviceable to them also. They may find that correct consciousness will tend to weaken them while they may find that false consciousness will service them quite well. They may not even be responsible for its rise. This has happened many times in our history of the caste system. The caste system developed under one type of social circumstances. But its perpetuation was due to the fact that as historical change and development occurred new social groups arose who found it to be

quite serviceable in one form or another. Just as caste in its traditional form has virtually disappeared from the middle and upper classes in India today but has been found extremely serviceable in a totally new form, that is electoral politics which were absent in the traditional India when the caste system arose, developed and changed for centuries and centuries. Therefore, we have to identify the social groups, the social interests, the social classes and so on which find false consciousness to be serviceable to them and also analyse how it serves them and why correct consciousness will not serve them. Struggling against these groups–whether one struggles against them as enemies or whether one tries to accommodate them, I will not go into that question, I am a bit of an extremist, I believe that they should be struggled against, but may be they must be accommodated– one must identify the interests which accept this new ideology.

In Punjab – it is very interesting – we talk of spread of communalism in Punjab. But do we know that the party which ruled Punjab till 1946 end or beginning of 1947 was semi-communal, but basically it had an agriculturist ideology, the Unionist Party? Sir Chhotu Ram was certainly not a communalist. He held Haryana together by talking about agriculturism which was a false consciousness but it served well. A rising rich peasant-cum-landlord Jat, whether he was a Sikh, Hindu or Muslim, was able, on the one hand, through the agriculturalist ideology, to keep the moneylender out, and on the other hand to expand the money lending business, as he took it over. In fact the indebtedness of the peasants increased in Punjab. Only, now, he was in debt to a fellow agriculturist, who charged a higher rate of interest and took over the land because he was also capable of cultivating it, while the traditional moneylender charged a low rate of interest, would also buy the land in lieu of repayment and give it back to the peasant now as a tenant, only exploiting him all the more.

Therefore, he found himself probably in a worse situation. But this ideology was useful and was able to successfully compete even when Hindu communalism developed. It is very interesting that a part of the people following the Hindu religion went to the Congress, a part to the Hindu Mahasabha, but a part went to the Unionist Party as well. Similarly when the Akali movement broke up after 1925, a part of the Akalis went to the communists, a part to the Congress, a part to the Akali party which was at that time a semi-communal party, and a fourth part went to the Unionist Party, Surinder Singh Majhitia and company.

I believe, that one reason for the growth of communalism in Punjab in the last few years has been the class situation as it has developed. In 1981 when we were doing field work in villages in Ludhiana and Patiala districts, I met an ex-inspector of cooperatives, a Sikh Jat, and he said, “This land is going to flow

with blood very soon.' So we asked 'Do you think Hindus and Sikhs will fight like this?' He said, 'No, no, I do not mean Hindus and Sikhs. It will be French Revolution, Russian Revolution.' So I said, 'You are expecting the people to overthrow the rich?' He said, 'They hate us. We are surviving because of these Bihari labourers. When we employ these harijan young men for weeding, if they were to cut off some of our wheat crop and take it home to feed their cattle I could understand it as selfishness; it is very bad but it is greed that I can understand. But when they pull out four weeds they also pull out two wheat stems and mix them; they do not take them home. They pull them out so that we may not get enough wheat. They hate us. So either we are going to live or they are going to live.'

I personally feel that this was the situation that was developing. I talked to many other young big farmers. Our project was such that we were interviewing all, from big farmers to agricultural labourers including Biharis. Also, the Sikh communalists found that they could never win an election in Punjab because these harijan labourers did not like them any more. A class struggle situation was developing in the countryside. So the growth of Sikh communalism in the last six-seven years, is very simply explained, by the desire of the largest farmers and rich peasants to have a political situation where they would not be at the mercy of their own agricultural labourers, who with the help of others were able to win the majority and secure all sorts of concessions from the government and try to dictate terms to the very farmers who work with the sweat of their brow. I may be very wrong. But I believe that the social base of communal ideology in the Punjab villages underwent a drastic change in the last few years in this manner.

One other point. When one says that one should study the reasons for the growth of communalism – and these reasons are real reasons, because of these reasons communalism grows – one is not saying that communalism is also justified. For these reasons explain the growth of development of communalism, but this does not mean that communalism correctly reflects the reality. To go back to my example, it was unemployment which explains the rise of fascism but this does not mean that fascism, therefore, reflected the German reality correctly. Communalism has social roots but this does not mean that the problems of the peasant in Punjab – which in my view are very genuine problems-are correctly reflected. For example, I found in Punjab that a peasant has ten acres of land and is quite well off. But he has three sons and he knows that his three sons will have three acres each and will be beggars in ten, fifteen years' time. Therefore, there is a genuine problem that is faced by the farmers and my sympathy is very much with him also. I can sympathize with everybody concerned. Only I cannot sympathize with the communal representation of social condition, because communalism is no answer to any

of these problems that are generating and resulting in the growth of communalism.

One other aspect. The purpose of calling communalism or communal ideology a false consciousness is not to condemn it by abuse – give a dog a bad name and hang it. The purpose is not to say that there is no need to study it, it is false and, therefore, why waste time studying it. Call it false, go to the people. This is in fact what our national leaders used to do. Communalism is anti-national, it will divide the country - they would go on making speeches all over the country and they were surprised that people would not follow them. The purpose of calling it false consciousness is to create proper conditions for its scientific study. That is not to accept communal ideology at its face value but to go in a scientific manner to study what it is, what interest it is representing. Why condemn it. In my analysis, for example, I was not condemning the farmer, I was only trying to understand why he or his sons or daughters support communalism in this fashion. It is to avoid the empiricist error of accepting communalism as its own causation and its own truth.

Communalism – as has also been explained by Pramod Kumar – is a modern phenomenon. I have already explained how communalism uses caste as a mobilizing factor. It does not mean that this ideology or this politics are carryovers from the medieval past. Communalism is not the heritage of the medieval past. There were no modern politics in the medieval past. There were no popular mobilizations in the medieval past. Akbar did not go round to the people and say, 'I am a Muslim, you are a Muslim, support me.' Aurangzeb did not do it either. He might have got hold of ten, twenty, thirty nobles and mullahs and said, 'Why don't you support me against my brother, I am a good Muslim, he is a bad Muslim?' But there were no politics of popular mobilization. These are new ideologies built around the need for new identities. Above all, they are based upon the politics of mobilization-modern politics.

Let me give an example of what I mean when I say many identities developed. I am very fond of giving the example of Bankim's 'Bande Mataram', the national song of India till 1947. In 'Anand Math' when Bankim wrote 'Bande Mataram' how many of you know that he said, 'Six crore throats singing in unison, O Mother, your praise, twelve crore hands raised in your defence, O Mother'. Patriotism, nationalism! What is this six crores? What identity was he projecting? Indian nation? It was not the population of India at all. India's population was somewhere around seventeen crores. Was it the population of Hindus? No, the population of Hindus would have been eleven or twelve crores. Was it giving expression to the emergence of Bengal nationalism? No, the population of Bengal was something like three crores or two and a half crores. Then what identity was he projecting? This is a great song of ours.

Some historians even say that Bankim is the father of Indian nationalism, the first to project Indian nationalism in this song. What identity was he projecting? It was the Bengal Presidency, created a few years earlier by the British, consisting of Bengal, a part of Assam, Bihar and Orissa. In 1892 or 1893, just before his death, some people went to him and said, 'Your song has become a great national song but what is this six crore business? You must change it.' So he changed it. I think it became twenty crores. Was twenty crore the population of India? No, of British India. The Indian States were out of it. Indian States became a part of the Indian people only in the nineteen thirties. Whenever the Indian nationalists said twenty crores they never meant every Indian. When they said foreigners are ruling they meant only British India, and not princely India. It was only in the nineteen-twenties that Indian started saying that they are agents of the British and they are being ruled by the British.

This brings me to my next point, that it is very important that we must formulate our questions correctly. Regarding communalism, quite often it is the communalists who raise the questions and issues we try to formulate the answers. Punjab is a specific victim of this. What to do in Punjab? How to solve the Punjab problem? What is the Punjab problem? These are the demands. Somebody says, do not accept them, they are communal. Somebody says accept them. Somebody says compromise. But the communalists have formulated the problem for you and then you are trying to solve the problem. This is what happened with Muslim communalism. Tilak was the first in 1916 to sign the Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League accepting their demand for reservation of seats and separate electorates. The Muslim communalists raised the problem and Tilak said, yes, we want unity; without Hindu-Muslim unity there will be no freedom; if we unite we will get freedom, so let us unite; so we accept the problem as formulated by communalists. It solved nothing. The Nehru Committee discussed the issue threadbare for two years, i.e., from 1927 to 1929. But once you let the communalists raise the question and formulate it the chances of finding the correct answers are virtually nil. In other words, it is very necessary that one should know what the questions really are, what is behind what the communalist is saying. If so-called compromises are to be made they should not be made with communal questions and communal answers. They should be with the reality leading to the growth of communalism. There one may try to understand and then arrive at a compromise, as I said, with the reality. The reality cannot be solved at one stroke. It can only be solved by doses; sometimes big doses, sometimes small doses.

Thus I will conclude this part by saying that if one does not differentiate between objective reality and false communal consciousness one is likely to be

swamped by communal ideology. However, consciously secular one may be, the communal ideology is likely to swamp one or at least swamp the people with wrong views. To accept communalism as the truth of the reality and then to fight is to fight communalism in a false arena, on a false stage, on a false basis. In Punjab, a crucial error behind the so-called famous accord was with regard to the nature of the problem. Chandigarh, electricity, water. Were they the problems? Of course, now hardly anybody would say that these are the problems. The leader of the dissident Akali wing has already said, 'Give us Rs. 300 crores, we do not want Chandigarh.' A solution which I suggested in September 1984. At that time was Rs.150 crores to build their own capital in a proper place where all Punjabis could go to the high court and administration in two or three hours' time by bus.

Then comes another aspect. Why does communal ideology arise? What is the answer? Some people object to these questions themselves. Those people who deny the notion of objective reality or the possibility of learning the truth behind communalism, whether it is true or not, also deny any notion of causation or causality. They say that it is impossible to find out what are the causes of events one can only look at what is now the problem and try to find an answer or understanding. The real point is to try to understand how many people support what. How many people supported the Muslim League? Ninety per cent? Seventy per cent? Was Jinnah the spokesman of Muslims or not? How many Muslims joined the congress? That would have decided whether it was a Hindu Congress or an Indian Congress. The question of discussing the nature of communalism, the nature of a party, the causation of communalism, all these questions do not arise. They say that it is not possible to find out the causes of events, to ascertain the causes of events and of phenomena. This is a classic dilemma which, surprisingly, many Marxists also in practice suffer from and of course non-Marxists suffer in a very big way. This is my difference with those who say that communalism arises out of a particular political economic, social structure, so long as that structure is there nothing can be done.

The logic is that structure is the determining element and, therefore, human beings as actors in history can only play a relatively passive role. They cannot do anything more because the structure is producing these things, and as long as the structure is not transformed you cannot fight communalism. There is a rather cheap and popular version, as long as there is capitalism in India there will be communalism, and, therefore, fight against capitalism, there is no need to fight against communalism. There is the opposite view also, what I would call the subjective view, which says that – and which is a very dominating view among our intelligentsia and political parties – forget about the structure; if only we can convince people, that is if only we had more propagandists, more

mass meetings, somehow if human beings could be convinced, then we can overcome the phenomenon. In other words, complete voluntarism, that human beings can achieve anything; it is a question of their wise to do so.

Some of my young friends with whom I have discussed this over the last few years accept both at the same time. One time they are structuralists, and at another time they believe anything can be done. They even believe that right wing revolutionary terrorists can be used as instruments of social revolution. Let the structure of the state break down, let the extremists find out the truth of things, then they will take recourse to social revolution and they will become communist revolutionaries. Pure voluntarism. The alternative position is no possibility of fighting communalism because this structure is incapable of dealing with the situation. This results in either deep pessimism or fatalism; nothing can be done. We can only salvage our own moral conscience at the most by remaining secular but everything is lost; or idiotic optimism; human beings are capable of everything, the situation is always ripe for change and, therefore, do not worry, somehow, somewhere, some people will find the answer and we will be able to overcome communalism.

In reality, there has to be a constant dialectic between the two. This is a very difficult task, but the task really is to relate the social roots of communalism to a proper understanding and an ideological struggle against it, to develop simultaneously the capacity to understand both and to fight on both fronts sometimes the one getting more emphasis and sometimes the other. In other words, the task is how to build up the subjective forces, the ideological forces within the broad parameters of the structure which comes into being.

Very briefly just two last aspects. One is, when we discuss and accept that there is causation of communalism, especially causation of the growth and development of communalism, then again there are two dangers. One is to look at a single cause, whether it is feudalism, casteism, the role of the rich peasant, the role of the petty bourgeoisie, the villainy of the congress or the Akalis or the Jana Sangh or the Shiv Sena or whoever, and we can go on fighting as to whether this is the cause or that is the cause. The other danger is that when one accepts the causation one gets a multiplicity of causes, what our historians are famous for and our social scientists also, what may be called factors approach towards the study of history.

The danger of the mono-cause is that one looks only at the partial aspect of the reality, however, important it may be. The danger of multiplicity of causes or the factors approach, is that one does not know where to make the effective intervention at any time. Because all causes are there, so all are equal.

For communalism, therefore, one of the basic tasks is to find out the hierarchy of causation. The same for Punjab. If one is looking at the hierarchy of causation it can undergo changes. A cause which was not primary earlier may become primary later. That is, the primary aspect of a situation can undergo change with changing times.

Lastly, there is what we may call an empiricist error which is quite often made in the study of communalism. The social scientists are very very prone to this error. A great deal of modern research in sociology and political science and even in history is based upon this error. But the classic examples are the newspapers, even secular newspapers like *The Tribune* and *The Indian Express.* They seem to believe that reality can be studied by studying what we may call the phenomenal form of reality, that is what appears on the surface. The fact is that reality is never given to our senses directly. Reality is never given to one's senses, even in its simplest forms. And social reality is never given to our senses. Social reality is always mediated.

This is much more true where ideology is concerned. Ideology is never what it appears to be on the surface. The remedies it is suggesting are not necessarily the remedies that are lying at its back. The reality that it is projecting is not the reality that comes on the surface. This error is quite often made by sociologists and political scientists who go by the questionnaire method.

A great deal of our social research including radical research is based upon the questionnaire method. Our newspaper men do the same. Consequently they become the medium for the propagation of communalism even when they are not communal themselves. To say that the Tribune's editorial staff is communal is a blasphemy, a total lie probably. But that The Tribune has been acting as an instrument of communalisation in Punjab I think can be demonstrated. Somebody calls himself a Sikh leader and they write 'Sikh leader says this'. So gradually people get accustomed to the notion that communal Sikh leaders are leaders of all the Sikhs.

The fact of the matter is that in the empiricist treatment of communalism, communal reality, is accepted at face value and on this basis a theory is formed. A very good example of this is the theory of what is called identity crisis; that the people are suffering from all sorts of identity crisis. Up to now it was only the Muslims and Sikhs who were suffering from identity crisis, but in Lucknow I heard from a Hindu also that their real problem is that they have not got an identity and that is why in history they have been so far buffeted about and enslaved by everybody. They are in search for an identity but they are not able to form it, and once they form an identity the Hindus will be happy people. The empirical form of identity is easily accepted. We are in danger, people are not accepting what we are, we do not know who we are.

Of course, there is an identity crisis also. Almost every social class, especially the petty bourgeoisie is having a crisis: who am I? Everybody wants to prove that he is somebody. Naturally there is some sort of crisis. But what are the roots of this crisis? Why do people feel like this? Why do they feel deprived? Is the answer to get Sikh identity or Hindu identity or Haryanvi identity or Himachali identity, or whatever? What is lying behind this crisis? This sort of question cannot be answered on the basis of merely looking at the empirical reality.

How do we evaluate whether nationalism and communalism are not the same sort of phenomenon? In India before 1947 - of course also after 1947 but that is a slightly different question nationalism was a valid or a more truthful reflection of reality. It was not because the leaders said we are in nation, but because there was colonialism, which was under developing us, exploiting us, impoverishing us and standing in the way of our economic, political, social and cultural development. We have to study the various channels and various forms in which communalism was standing in our way. We still do not understand the cultural aspects of it. We are still victims of cultural colonialism. Colonialism came in our way in every respect and to a lesser or greater extent of all Indian people. In other words colonialism was ever present in a dominational, exploitative, under-developing sense in relation to all sections of the Indian people. Therefore, when Indians created a nationalism or a national movement against the British it had a true objective, true basis founded on a true comprehension of the objective reality of colonialism.

What was communalism? When Hindu and Muslim communalism developed what did Muslim communalists say, from Sir Syed Ahmed Khan onwards to Jinnah? The enemies of the Muslims are not the British. They are their friends. The enemies of the Muslims are the Hindus. They are the ones who have gone ahead. If in a government office there were three Hindu officers or ten Hindu officers and one Muslim, proportionately more Hinds, the Muslim communalists said that this shows the Hindus are dominating us. But there may be twelve Englishmen. That did not seem to bother the Muslim communalists. Take Hindu communalism on the question of cow killing. In Multan, Muslim shops would display and sell meat of cows and there would be a communal riot. But in Multan Cantonment every day a minimum of nine or ten cows would be butchered for the white regiment and there was no protest by anybody, however deeply religious he might be. What is the domination that the Muslim communalists said one should be afraid of? Hindus will dominate us. What about the British who are dominating them both? That was a second level question that they would not bother about it, the real question was the domination by the Hindus. And among Hindus the question was of the

domination by Muslims. Even though they were a minority they are strong and therefore they would dominate the Hindus unless they mobilized, organized in akharas and learnt talwar and lathi and fought them properly.

There was no objective basis for this. I have shown in my book that it was the result of colonialism that Hinds were more in business or jobs. I have shown how in the medieval period land was more under the control of Muslims. Government jobs were more under their control. It was colonialism which destroyed the Indian States and, therefore, destroyed the Muslim bureaucracy. It was colonialism which decided that it was not the zamindar who was important, but the moneylender. The power of the moneylender was the creation of British rule, of colonialism. Therefore, communalism as it developed, did not have an objective basis in reality, while nationalism did have. The question today again would be very similar.

If you talk about national integration, about unity, about national development, is there any objective basis for saying so? If you believe there is not then one should not bother about it. But it one believes that one is still living in the era of world imperialism; if one still says that it is not possible for our people to develop unless they cooperate all over this sub-continent, unless the markets of Bengal and Punjab are integrated and developed together, that if both of them help Rajasthan or Orissa to develop, then not only Orissa and Rajasthan will grow but Bengal and Punjab and Gujarat will also become more developed. In other words, national unity, national integrity, independence, these are values because they still have an objective basis.

There is also the other aspect though, that they can also be used today in the way in which the Europeans used jingoism, that is merely to cover up the social reality. It is a very complex phenomenon today. But again one has to ask the question, in Punjab is it true that the Sikhs are facing domination by Hindus or Hindus are facing domination from Sikhs? All over the world people talk of domination of a region by a region or even religion by religion, but here we say that the Centre is dominating or exploiting. A mythical identity called Centre does not exist, cannot exist. It is there because the Sikh communalists do not want, and did not in the past want, to come out openly and say that they were afraid of Hindu domination, and so they coined a new slogan that the Centre is dominating, oppressing, killing the Sikhs. Hindu communalists similarly talk about the Centre being a Hindu Centre and therefore protecting them.

One need not go further but the same question may be dealt with very briefly in another manner: how does the historians handle the same problem? How do we in history decide what is communal interpretation? Precisely by digging into data and by interpreting that data. The communalist has either dug up

wrong data or used the data to misinterpret the reality. The interpretation is wrong. Sometimes the data are wrong. We try to dig up all the data, favourable and unfavourable and then try to interpret them in a scientific manner. Then we see whether our interpretation is closer to the historical reality. But we do not say that every version of history is equally valid, because history is nothing but the creation of the mind. I do interpret. I do choose data. If I write about even 1950 I do not look up all the newspapers published in India. If will take me twenty years to read all the newspapers of one single day published all over India and all over the world. I do choose. But the real problem comes up from which point of view is the choice of my data? Is my interpretation more closely approximating to reality or is another interpretation a false interpretation of the same historical reality? We apply the same standard.

WHY COMMUNALISM?

K.F. Rustomji

People say that when you copy a large number of people's work that is called research. So I will take you into the thinking of a large number of people. I will not go into the historical reasons of the persistence of communalism, i.e., why Hindu is supposed to be different from a Muslim or a Sikh from a Hindu; the reason why everyone claims to be different in using religion for his own individual identity. The first fact that we have to accept is that basically communalism is a struggle for survival. People may give many explanations. They may say people are different in heir modes of dress, their way of thinking, and various practical aspects of life. They may describe marriage ceremonies and other matters. But these are all superficial. Communalism arises when there is distrust, disquiet, a feeling of apprehension, a feeling of not knowing what is going to happen to an individual, his family and his community. Starting from oneself it expands and takes on all those whom the man meets every day.

Before independence, when Hindu-Muslim communalism took the form of processions, attacks on processions, music before mosques, questions regarding sacred trees, all very small problems. Yet they gave us idea of the urge for assertion, for dominance, for securing a position in the street which could be used for whatever purpose considered necessary. It was mainly to protect and safeguard one's own interests. This communalism which developed without the intervention of Jinnah was used by him to secure Pakistan. In the end we conceded Pakistan because we felt that the Hindu-Muslim conflict would go on endlessly and the suffering would be very great. In this process we not only had the great migrations, the enormous killings, but we perpetuated communalism and raised the communal monster to the high level of international politics. So in a sense we have lost out in the creation of Pakistan.

But not only we. Take the position of Muslims in India. It has deteriorated considerably after Pakistan was formed, after we gained independence. The Muslims in Pakistan too have suffered. They had a military dictatorship which butchered Baluchistan, which developed a drug traffic which is unsettling them as well as us and the whole world. They gunned down thousands in East Pakistan and it had to separate. In Bangladesh too the

people have suffered greatly after partition. You know the story of assassinations and poll violence and so on. So Hindu-Muslim communalism has been a disaster for every single person in the Indian sub-continent.

I come now to one important factor which is missed by people. That is, after independence, both Hindu society and Muslim society – and I am sorry to be demarcating them separately, but shall I say all Indians - are no longer what they were before independence. There is a desire to advance, to plan, to see how they can advance, how they can study, how they can improve their prospects and the prospects of their family and their home – in brief to develop. This was not there in the same measure before independence. On the Muslim side, after the first shock they were completely bewildered and supposed for at least ten years after independence, that is, from 1947 to 1957 - a new generation of professionals, professors, doctors, industrialists began to emerge. Muslims built up a large number of industries; locks, bangles, paper, boots, shoes and so on. This itself has created jealousies. In the new series of riots that we have had in India, the main factors are not the original ones of securing political positions but trying to assert an identity which is different. A new factor, which I am sure you could not have missed, is that Hindu militancy is growing all over the land. This militancy presumes that the Hindu has always been reviled, rejected, while he has pampered the minorities, that he has done s much for others but nothing for himself, for his own clan. Right or wrong, this feeling is there and is growing very fast. This may be one cause of the riots that I will refer to later.

I will now come to one of the basic factors, that is the economic equations of public unrest. There is no doubt that there are many cause for the rise of communalism, but to my mind, the most important and the most frequently missed cause is economic disparity and uneven economic opportunities. Let us take a look at two issues which create economic problems. One is drought and the other is war. We have had droughts in 1943-44, 1950-52, 1957-59, 1963-64, 1965-66, 1972-74 and the worst drought of all in 1979. In between we have had the 1947 war with Pakistan, the 1962 war with China, followed by the 1965-66 war with Pakistan. In 1971 there was the conflict over Bangladesh and the war with Pakistan that followed. When you put these together you will find that whenever we have had the worst economic years, because of drought or war, we have had public unrest. The worst pubic unrest, you can easily recall occurred during 1965-67. The Congress party lost elections in nine of out seventeen states in 1967. There was dissatisfaction; a demand for change; a feeling that the Congress Party was not capable of meeting people's needs. Then the 1971 war with Pakistan and the droughts of 1972 and 1974 produced another series of disturbances. You had Assam; Telangana; strikes all

over; doctors, academics, everybody on the war path. That again was an expression of public unrest.

The point that I am making to you is that whenever our economy suffers a bad set-back because of drought – I am not emphasizing the industrial production angle, because may be it was not yet as important s it would become in the years to me, but it is there – wherever there is economic failure, shall we put it, public unrest erupts in a big form. That is a lesson which I think academics ought to drive home to the people of India; if you look after your economy and not waste your money on pay commissions you will find that the economy will stabilize and people will be contended, happy and restful.

I would now like to do a small diagram. I am taking some of my thinking from a book by Rastogi of UP and the book is called "The Cybernetic Analysis of Indian Societal System". I will do it along with you. In the middle of the page put down a rectangle and put over there resources. This is the key to all economic factors - what are your resources? Take an arrow up and put down another rectangle, Natural, and those are oil, minerals, gas power, the natural resources of the land. On the left side take agriculture, another rectangle. Agriculture, as you know, is dependent on an arrow going upwards to god, the weather. On the right side put in another rectangle, call it industry, trade, commerce. I am leaving out minor matters like loans, grants, and other minor matters which come into resources. What I am trying to say is that resources come from these important areas in the country, agriculture, natural resources and industry and trade. This is what makes us what we are, the resources.

From resources we have to consider the expenditures. Right below that minus another rectangle, defence and administrative expenditure. Whatever your resources are, you reduce from that your expenditure. I am simplifying it by making one defence and administrative expenditure; there may be a lot of other expenditures, like funding research institutes.

Then we come to the next point, the investible resources. What are the resources that are available to you got investment in development? On the left side, please write 'adequate' and from adequate resources you will get development, internal peace. On the right side, inadequate resources' and you will find price rise.

The point that I am trying to make is that all unrest has an economic base and if you can deal with the economy you can contain unrest. Possibly the best way is that of the Marwari who is very particular about every rupee that is spent; or the woman looking after house, who cannot spend the way the government does, because she must be very careful that she does not exceed the money that her husband brings in. When there is wise management of money you find that society stabilizes at a certain level and there is no unrest,

no communal rioting, no ethnic trouble, no problems of day-to-day living, no struggle for survival. This is the way in which some of the western democracies have stabilized and some of the world's richest nations have got rich.

Let us go on to the next point. The second factor that is important in considering matters of public unrest is disparity. As long as the people of a Madhya Pradesh village live at the same level of poverty, there is no conflict. Wherever people are stabilized on an equal basis there is no conflict. In a normal village where everybody shares poverty there is no conflict. But you introduce conflicts. That is why a man like Jawaharlal Nehru used to emphasize again and again the importance of removing disparities. We have not been able to do that. On the contrary, we have created two worlds in India, the world of the affluent, that ten per cent that are able to get two or three meals a day, and the rest ninety per cent who are poor, who may be above the poverty line but are still comparatively poor. Don't you think that this type of a separation is likely to create distrust and conflict? In your own sphere, if you find that one family has got rich either by corruption or through its own genuine efforts, you will find that there is an undertone of jealousy, very clear and difficult to control.

On a national scale when you have problems of education, unemployment of the young, problems of youth, then you will find their dissatisfaction erupting as is happening in Punjab today. I have heard of a recruitment parade which led to a lathi charge, because for a hundred posts fifteen thousand people came. That is the problem that we have to face in this country. Youth is discontented. Youth is now organizing. In the past, the education was at a low level. In the villages today you will find a large number of people who are what I might call semi-literate; people who have gone up to the seventh or eighth standards and dropped out, but they will not work in the fields and consider it inferior to take up a plough. They want an office job or the ability to command others. This is a state which is likely to create big problems for the future.

Another factor is demographic. I will give you one fact which will probably be quite disquieting. India will be the most populous country in the world and also the poorest when the population stabilizes in the year 2150 at 1.7 billion. I think this was the entire population of the world just a few centuries ago.

Another factor is that literacy has risen from 16.6 per cent in 1951 to about 36 per cent in 1981 and today it might be about 40 per cent. But there will be five hundred million illiterates in 2000. Also, if you know the pyramid of population, you will find that its widest base, the largest number of people in the country will be roughly in their thirties or a little lower. That means so much more struggle for existence so much more need for increasing the number of jobs.

I have tried to place before you the underlying causes of communal conflicts. Therefore, when you believe a simplistic statement against the Hindu or the Sikh or the Muslim, please remember that you also have been behaving like an illiterate. The causes are quite different from what they appear to be on the surface. The problems as you find in Gujarat or UP or Darjeeling or anywhere are only the superficial causes. The underlying cause is the feeling of apprehension in people's minds; what will happen to me, what will happen to my family, what will happen to my friends, what will happen to my community? That underlying apprehension is the one that unites people and brings them together into conflict with authority.

So, if I may summarise, communalism is basically an outward expression of the fears and anxieties of survival that are felt by all. I am turning a biological idiom into a demographic one.

I want to make a change in the approach now and to compare the world of today with the world as it was fifty years ago. You will agree with me that science and technology have changed the entire picture. We had had man landing on the moon, lasers, communication technology which has brought all of us together, and another factor is the English language which a large number of people in the world speak – I was astonished to hear the other day that there were more people learning English in China then speaking it in the United States. Imagine that, the whole Chinese world is studying English, it came as a surprise to me that on the day President Kennedy was assassinated, within twenty minutes of the event a journalist in distant Bhopal woke me up and told me that the President of American bas been shot. This is how close we are getting in the world. I have no doubt that the incident of killing that occurred in Muktsar was known within fifteen minutes throughout India, and it was only the work of four men, four mad, intemperate men, but it shook the whole of India and its traumas will be felt for a long time to come. Then we have genetic engineering; we have satellites, advances in microbiology, physics, chemistry etc. Today the advances that have been made in science and technology are like the steps we have taken in the last fifty years when we took only one in the fifty years before that. That is the pace at which advances are being made in science and technology. There are also social changes: women's education, women's lib, youth cults, rock music, horror movies, etc. We have had no wars for almost forty five years. But our expenditure on armaments is one million dollars a minute. It has been going higher and higher throughout the world. Also, the nature of wars has changed. The 1914 war was trench warfare, mud warfare you might call it. The next war, 1939, you had more air engagements and two atomic bombs which settled the conflict. The war of the future will be star wars, long distance controlled wars which

will encompass humanity in conflicts from which we may find it very difficult to emerge.

I am trying to tell you how the world has changed and I am leaving out how we have changed in India. We no longer are what we were in 1947. The point that I am coming to now is that there has been a change also in the methods which people think will change or will deal with the situation as it arises, of what are the means of dealing with these problems or the problems of the world. During the second world war, Nazism became a very widely accepted faith and almost threatened the whole world till Hitler and his clan were destroyed. After that communism appeared as a phase and as a counterphase you had anti-communism. An offshoot of that, a society which has equity and brotherhood. Even that is now not able to take the strain of development that exists today. We are virtually in a period when we are going through a period of great transition, but we are not sure that we should do to deal with our problems.

To search for an answer I would suggest case studies of two or three areas. The first is, U.P. In the last few months, arising out of the Ayodhya controversy, there has been a great deal of communal unrest in Uttar Pradesh. Allahabad was the 38th town in which there was rioting. In one riot 22 people were killed in Pilibhit. Today ripples of that controversy of Ayodhya or the Ram Janmabhoomi – Babri Masjid question are going down all over India, right up to Kanyakumari. It has given rise to Hindu militancy in a very firm and decisive way and threatens to overtake the whole of India, as it has certainly produced repercussions in the Punjab, Gujarat and other places too. I would think that there is a link in this between Punjab and UP because the Hindu backlash arose mainly out f the terrorist activity that occurred in the Punjab. It was something that I had predicted as soon as the movement by the extremist began and it gained strength when killings occurred, that terrible Thursday on which Hindus and Sikhs were separated in the bus for the first time, I think it was 8th of August, and shot. Then the migrations produced a trauma all over India, which is perhaps not fully realized in Punjab. You find a sudden manifestation of this occurring in Gujarat. Gujarat has a record of rioting which is rather peculiar. Every five years there is a major riot. I will give you the years of the riots - 1969, 1974, 1980, and 1985 – and now it occurs every year. Why does it occur in this way in Gujarat? Obviously, Gujarat is on state where there is a great deal of economic activity, great deal of industrial development. That creates tensions because people who are unemployed find that they must react, make their point clear, fight against reservations and anything that seems to impede their progress. Fortyeight people have died in the rioting so far. Of course in each place that I have mentioned you find complications. In Punjab, in the three border districts and mind you, the problem of Punjab is

really the problem of the three border districts, you find a peculiar type of problem because of smuggling of heroin, other articles, boot-legging or illicit distillation. In a peculiar way the economy of these border districts has got pegged on illegal activities. Once you try to break that you will get into a situation which you will find difficult to control. In the same way, prohibition has produced problems in Gujarat which leads to perpetual warfare between rival groups that manufacture illicit liquor.

So I have suggested three case studies, one of Punjab, second of U.P. and the third of Gujarat. I think when these case studies are done you will find more important material coming out than what I have mentioned.

I have tried to tell you what one could call the roots of communalism. What is the answer? How do we deal with it?

First of all, there must be political will. Political will depends on political understanding, on political education which, I am sorry to say, is rather poor. The understanding of current problems that an average minister displays is really very poor indeed. He does not go deep into affairs, he does not study what the effect of any decisions that he takes will have on the country. Somehow, this type of adhocism has affected the bureaucracy also. I have known bureaucrats who have a very deep understanding of the country and its problems. In fact there were a large number of bureaucrats who took it upon themselves to make studies. During the British period you had a large number of British officers who were well versed in Sanskrit, in ancient literature. That type of administrators are now less and less visible and less and less popular with the government. I have a feeling that unless our democracy develops, matures; we will be using the wrong men and neglecting the right. So there is an important factor which comes from experience, from knocks and from disasters.

The second factor that is important is complete administrative impartiality. We must have an impartial administration. We are too prone to give our sympathies to our own cause or to our own community. Why should I – fortunately I am a member of a community of whom there are hardly 70,000 people in India – think that something should be done for the Parsis? It just does not occur to me. May be they are also placed in such a way that there is no real anxiety in their minds. But the point that I wish to emphasize is that there can be no progress in India unless the administrative structure is based on absolute impartiality.

The second point that I wish to make is that even in academic studies, one has to confront of communal bias of the researcher. Otherwise the study is going to be worthless if the researcher has injected his own peculiar biases into it.

The third factor which I feel the country must accept is, that the economy must afford opportunities for all in equal measure. The conditions must be created for the people to rise out of the despair or poverty. There must be ability for young people to find jobs. There must be an ability to use all the advances that science and technology have made for the benefit of the country, whether in the agricultural or in the industrial sphere, and there is a great need for a type of thinking to emerge which is broad based, electric, probably irreligious, may be religious in private, but totally committed to the development of the country. Our mistake is that we are always working at cross purposes. The minister distrusts the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy distrusts each other, they distrust the public, the public distrusts all of them. Unless we come together and begin to think alike and in that there is need for men to devise new thinking methods, unless we do all that we can to pull this country out of the turbulations that lie ahead. The disasters that are coming will be worse than what we have faced and we can only face them if we know the causes and understand the remedies.

CAUSES AND APPEAL OF COMMUNALISM

Pramod Kumar

Communalism is a pertinent reminder of the complexities of religion, caste, ethnicity and the intractable political and economic problems often inherent in them. It has taken diverse forms over time, with contextual variations manifesting in desires for incremental concessions, communal rioting, secessionists demands, etc.

Communalism is retrogressive but understanding this phenomenon through the communal prism is no less retrogressive. Identification of the causes for the existence or persistence of any social phenomenon provides the necessary insight into ways of seeking solutions.

Communalism Caused by Religious Differences?

It is widely believed that communalism is caused by difference in religious practices.[1] Communalism is also understood to be the result of discrimination on religious group basis. Communalism uses religion, caste or other ascriptive group affinities. So it is commonly believed that communalism is caused by ascriptive group differences and has existed ever since religion, caste or other ascriptive groups came into being. It is proposed that a distinction should be made between the origin of caste or religion and the factors causing the origin and persistence of communalism. The belief that communalism is caused by differences in religious, caste or other ascriptive categories, alongwith the assumptions and implications of this belief, leads to the following suggestions for overcoming communalism:

(a) Preaching and practice of tolerance and communal harmony by members of all religious, caste and other ascriptive groups;

(b) Proportionate reservations for the protection to members of all religious, caste and other ascriptive groups.

In the event of failure of the two solutions, the ultimate way-out suggested is that the members of one religious, caste or other ascriptive group should be physically separated from another either by expatriation or through elimination.

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[1] P.C.Joshi has rightly pointed out that explanations of the communal problem have been biased in favour of either religious, economic or political factors. Very rarely does one come across explanations which attempt to investigate the kind of political and economic framework or background in which the fact of post religious antipathy developed into a force of explosive potentiality. In other words, very rarely does one come across an attempt to evolve a comprehensive and integrated approach to the problem.

Antagonism constitutes a crucial element of communalism and is give the moral garb of religion to perpetrate inhuman acts such as, looting, rioting, arson and killing. W.C. Smith has rightly pointed out that in this (communalism), religion is used as an instrument to provide justification for acts, which are otherwise undesirable or even inhuman. Further, history has shown may times that religion is ready to excuse atrocities which decent men would hesitate to commit under any other name. Moreover, once a conflict has started for economic or other reasons and then when it assumes a communalism guise, it tends to expand to include innocent co-religionists of the real enemies. Also it tends to colour the thinking of the persons involved for all their other issues.[2]

However, it should be mentioned here that religion is not a synonym for communalism. By this is meant that a religious person is not essentially communal. Religion as an ideology, according to the Marxist tradition, performs two social functions. First, it makes the conditions of this "heartless world" bearable for the oppressed who are alienated from the fruits of their labour by the nature of production relations. Thereby, religion removes the motives and saps the will of the oppressed to change the conditions of this "heartless world" by making them bearable. Second religion helps the oppressors to prevent the oppressed from resorting to violent or other remedies to rectify the conditions of this "heartless world".

However, there are instances when religion was used to bring about an order slightly better than the existing one. The example of the 17th Century English Puritans is quoted in this context. The Puritans attacked the forces of monarchy and aristocracy and supported commercial interests. The support extended by the Puritans helped, together with other factors, change the social order from tottering feudalism to nascent capitalism. But the emergent commercial interests needed religion, and a morality based on it, to accumulate capital by propagating thrift and austerity. But religion and the morality based on it, was also required for purposes of having a subservient working class to whom honesty and diligence were preached.

In the non-Marxist tradition, religion as an ideology, is thought to make people more humane, moral and honest. Religion is also believed to make people closer to God who symbolizes divinity, sublimity, virtue and goodness. Religion as an ideology does not cause communalism. However, when over-religious people are drawn to communalism. Therefore, religion cannot be used to combat communalism because there is a thin line between being over-religious and religious.

[2] W.C. Smith (1979), *Modern Islam in India*, Usha Pub., p.21.

Colonialism, Nationalism and Communalism

Some authors are of the view that the colonial rulers, particularly the British, caused communal tensions among their subjects to rule them in Malaysia, Nigeria and India. It is also pointed out that the French colonial authorities did not resort to communalism in Morocco and neither did the Dutch colonialists do so in Indonesia.[3] Communalism, therefore, in its existing form and magnitude, was typical phenomenon experienced in ex-colonial countries ruled by the British. These observations are only partially correct. Communalism was not conspired into existence by the British. However, once communalism appeared due to the social conditions prevailing in India, the British used it to perpetuate their rule. No doubt, there existed a reservoir of mistrust and suspicion among members of different religious groups which was exploited by the colonialists to govern the colonies. And this continues even after independence of these colonies.

There is also a view that communalism is an outcome of the failure to inculcate national consciousness in independent India.[4] In this context, it is pointed out that during the freedom struggle communalism receded with the growth of nationalism. This view overemphasizes nationalism as an ideological anti-dote to communalism. Nationalism, no doubt, was a progressive ideology during the freedom struggle. In independent India, national disintegration can be one consequence of communalism; so can communalism cause fascism. Hence, communalism has to be seen in its totality. Communalism is an outcome of the failure to understand and resolve social problems in a secular and democratic way. Nationalism in independent India cannot be a substitute for the failure to solve the problems of social inequality, brutalization and dehumanization of society, unemployment, corruption, abridgement of civil liberty etc. People should be mobilized along secular and class lines to fight against these problems. Only then can the anti-imperialist stance of the Indian nationalists be meaningful.

Lag in Economic Development: Relative Deprivation Hypothesis

Some other authors try to establish an isometric relation between the perception of deprivation or discrimination along religious, caste or other ascriptive group lines and economic development. The scholars subscribing to this approach see “the lag” in economic development between different

[3] Moonis Raza (1992), “Communalism: The Dragon’s Teeth”, See p.

[4] Aloo Dastur (1984), Paper presented in a Seminar on *Multi-Dimensional Approaches to Communalism*, Summary published in Man & Development.

religious, caste or other ascriptive groups to be the cause of perception of deprivation.[5] This "lag" is attributed by them to:

(i) The economic situation during British rule which benefitted traders, money-lenders and professional classes, most whom belonged to certain upper castes of the Hindu religious group;

(ii) The inherited attitudes and cultural traditions which inhibited feudal lords and artisans from securing benefits from the economic process, most of these feudal lords and artisans being Muslims.

The continued uneven economic development and differential access to the economic process of ascriptive groups due to "the lag" mentioned above, is assumed by these scholars to be the cause of communalism. This approach is inadequate because it explains only the reasons for the perception of deprivation. This perception when conditioned by communal ideology, is expressed communally. The more important subject in the present context, therefore, should be the explanation of the existence and persistence of communal ideology.

Economic Competition: Communal Riots & Communalism

Another approach tries to identity the socio-economic roots of communalism through a study of communal riots. According to the scholars subscribing to this approach, communal riots are caused by the competition and conflict between vested interests, viz. traders, industrialists, etc. belonging to different ascriptive groups. They extend this argument about the cause of communal riots to the cause of communalism. Hence, communalism, to these scholars is caused by the clash of economic interests of persons belonging to different religious groups.[6] This approach is also inadequate. A pertinent question in this regard is: why does the clash of economic interests take a communal form? The need is, therefore, to identity the basis of communal ideology. Another inadequacy of this approach is that it considers communal riots to be synonymous with communalism.

No doubt, communal rioting cannot be understood in isolation from a comprehension of the level and operation of communal ideology. Communal rioting as a conjunctural outcome of the pervasiveness of communal ideology has to be understood in terms of the linkages of communal ideology, communal politics and communal violence. But this does not mean that it is

[5] Rajni Palme Dutt (1955), *India Today and Tomorrow,* Delhi, A.R. Desai (1959), Social Background of Indian Nationalism, Bombay. J.L.Nehru (1956), The Discovery of India, London, P.c. Joshi in an article "The Economic Background of Communalism in India" argues alongwith same lines. However, Joshi holds that the impact of development on ascriptive groups varied from one region to another. "Hence, to understand the basis of communalism it is necessary to study the problem at regional level."

[6] Asghar Ali Engineer (1984), "The Cause of Communal Riots in Post-partition Period in India" in *Communal Riots in Post Independence India*, (ed.). Asghar ali engineer, Sangham Books, Hyderabad.

synonymous with communalism or it has its own logic and can be combated independently of the various complex processes unleashed by the changing socio-economic formations.

Poverty, inequality and competition for economic and other benefits are objective facts, but are disguised in communal discriminations due to the pervasiveness of elements of communal ideology. This can be illustrated by citing two examples. In Jaipur, the competition in the expanding gem and jewellery household industry between established traders, most of whom happen to be Hindus and the emerging traders, most of whom happen to be Muslims has not reached the stage of antagonism. The competition between these trading groups has provided one of the conditions for the growth of communalism, but the absence of communal antagonism, among other things has prevented the competition from manifesting in communal violence.

As opposed to this, communal violence has erupted and communalism continues to grow at Indore. The demand for tin-based products has increased and the product range diversified in the iron and tin manufacturing industries at Indore. Under the changed conditions, the traditional blacksmiths, most of whom happen to be Muslims, were displaced. Certain traders most of whom happen to be Hindus, invested capital, improved the technology and captured major share of the market. The marginalization of traditional blacksmith was interpreted communally by them and was projected as discrimination against "Muslims" by local political leaders and parties. The condition which contributed among other things, to the greater appeal of communalism was not competition *per se* but mainly the pervasiveness of communal ideology.

Electoral Politics, Modern Democratic Institutions Cause Communalism

Some believe that the introduction of adult franchise and modern institutions of democratic representation have caused communalism. It is felt that in the absence of corresponding modernization of society, the adoption of modern institutions of popular political participation by a plural society, which is organized along religious, caste or other ascriptive group lines, has led to the growth of communalism.

Some authors hold that communal electoral politics causes communalism. ". . . .numbers game does seem to have given rise to an ethnic calculus and ultimately to communal politics"[7]. The persistence of communal politics, no doubt, influences the voting behavior of some sections of the people. It is precisely because communalists belonging to the less numerous religious or caste groups perceive democracy as synonymous with Hindu domination and/or Brahmanvad. It is further believed that the use of symbols and

[7] Rajni Kothari (1984), "Communalism in India: The New Face of Democracy", *Lokayan*, June, p.6.

institutions associated with religious, caste or other ascriptive groups in politics causes communalism.

Both these notions partially explain the existence of communalism. This is only a partial explanation because it does not pose the question, why people respond and participate in politics which has communal overtone.

It is relevant to make a historical analysis and establish a relationship between the form and essence of communalism. Unfortunately, most of the studies on communalism either take into consideration economic changes or reduce it merely to a phenomenon related to culture, religion or politics. Both these approaches lack the perspective of totality and organic relationship between these variables.

An attempt should be made to comprehend and understand the necessary as well as sufficient conditions responsible for the existence and persistence of communalism. The necessary conditions are those without which a phenomenon cannot exist. The necessary conditions as such do not give any idea about the frequency, form and intensity of communal eruptions. It is the sufficient conditions which determine the form, frequency and direction of the development of a situation though always deriving its life force from the necessary conditions. It is obvious that these conditions, necessary as well as sufficient, do not have a separate objective existence.[8] Therefore, it is essential to comprehend and understand the necessary as well as sufficient conditions responsible for the existence and persistence of communalism.

A realistic approach to understand and combat communalism should take into account the diversities of linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic patterns in India, as also a cumulative differentiation, in beliefs, value patterns and ideologies which has evolved overtime. This differentiation in response to the social exigencies has manifested in the form of mistrust, suspicion and antagonism amongst various religions, caste and ascriptive groups. For instance, the perception of these differentiation is reflected in the widely prevalent notions that democracy is a rule of the brute 'majority' and that since Hindus are in a majority, the minorities will never come to power, that the polity is communal and votes are cast on communal considerations, that if capital circulation is restricted within guilds or 'jamaats' formed on communal basis, it will bring in more profit; that jobs are not offered on the basis of skills or merit but accrue to persons due to their religious or caste group identities; and that cultural differences are based solely on religion. These notions are widely held and practiced and they reflect the pervasiveness of the communal ideology.

[8] V.L.Allen, *Social Analysis,* Orient Longman, (1974), pp. 205-9.

Religious, caste and ascriptive groups, no doubt, have been conscious of the differences between themselves and on occasions those differences were perceived and articulated through antagonistic notions and violent conflicts even in the days before British rule. These conflicts were mainly religious or casteist, but not communal which is something modern. But it is relevant to take into consideration the reservoir of mistrust and suspicion which was historically present and remained dormant during the initial decades of colonial rule in India and thereafter it surfaced with intensity under specific socio-economic conditions and political initiatives taken by the British ruling elite.

The British used and perpetuated the existing reservoir of perception of religio-cultural superiority or inferiority of one or the other communal group. They extended its logic to propagate that social placement of individuals is determined by religious beliefs or caste affiliation. Therefore, access to politico-economic opportunities and benefits is (or should be) regulated by the numerical strength of the religious or caste group to which they belong. In a given situation where sometimes these diversities coincide with class distinctions, mobilizations identity the sources of uneven development and differential access to distributive benefits on communal lines.

The British politics used the process of increasing surplus extraction and alienation of peasantry through increasing indebtedness to project it in terms of conflict between Hindu money lenders versus peasantry – the communal implications of which were too obvious. Consequently, the increasing landed inequality, differentiation within peasantry became less important in perception of peasantry.

Further, the bifurcation of politics among Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus in terms of its content was also initiated by the British. It was hammered that the content of politics of Hindus was mainly political, whereas in the case of Muslims and Sikhs it was economic. So it was not only that their religion was different, but the content of politics was also dissimilar. From this it was concluded that to articulate these dissimilar interests the religious groups must necessarily have separate political organizations. This was very well responded by the leaders claiming to represent the secular interests of the religious groups in politics.

There is also evidence of the religious reform movements, like Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha Movements, Ahmadiya with their emphasis on Shuddhi, Amrit Prachar, Tabligh and Tanzim contributing to the resurgence of the culture and politics based on purity of religious practices and beliefs and critique of other religious group practices and beliefs at the popular level. So it was the retarded nature of capitalism, British politics of divide and rule, religious

revivalist movements in a milieu where the mistrust and suspicion amongst various religious groups was a historical fact, accentuated communal divisions. It is, therefore, relevant to point out that the British policies like separate communal electorates, encouragement to communal organization and thinking in politics, constitutional reforms only in terms of more relative communal basis, accentuated (but did not cause) the reality of communalism.

Even in the post-independent phase this process could not be reversed. In 1947 what happened was the transfer of political power from colonial rulers and through which the resolution of the primary contradiction between the Indian people irrespective of their caste, religion, on the one hand and British colonialism on the other. The mass nationalism was roused with varying political strategy adopted by the political parties to resolve this contradiction. However, it must be recognized that the national freedom movement did not have a unified ideology. This also in a way contributed to the growth of communalism.

Even after freedom from the British colonialism no fundamental changes were initiated. No doubt, a sustained trust towards industrialization and intensive agricultural production were initiated with a view to enhance production. Consequently, the success of social and economic development sought to be measured by per capita income, growth rate and by referring to the large industrial base and the third largest technical manpower in the world and above all, in the growth of parliamentary institutions.

It tried to underplay the growing inequalities and consumerism, sexism, communalism. Moreover, capitalism in India made compromises with the remnants of feudalism for its political survival. For instance, even much sought of land reforms could not be implemented. The implementation of land reforms would have helped the creation of market for mass consumption of goods and production of cheap raw materials for industries. Not only this, no basic changes were introduced in the bureaucratic frame. The non-faith in the people remained the dominant pattern of the functioning of the bureaucracy. The education system remained to be based on Macaulay system of producing white collar workers and the dominant value of divide and rule as reflected in the content of education.

Further, India’s democratic polity also could not bring about much desired changes in the socio-cultural value patterns. On the contrary, it reinforced already existing divisions and antagonisms amongst various religious and caste groups. For instance, political leadership could not find the will to execute a universal and secular civil code. The Hindu Code of 1956 was an admission of defeat to communal thought. The fact that the issue of Urdu language, AMU Bill and the establishment of Banaras Hindu University were used as political

ploys, indicates the level of operation of communal ideology. During this period the electoral politics was also riddled with mobilization along caste and religious group lines with the Shiromani Akali Dal, Indian Union Muslim League, Jan Sangh, Shiva Sena being only the most obvious examples. However, even the known non-communal and secular parties have allied with communal parties and organizations to form governments or fight elections. Twice, once in 1948 and then in 1956 the Akali Dal was allowed to merge with the Congress during the Nehruvian days. The use of symbols deriving their legitimacy from religious, caste etc. for the purposes of elections also strengthened communal monoliths.

Above all, the communally divisive politics and exclusiveness emerged as a dominant mode of political activity. This reinforced the belief that politics transcends class barriers and of course, not religious, caste or ethnicity and it is always monolithic. This kind of political activity emphasised the particularistic aspects of social existence. The politics based on communalism used particularistic aspects for intra-religious or caste mobilizations and underplayed universalistic cultural patterns. It is this specific nature of socio-cultural, economic and political developments which has provided life force to the phenomenon like communalism. In other words, communalism acquired its assertiveness in politics and economic and social spheres from conflicts emanating from the specific nature of capitalist development. And in the presence of traditional structures and organizations, this assertiveness not only acquires colour from these but also operates through them. For instance, the interaction of caste, religion, ethnicity etc., with modern institutions have provided basis for the growth of communalism. The challenges posed by the development process to these traditional institutions was weak in terms of blocked economic development and limited opportunities. This, in turn, reaffirmed and consolidated already existing reservoir of mistrust and suspicion amongst various caste divisions and religious groups. This, however, led to a fragmentation as expressed in various caste and religious alliances and caste and religious conflicts within the system of castes and religions itself.

In nutshell, communalism derived its life force from the conflicts arising out of the specific nature of capitalist development[9] and character of the Indian state and above all from reservoir of mistrust and suspicion prevalent among

[9] In this paper the term conflict has been used instead of using the term non-antagonistic contradiction (as characterized by Mao Tse Tung). According to Jorge Larrain, all contradictions in society are antagonistic but not all conflicts in society are contradictions. A contradiction necessarily entails two extremes which cannot stand without each other and which negate each other. The conflicts between monopoly capital and competitive capital, between employed and unemployed, between state and monopoly capital clearly do not entail two poles which cannot stand without each other. In other words, the so-called non-antagonistic contradiction is not a contradiction at all. It is not sufficient for one of the poles to be a partial condition of the other pole's existence, for a contradiction requires that each term is defined and becomes intelligible by its relations to the other term. Jorge Larrain (1980), *The Concept of Ideology*, New Delhi.

various religious, caste or ascriptive group. In a multi-ethnic, cultural and linguistic society the specific character of capitalism led to the creation of national market and a Pan-Indian bourgeoisie. But at the same time it could not accommodate the interest of the emerging class fractions constituting the ruling class at the regional level. Moreover this capitalism has shown no signs of developing the secular and democratic consciousness and has been marked by its historical incapacity to destroy feudal elements. This led to the struggle for an all round democratic and secular advancement of different national streams on the one hand and on the other it provided a necessary condition for the growth and consolidation of linguistic or cultural or religious monoliths.

Communalism, therefore, can be seen as one of the instruments of the ruling class politics to blur the real contradictions and derives its life force from the conflicts inherent in the contradictions of the specific form of capitalist development and from reservoir of mistrust and suspicion prevalent amongst various religious or caste groups.

According to Randhir Singh, “Communalism in Contemporary India, as ideology and practice is above all, an aspect of the politics of the ruling classes in a society. With a massive feudal colocial inheritance, deep religious divisions and undergoing its own, historically specific form of capitalist development.”

The conflicts arising out the specific nature of capitalist development are conditioned by the contradiction inherent in the Indian society. Communalism is not a direct manifestation of contradiction and is not a total ideology. The function of communal ideology is to conceal the real character of the conflicts by providing mystified “motives” and “banners” and mis-placed target. For example, the conflict between big and small capital and between landlord and capitalist farmers; between well entrenched and emerging traders and between employment and unemployment has been often concealed by communal ideology under the cover of religious and caste conflicts in India. It is necessary to point out that religion derives its life force from the contradictions inherent in the specific socio-economic conditions. Religion is an inverted consciousness produced by an inverted reality. The distinction between communalism being a product of conflicts which are conditioned by contradictions and religion being a direct product of contradictions is an analytical distinction. Communalism can be said to be a distortion of an inversion. The struggle against communalism, if launched as a part of political programme of working class struggle, will de-mystify ‘motives’, ‘banners’ and misplaced target of the conflicts. These, in turn, shall help in understanding the basic contradictions of the Indian social system.

The internal conflicts arising out of competition for the markets within industrial capital and within the merchant and agrarian capital have taken a

communal form of competition. For instance, there is a dominance of low productivity small scale industrial units in Punjab. These small scale units have been at a disadvantageous position while competing with the products produced by medium and large scale units in the market can be seen in terms of their share in the paid up capital, value added etc. Besides this, medium and large industries show a fairly steady and high rate of profits, while that of small scale industries has been less and fluctuating. Internal conflicts between small scale industries and large industries arising out of competition for market has imparted its own communal character. This illustration of Punjab should be seen in the overall context of the nature of industrial development in India since 1947. An analysis of the industrial structure of India reveals a keen competition between big and small capitalists. The dominance of big factories in the market can be seen in terms of their share in paid up capital, value added by the manufacturing industries etc.[10] Besides this the medium and large industries show a fairly steady and high profit rate while the profit rate of small industries has been fluctuating and is less as compared to that of medium and large industries. Government policy, though claiming to create conditions for the wider distribution of capital among small scale entrepreneurs, has failed to do so. This fact illustrates the stronger hold wielded by big capitalists on the institutions and the agencies of the government. As a consequence of this, the surplus, which has accumulated with the capitalist farmers and trading companies at the regional level, is put at a disadvantageous position to emerge as small or big industrial corporations. The emerging agrarian and trading interests at the regional level often project their disadvantageous position as a discrimination against the caste of religion to which they belong. This discrimination is said to be perpetrated by the Central government or other similar governing authority which is projected as a representative of the allegedly antagonistic caste, religious or regional group.

Not only this, in Punjab, the growth of agriculture created surpluses in the hands of capitalist farmers and rich peasants which flowed out of the confines of agriculture. The rural rich felt the need for fresh avenues of investment and began to branch out into trade in agricultural products, trade in general and small and medium industry. The lopsided character of economic development in general and industrial development in particular could provide only limited opportunities for investment in industry and trade, leading to intense competition among those already entrenched in these sectors and those

[10] Ranjit Sau (1981), *India's Economic Development,* Orient Longman, New Delhi.
Ajit Roy (1976), *Monopoly Capitalism in India,* Maya Prakashan, Calcutta. S.L. Shetty, (1982) "Industrial Growth and Structure as seen through annual Survey of Industries", *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 2.

wanting to enter. Both found it convenient to appeal to communal sentiments to mobilize the people and thus influence the political power wielders.

Further the conflict between well-entrenched traders and emerging traders quite often tends to perpetuate communal cleavages particularly when class distinctions coincide with religious group affiliations. For instance, in Mau (in eastern U.P) there are around 138 yarn merchants out of whom 20 are wholesalers.[11] Amongst the retailers there has been a considerable increase in the numbers of traders during the past 10 years or so. Most of the new entrants in the yarn trade happen to be Muslims. These new entrants were weavers working on self-owned powerlooms and benefitted from the boom in nylon saree production during 1980-83 and the expanding market for powerloom products, mainly lungis.[12] Established traders in yarn perceived the emergence of the new traders as a threat to their profit. Some of them genuinely believed and others deliberately propagated that the new entrants had been facilitated by Gulf money and support by weavers who also happened to be Muslims. It is interesting that none of the established traders mentioned the fluctuations in yarn output and speculation arising thereof as a cause for the emergence of a few new traders or the eclipse of a few established ones.[13]

The internal conflict arising out of competition for market acquires a communal character of competition and antagonism. This is possible when caste or religious group differences overlap with class distinctions, communal politics is at a high pitch, religiosity is being promoted in the absence of an organized effort to remove fatalism, obscurantism, superstition etc. and of course, due to the specific socio-culture history of people. The lopsided character of economic development in general and industrial development in particular has inhibited opportunities for investment in industry and trade, leading to an intense competition among those already entrenched in these sectors and those wanting to enter them. Both find it convenient to make an appeal to communalism in order to mobilize the people and thus throw political power in the scale. Even if the interests of this emerging agrarian sections, as a consequence of dependence through linkages, requirement for market, etc. converge with those of the well-entrenched industrialists, it would be wrong to conclude that the emerging agrarian and well-entrenched

[11] There are almost 40,000 weavers and around 20,000 handlooms in and around Mau. The handlooms are owned by weavers themselves and almost every household of 'Ansari Muslims' have at least one handloom.
[12] The share of the decentralized sector in the total cloth output in India has increased from 20.40 per cent in 1951 to 30.40 per cent in 1961, 46.20 per cent in 1971 and 61 per cent in 1981. Within the decentralized sector, the powerloom sector contributes more than handloom sector. The handloom sector has been producing less than its targets during successive five years plans. During the Sixth Plan production of hand-woven cloth has been 3,300 million meters against the target of 4,100 million meters.
[13] For details see Report on communal Violence & Its Impact on Development & National Integration in Uttar Pradesh, CRRID, Chandigarh, 1985 (unpublished)

industrial interest might work together for the cause of secularization and democratization of Indian society. This subject requires deep study.

Another conflict i.e. between unemployment and employment has also contributed to the growth of communalism. For instance, out sample survey in 1986 of five large scale industries in Kota town revealed that out of 5039 workers only 0.37 per cent were Muslims. It was alleged that these industrialists particularly Sri Ram and J.K. Industries do not employ Muslims even though they have necessary weaving and engineering skills. It is possible that some of the managements of industrial groups may be employing their co-religionist or members of their own caste groups while discriminating against others. Such discrimination is a result of the pervasiveness of communal ideology and therefore should be opposed.

Further it is also interesting to note that sometimes data on religious groupwise distribution of jobs are used to reinforce the feeling of discrimination. For instance, in Maunath bhanjan a small town in eastern Uttar Pradesh it was mentioned that no worker from the Muslim religious group found employment in the two spinning mills because they were owned by 'Hindus'. This propaganda has carried conviction among the pauperized or unemployed sections of Muslims and led to the reinforcement of communal leadership. Whereas, the self-employment as weavers of a majority of the members of the Muslim religious group was the main cause of their relative absence from the spinning mills.

The issues like unemployment and employment are used by communalists which leads to their acceptance among co-religionists because it benefits certain individuals to corner jobs, licenses, permits etc.

The growing unemployment often contributes to the perception of deprivation and discrimination along communal lines. The specific nature of economic development has generated demand for certain skills. Employment opportunities had a differential impact on various social groups since skills were unevenly distributed among these groups. Communalists conveniently overlook the fluctuations in economy and the dependence of recognition or devaluation of skills on market mechanism. They always demand re-allocation of scarce job opportunities on caste or religious basis and in the process strengthening the irrational belief that society is organized on the basis of caste, religious, linguistic or regional group identities. The fact is that communalism can at most favour or discriminate against individuals but cannot create fresh job opportunities. It cannot resolve the problem of unemployment or cause recognition of specific skills in the labour market on which employment so largely depends.

The conflict between the locals and the migrants has contributed to the growth of communalism. This conflict derives its life force from increasing competition for jobs, licenses etc. and to have an access or control over political power and economic benefits. The main thrust of this conflict is to protect the interests of the local emerging middle classes and dominant agrarian-interests. For instance, in Maharashtra, upto the mid-seventies migrant merchant manufacturers, small traders, industrial workers who happen to the Ansaris, Pathans and Sheikhs from amongst the Muslims and Bhoi, Urpi, Gujarati, Sindhi from amongst the Hindus were projected as usurpers by their counterpart local Maratha-Kunbi competitors. But later on Shiv Sena used communalism to protect not only local Maratha rich peasants and big industrialists, but also the migrant Marwari and Gujarati Hindu big industrial magnates. Bal Thackeray the Shiv Sena leader observed: 'those who give a livelihood to Marathi are our, let them be either Tata or Birla, who cares'. Therefore, the communal thinking and practice adversely affected the interests of migrant Muslim workers.

Further, in Punjab the conflict between the local and the migrant labour has been used to have a better bargain for political power. With the influx of the migratory labour, the local labour is finding it difficult to bargain in the labour Market. The factional politics within Akali Dals has sharpened this conflict. The leadership of one faction raised the demand of disenfranchisement of migrant labour, which was resisted by rich peasant-lobby. This demand was articulated to win over the support of small and marginal peasant and local landless labour. But this faction did not talk about the ouster of migrant labour, although a few pro-Khalistan leaders have. They were of the view that migrant labourers are Hindus and they will never side with the cause of Khalistan, therefore, they must be thrown out. However, factional fight within the Akali Dal tried to communalize the issue, but they did not raise the extreme demand because the ouster of cheap labour would have meant less profit for big and medium land-owning strata. It would have also resulted into the differentiation of peasantry in politics and in turn weaken the appeal of religion which helps them to project the interest of the rich peasantry as those of the whole Sikh community.

The conflict between local and migrant labour has been used to sharpen the polarization between trade unions, having their basis in religions in Ahmedabad and Vadodra in Gujarat. Migrants constitute around forty eight per cent and forty one per cent of the population in the urban agglomerations of Ahmedabad and Vadodra respectively. Majority of the migrants from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan happened to be Hindus and majority of the local labourers happened to be Muslims. These workers were skilled or semi-skilled employed in various industrial units. The workers retrenched by the textile mill

owners were mainly Muslims who perceived migrants to be their main enemy and vice-versa.

The recession in the textile industry and consequently, the retrenchment of workers was encouraged on communal lines by the industrialists to have industrial peace. The communalization of this issue adversely affected the interests of the migrant labour.

The internal conflict arising out of competition for market acquires a communal form of competition and antagonism. This is possible when caste or religious group differences overlap with class distinctions, communal politics is at a high pitch, religiosity is being promoted in the absence of an organised effort to remove fatalism, obscurantism, superstition and of course, due to the specific socio-cultural history of people. The development of capitalism in India is retarded in so far as its actual development falls short of its potential. This non-realization of the potential is conditioned primarily by the political and social structure of India and also to a significant extent, by the dominating effect of advanced capitalism. The slow and retarded development of capitalism in India has limited the capacity of the social system to meet the needs and aspirations of the people. This limitation is felt by the liberal and democratic forces in their efforts to exercise their autonomy for the mobilization of people along non-communal or secular lines. Further, the lack of political will of the ruling classes to decommunalize Indian society has aggravated the problem. Factions among these classes have been using communalism in an opportunistic manner to further their narrow ends. For example, the tendency of big capitalists in India is to maximize their profits by centralization of the capital and speculation coupled with their dependence on trading and farming interests. Those who acquire and maintain a social, economic and political hegemony by using traditional institutions and value patterns for private profits and for electoral purposes are less inclined to play the historically progressive role which their counterparts played in the west.

From this it can be inferred that communalism is not utterly disconnected with objective conditions. Communalism has an appeal among sections of people as communalists raise the genuine demands of people like more employment, some security against competition by way of subsidies, fresh opportunities for economic well-being by way of licenses, quotas, permits etc. But communalists raise these demands on the basis of ascriptive group categories like caste, religion and region and not merit, comparative need etc. Besides, communalists do not ask for the dissolution of the conditions which create scarce socio-economic opportunities and the resultant competition. Instead, they seek a re-allocation of scarce jobs, subsidies, quotas, licences, etc., so as to favour the leaders of the pressure groups organized on communal lines. Hence, it can be seen that communalists raise social problems but interpret

them in a distorted manner and suggest solutions to social problems which are false in premise, opportunist in approach and retrogressive in impact.

Communalism does benefit the individual aspirants for High Court judgeship, Vice-Chancellorship or Directorship of a hospital, applicants for other white-collar and blue-collar jobs, and also seekers for licences and quotas. These individual gains are short-term and in no way benefit the whole religious groups in whose name they are sought. Those who fail to gain are naturally discontented. This discontentment is a result of scarce resources, distributive injustice, etc. and not because one 'community' is competing against another for its own betterment or other's detriment. However, communal propaganda by communal, religious and political leaders seeks to give a colour to this struggle between or amongst classes as one between 'communities'.

Since communal ideology has social appeal, the electoral tactics adopted by most of the political parties has a communal content. It arouses expectations on communal lines which cannot be realize within the existing socio-economic structure. Non-realization of such expectations reinforces the belief that a particular religious group is being discriminated against. The sense of discrimination gets confirmed when it receives the support of the polity or at least neutrality and passivity of political groups or institutions or agents of the state. In most of the recent communal riots this fact has become more apparent and glaring. The incidents in Delhi, Bhiwandi, Malegaon, Indore, Hyderabad and various other areas prove this point beyond doubt.

Conditions and Manifestations of Communalism

Communal tensions are generated by the nature of socio-economic and political process. But they are imparted a communal colour by communal stereotypes, distorted version of history, religiosity operational and unascertainable beliefs. These are pregnated with notions having sense of discrimination, deprivation and hatred for other religious, caste or ethnic groups perceived to be antagonistic. These notions have their basis in larger assumptions of social living and way of life. Therefore, it is necessary to understand and analyse these notions in their proper social, cultural and historical context.

The strategy to counter these notions must, therefore, question the basic assumptions from which they derive their life-force. For instance, the content of communalism has its basis in the understanding that societies are organized around religious and caste lines. A crisis of social and economic nature is interpreted by communalists to be specific to religious groups. In other words, social problems, political and economic issues are projected as matters concerning caste or religious groups. In a situation where caste and religious

group identities overlap with secular identities the task of communal ideology becomes easier.

The following are the main manifestations and sufficient conditions for the growth of communalism:

(a) Communal stereotypes, educational practices and demonstrative religiosity;
(b) Print Media – reinforcing communal outlook;
(c) Communal Politics: the main propagator and consumer of communalism.

Communal Stereotypes, Educational Practices and Demonstrative Religiosity

Communal stereotypes are used to build up a collective ascriptive based identity. This identity is fashioned through social and political discourse. The main focus of this discourse is to reinforce the belief that the basic need of a communal monolith is to reclaim its history, culture and glory having its basis in ascriptive framework of social analysis. In other words, the emphasis is to reclaim the control over those symbols, myths and legends which multiply communal cleavages and these are used to find answer and solutions to the problems and issues having their basis in the contemporary socio-economic and political realities.

The political strategy, envisioned is not transformational in nature. It reinforces and perpetuates existing inequalities. The gradations on the basis of communal categories blur the structure of inequalities – the cleavages of political, social and economic nature. This process strengthens communal monoliths and conceal the structural inequalities. These monoliths constitute social and political reality – of a sort; but of a sort only. Because communal monoliths are torn between the pragmatic acceptance and so far ineffective rejection by the specific path of capitalist development and secular perceptions. On the contrary, communal fragmentation help to maintain the existing order. It keeps divided the forces which can challenge and question the forces of status quo.

Therefore, communal forces try to strengthen and reinforce the communal monoliths by inciting fears and insecurities among their respective support base. This is also achieved by taking the communal propaganda of the rival communalists to one's own support base. The propaganda is imbued with hatred and antagonistic assertions.

Invariably, communal propaganda has resulted in the formation of certain stereotypes, some of which are broadly common amongst sections which may be victims of elements of communal ideology or may be suing this ideology or may only have inculcated some elements of this ideology.

The communal stereotypes widely prevalent among sections of the Hindu religious group are as follows"-

(a) Muslims believe in one god and one Book and are more organized. They are unreasonable, fundamentalist and fanatical.

(b) Muslims eat meat, are hot-blooded, keep at least big knives (and other deadly weapons too) and are initiators of communal violence which takes place in India. They derive their strength for violent assertions from tenets of Islam such as 'Jihad against Kafirs'.

(c) Muslims are tribal in their outlook and to them religion is above everything etc. They unite in politics and organize their housing in clusters on the basis of their religion.

(d) Muslims are unhygienic, uneducated and unhealthy as they show no interest in the development of civic amenities and health and educational facilities. Islam is an unscientific religion.

(e) Muslims are immoral and polygamous. They want to numerically outnumber Hindus through conversions and violation of the small family norm and establish another Pakistan in India.

(f) Muslims are disloyal and unpatriotic. They are converting lower caste Hindus and purchasing real estate at the behest and with the financial support of Gulf countries.

Stereotypes prevalent amongst sections of the Muslims religious group were as follows:

(a) Hindus are money-minded. They are always looking for ways of making money through any means. They charge interest on money, which is not permissible by our religion. While we impart moral teaching to our children, the Hindus teach their young ones the methods of spinning money.

(b) Hindus are untrustworthy. They always work towards their narrow self-interests and can do it at anybody's cost, even their own kith and kin. They are divided amongst themselves. Casteism is a proof of this and their selfish nature.

(c) Hindus consider themselves to be superior. They do not interact with us. They do not like the idea that we must come at par with them and hence wherever Muslims improve economically they conspire to riot.

(d) The administration is dominated by Hindus and is unfair to us. Even in a rioting situation we are at the receiving end from the administration. Development schemes don't benefit us, Government jobs are not given to us and all this is due to the Hindu character of the administration.

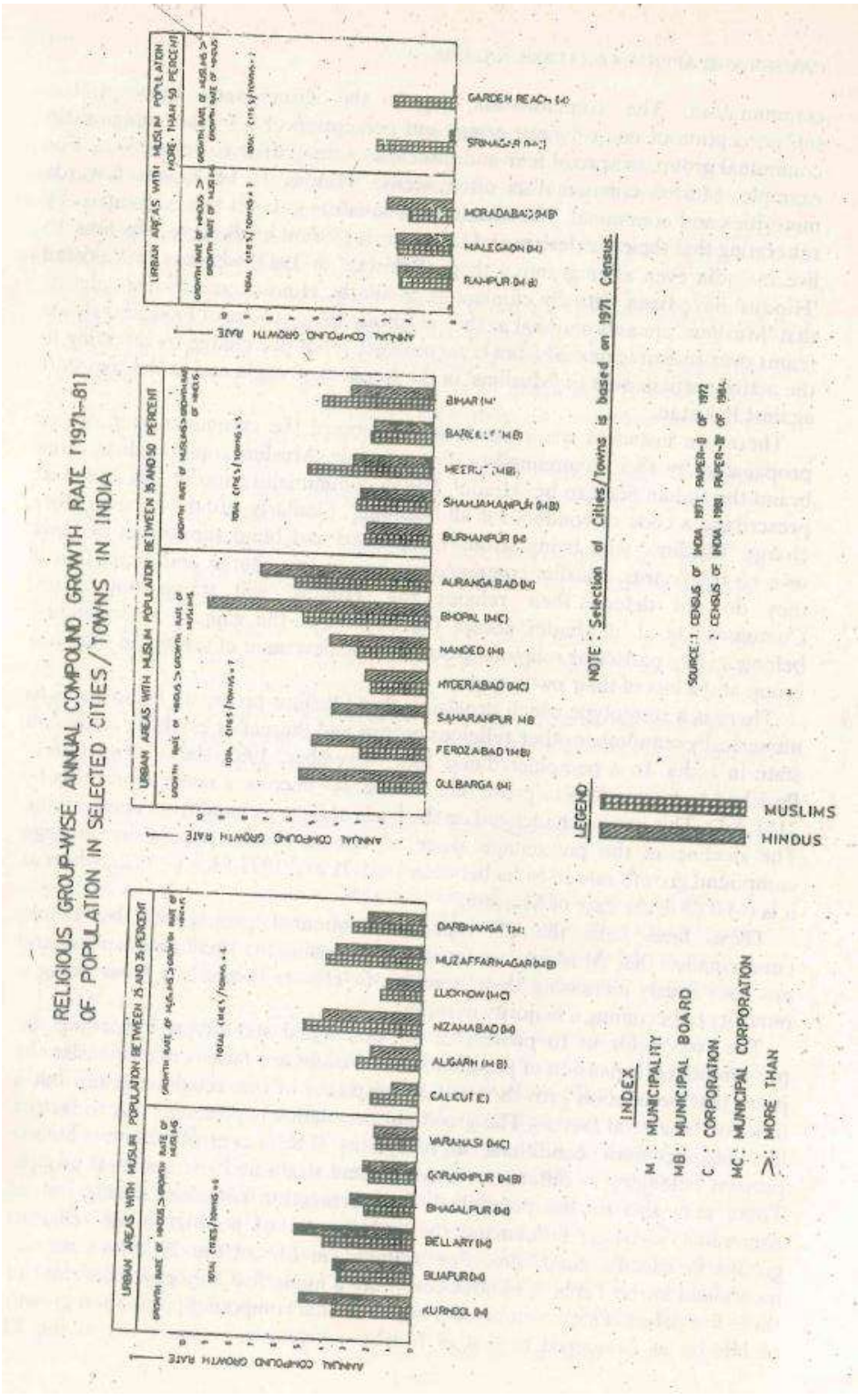
These stereotypes feed and fatten religious groups identities, i.e. communalism. The communalists exploit the discrepancy between the self-perception of one religious group and perception of it by the antagonistic communal group, to spread fear and insecurity among their co-religionists. For example, Muslim communalists often accuse 'Hindus' to be vicious towards minorities and communal. The Hindu communalists counter this accusation by reiterating that their secularism and tolerance is evident in allowing 'Muslims' to live in India even after granting them 'Pakistan' in 1947, whereas in Pakistan 'Hindus' have been virtually eliminated. Similarly, Hindu communalists charge that 'Muslims' are anti-national as they celebrate the victories of Pakistani sports teams over Indian teams. Muslim communalists rebut this charge by referring to the active participation of 'Muslims' in the freedom struggle and in the two wars against Pakistan.

There are instances when communalists accept the communal stereotypes propagated by rival communalists. For example, Muslim communalists often brand the Indian State to be 'Hindu'. Hindu communalists accept this and start prescribing a code of conduct for all 'Muslims'. Similarly Hindu communalists charge 'Muslims' with being strongly organised and blind supporters of their own co-religionists. Muslim communalists accept this charge and claim that if they do not defend their religion the 'Hindus' will stamp out Islam. Communalists of all shades accept the belief that the gain of an individual belonging to a particular religious group is an achievement of the whole religious group and a loss of their own group.

There is a stereotype which proclaims that Muslims procreate faster so as to numerically outnumber other religious groups and thereafter establish a Muslim state in India. In a pamphlet dated 16th November, 1983, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad highlights data to prove that Hindus will become a minority in India by 2151 A.D. This can be challenged on the basis of facts gleaned from census data. The decline in the percentage share of annual Hindu population average compound growth rate in India between 1961-71 and 1971-81 is (-) 0.20, whereas it is (-) 0.63 in the case of Muslims.

These facts belie the oft repeated communal propaganda by Hindu communalists that 'Muslims' are fanatically opposing the small family norm and are consciously increasing their numbers to elevate themselves from being a minority to becoming a majority in India.

The reason for us to prove that the communal stereotypes regarding the pre-meditated expansion of population by Muslims are false is to emphasise the point that population growth is not a conspiracy of one religious group but a function of several factors. The growth of population is primarily due to factors like socio-economic conditions and receptivity of birth control


RELIGIOUS GROUP-WISE ANNUAL COMPOUND GROWTH RATE (1971-81)
OF POPULATION IN SELECTED CITIES/TOWNS IN INDIA
URBAN AREAS WITH MUSLIM POPULATION BETWEEN 25 AND 35 PERCENT
URBAN AREAS WITH MUSLIM POPULATION BETWEEN 35 AND 50 PERCENT
URBAN AREAS WITH MUSLIM POPULATION MORE THAN 50 PERCENT
ANNUAL COMPOUND GROWTH RATE
DARBHANGA (M)
MUZAFFARNAGAR (MB)
LUCKNOW (MC)
NIZAMABAD (M)
ALIGARH (MB)
CALICUT (C)
VARANASI (MC)
GORAKHPUR (MB)
BHAGALPUR (M)
BELLARY (M)
BIJAPUR (M)
KURNOOL (M)
BIHAR (M)
BAREILLY (MB)
MEERUT (MB)
SHAHJAHANPUR (MB)
BURHANPUR (M)
AURANGABAD (M)
BHOPAL (MC)
NANDED (M)
HYDERABAD (MC)
SAHARANPUR MB
FEROZABAD (MB)
GULBARGA (M)
GARDEN REACH (C)
SRINAGAR (MC)
MORADABAD (MB)
MALEGAON (M)
RAMPUR (M B)
NOTE : Selection of Cities/Towns is based on 1971 Census.
SOURCE : 1 CENSUS OF INDIA, 1971, PAPER-2 OF 1972
2 CENSUS OF INDIA, 1981 PAPER-3 OF 1984.
LEGEND
MUSLIMS
HINDUS
INDEX
M : MUNICIPALITY
MB : MUNICIPAL BOARD
C : CORPORATION
MC : MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
> : MORE THAN

measures among persons belonging to different classes, income strata and occupational groups. There may also be the possibility of a persecution complex, arising out of communal ideology, influencing the growth rate of population of religious groups in specific conditions. For example, in five of the 29 urban centers mentioned in the Table 1, Hindus constitute a numerical minority. Three out of these five urban centers witnessed a higher annual compound population growth of Hindus as compared to that of Muslims. Similarly, in seven out of the 12 urban centers where Muslims constitute 35 per cent to 50 per cent of the total population, the annual compound growth rate of the Hindu population was comparatively higher. Finally, six out of the remaining 12 urban centers where Muslims constituted less than 35 per cent but more than 25 per cent of the population also experienced a higher annual compound growth rate of the population of Hindus (See Table 1).

So, while the communal stereotype about a 'Muslim conspiracy' to increase 'their' population at a faster pace is denied by facts on the one hand, the influence of a communal ideology and the sense of fear and a persecution complex on the rate of population growth can be hypothesized on the other.

The failure of persons to agree to use birth control methods is related to the extent of the prevalence of fatalism, poverty etc. among them but not to the religion they profess. Nevertheless, communalists project the problems of human under-development as communal traps laid to destroy their co-religionists by religious groups perceived to the antagonistic. Communal propaganda, therefore, prepares the ground for increasing the plausibility of solution like the 'elimination' or 'expatriation' of the religious group perceived to be antagonistic.

In this way communal stereotypes aggravate fears, suspicions and mistrust between religious groups. The individuals who fall prey to c0ommunal ideology or some of its elements, seek refuge in religious group identities and also start reinforcing them by propagating communal ideology. Most of the persons who are over-religious begin presuming that communalism is protecting their endangered religious group identities. The consequence of the process leads to the maintenance and promotion of religious group identities. The emphasis of communalism is on religious practices, festivals, processions etc. In fact, it is not religion as an ideology which imparts passion and intensity to communalism. It is demonstrative and aggressive religiosity which forms a major plank of communalism and makes it politically effective.

Demonstrative religiosity refers to a deep and intense emotional involvement with merely ritualistic aspects of religion and a tendency to generate competition on celebration of religious festivals among members of different religious groups and to underscore the universal economic and political

interests of the unequal members of one religious group and these are projected as antagonistic to the members of other religious groups.

This kind of religiosity is the organizing principle commonly used by communalists. Repeated assertions regarding differences in religious practices and beliefs are elements which go into the making of communal identities. Every time a religious procession is disrupted or the public performance of religious practices is interfered with by rival communalists or even miscreants, these identities are projected to be in danger. Such frequent projections of danger further cement communal monoliths.

It has been observed that in the past religious celebrations were performed in places of worship without much fanfare. Lately communalists and vested interests started using religion to organize the people. Religious celebrations are conducted through huge processions with great pomp and show. For instance, between 1976 and 1984 at Maunath bhanjan in eastern Uttar Pradesh number of Mohalla level Durga Puja Samitis have increased from one to nineteen and each of these Samitis instals its own Durga idol. Tajias on Moharram are also taken out in grand processions. These religious processions ostensibly become the immediate provocation for communal tensions to surface.

The celebrations of traditional festivals of the Hindus (like Shiv Ratri, Teej, Gangaur, Makar Sankranti, Dassera, Krishna Ashtami, Holi etc.) and of the Muslims (like Moharram, id-ul-Isha, Idul-ad-ul-Nabi etc.) often generate communal tensions. For instance, saffron flags were hoisted on Shivaji Jayanti all over Bhiwandi in 1984 and green flags were put in same town at all places on the day of Shab-e-Barat. These flags were seen and projected as a provocation challenging the honour of their religion. It is spirit and manner of celebrating these festivals as manifestations of the religio-political strength of a particular group which cause tension rather than the celebration of religious festivals per se. The celebration of religious festivals if appears is prompted by and further strengthens elements of communalism.

The fanfare and pomp with which any religious festival is organized leads to a competitive response from persons claiming to represent other religious group. A result of such a competition is that members of different religious groups perceive their interests to be similar with their co-religionists and different from members of other religious groups. The impact of their efforts lead to the sharpening of religious group identities and the emergence of ‘community leaders’ who are expected to protect and promote ‘Hindu interests’, ‘Muslim interests’ and so on.

Our field surveys indicate that most of the members of both the religious groups have blind faith in God. They uncritically accept, follow the religious

values, rituals and traditions of their own religious group and condemn the values, rituals and tradition of other religions. Such is the extent of religiosity that it restricts intermixing between the members of different religious groups and thereby provides the ground for inculcating elements of communalism.

These distortions have been present in the society. They have been reflected in the formal as well as informal education practices. The constant reinforcement and sharpening of these distortions by the educational practices has proved legitimacy and in the process it increased its appeal amongst the people.

Then elements of communalism reflected in both formal and informal educational apparatus hammer that the believers in Islam are culturally inferiors and politically and socially aliens. However, the formal educational practice has been projecting Muslims as invaders, despoilers of temples and culturally inferiors. Whereas, the non-formal educational practices has been emphasising the antagonism between the believers of Hinduism and Islam in extreme form. In other words, at the popular level, literature sold for easy reading and the oral traditions tend to reinforce the antagonisms between religions. In this process impurity of other religion is fabricated and propagated. For instance, the distortions orally transmitted were published in the literature sold cheaply. An extract is being cited from a pamphlet entitled 'Rangila Rasul' published in 1920s which is still in wide circulation.

> Mohammad got married. He married many times. He contracted all types of marriages. He married virgins also. He enjoyed all types of marriages. He not only understood the good and evil of marriages but experienced them also. Mohammad's life is instructive, full of sermons and prayers, indeed Mohammad was a mentor (translated from Hindi).

This provocation was not the only one and, probably because of its sarcastic and venomous nature, it did not go unnoticed. The fanatics among the Muslims issued a rejoinder under the title 'Mukadas (or pure) Rasul'. Commenting on 'Rangila Rasul' Hazarat Ulomi of Deoband in district Sharanpur, said:

> "Rangila Rasul" is a proof of Arya Samaj's civilized behavior and of the regard Aryans have for truth. The book is imbued with the famous attribute of the Samaj's literature that it hurts feelings, is harshly written, is dishonest and is blind in hatred.
>
> The teachings of the first Guru of the Samaj, called Swami Dayanand, come out clearly in this book. That such a dirty and

> stinking composition comes from an Aryan is not surprising at all. However, it is very surprising that even after seeing such damaging and indecent sentences against their 'Pure Rasul' the Muslims have not reacted (translated from Urdu).14

It is clear from the above that popular literature published for easy reading bore imprint of communal rivalry and antagonism. Similarly there has been literature which painted the Hindu deities in darkest possible colours. 'Ram ki paheli' authored by B.R.Ambedkar, which is quite widely circulated, accuses a Hindu deity, i.e. Rama to be lustful, alcoholic etc.[15]

There are many other numerous instances of the propagation of irrational beliefs, strengthening of communal stereotypes and mis-representation of historical events. For example, in Fathepur guide, the following passages are instances of the strengthening communal stereotypes:

> The elder son of the third Nawab of Fatehpur was called Nahar Khan who had got built an exceptionally beautiful place… During the period, the routes to Amer-Jaipur, Jodhpur, Hissar etc., lay through Fatehpur. On these routes Nahar Khan had posted sixteen Kayamkhanis to remove the veil from the face of woman taking these routes and send them to the said place in case they were beautiful.[16]

The guide presents a communal incident of 1927-28 AD among the 'special events of Fatehpur'. The presentation of such an incident in a naive manner, is bound to stoke the fires of communalism. The narrated incident is as follows:

> A difference arose between Hindus and Muslims in Samvat 1983 over the route of Tajias. The Tajias used to be taken out (in procession) in front of the Temple of Laxminathji, Temple of Bad-ke-Balaji and Kutign Badi. Then Hindus wanted the closure of this route. This year on the fifth day following seven sudin 15 at 12 'O clock the Tajias were taken out on the same route. The following year 1984 (Samvat) this route was closed for all times by Shri Ramsut. With the grace of God Laxminathji, a big struggle (and heavy) bloodshed was averted. But it continued within the heart. It was expressed in the form of boycott. The boycott continued for one and half year.[17]

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[14] *Mukadas Rasul* Roznama Bargive Press, Amritsar.

[15] B.R. ambedkar (1963) *Ram Ki Paheli.* Buddhist Publishing House, Jalandhar, See also Shambuk Muni (1984) *Ram Rajya Nyaya Natak* for similar inflammatory material.

[16] Devkinandan Khedwal (Vikram Samvat 2033) *Fatepur Guide,* pp.9-10.

[17] Ibid.,p.7.

In another book 'Rajasthan ka Prachin Itihas' written by a local resident of Sikar district the historical narration is based on "epics and popular beliefs of the people."[18] This historical narration ubiquitously interprets historical events with a definite communal bias. An uncautious reader of this book will believe that history is nothing but religious conflicts, the story of building and destroying temples etc. Following are a few instances from the said book.

> "In the temple of Srinath, the idol was brought from Brij in fear of attacks from Muslims and established in Mewar".[19]
>
> "The Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya established in Ajmer by Chauhan Vigarh Raj was broken by Muslims and converted into a Masjid".[20]

"Many ancient temples were broken by Aurangzeb in 1735 Samvat. Sujan Singh and many other Shekawati Rajputs gave their lives in protection of the temples".[21] There is a mention also of Aurangzeb attacking and destroying temples of Jeenmata and Harshnath in Sikar district.[22]

Similarly, certain communally-interpreted stories form a part of orally transmitted history. These stories have no historical evidence or documentation but are a part of the oral tradition of folklore. They are preserved as legends from one generation to another by word of mouth with distortions creeping into its text every now and then.

In a developing society certain virtues are attributed to education. The fetishization of education and the elements of communal ideology in it alleviate every educated person as a responsible member of society and consequently provide legitimacy to communal ideas which a person has acquired in the process of learning.

A small sample survey was conducted of school-going children between 10 and 14 years of age to examine the extent of penetration of communalism and the intensity of the appeal of communal ideas.[23]

The main findings of this sample survey consisting of 150 respondents belonging to both religious groups and studying in 40 schools were:-

(a) Religious identity appears to overshadow all other identities among children. In response to the question regarding their primary identity

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[18] Devinandan Khedwal (Samwat 2033) *Rajasthan ka Prachin Itihas,* Fatehpur, p.10.
[19] Ibid., p.58.
[20] Ibid., p.56.
[21] Ibid., p.37.
[22] Ibid., pp.38-39.
[23] For details see, Report of *Communal violence and Its Impact on Development and National Integration* (Malegaon and Thane) 1985, CRRID, Chandigarh (unpublished);
Zehra Zaidi (1990), 'Formation of Communal Ideological Concepts', *Science & People,* Vol.2, No.1, pp.20-24.

most of the respondents (i.e. around 80 per cent) revealed their religion and not their name, region or section/strata/class to which they belonged.

(b) Children have absorbed rudimentary communal ideas and express hatred against members of the religious groups other than their own. Most of the respondents who happened to be Muslims said that 'Hindus' were superstitious idol worshippers, dishonest and uncouth. Similarly, most of the Hindu respondents said 'Muslims' were dirty, blood, meat eaters and deceitful.

(c) Children maintain considerable social distance from members of the religious group other than their own due to 'strict instructions from parents'.

(d) Children do not celebrate festivals associated with religion other than their own and (what is more surprising) do not mention any national festival (i.e. Independence Day and Republic Day) among the festivals considered important by them.

These views may have been formed by the non-formal educational practices, but the formal teaching is also not inconsistent with this. A cursory glance at the textbooks for schools, reveal that their content violates the very assumptions of scientific study. As is universally acknowledged, science provides a method for looking at issues, events and persons objectively. However, certain portions of the textbooks for schools don't appear to fulfill the criterion of scientific and objective analysis. At certain places, in the history textbooks an impression is created that rulers were motivated in the past to fight with each other mainly after being infuriated by religious prejudices or on being inspired by religious sentiments.

For example, a passage in the book entitled "Apna Bharat" (Tarikh ki pahli kitab) says: "Rana Udai Singh of the Sisodia dynasty was very proud of his Kshatriya status. In defence of religion and freedom he prepared himself to go to war against Akbar…" (translated from Urdu p.81).

Religiosity and fatalism are reinforced in "Sahayak Vachan" textbook included in the syllabus of Class V students in Madhya Pradesh. This textbook states that all positive characters and great men were invariable followers of deities like Shiv, Ganesh, Krishna, Parvati or Naar Devata. The book further propagates the superstition that a crow whose young ones were eaten by a snake and a beggar who could not feed his family were blessed with happiness after they prayed to Lord Ganesh. The wide appeal of Hindu Gods is shown by indicating that even some 'Muslims' worshipped them. "…Allauddin was born

in a poor family. His father was a small peasant who was a worshipper of Lord Shiva.[24]

Yet another passage is particularly offensive as it can arouse immediate emotive reaction due to reference to the Maratha feudal chieftain Shambaji, the son and successor of Chatrapati Shivaji. The passage says:

> Shambaji was produced before Emperor Aurangzeb and Tulapur near Pune, who said that if Shambaji embrace Islam, he will be pardoned. Shambaji was infuriated at this and he replied boldly, "it does not matter if I loose my life, but I shall not disown my beloved religion. On hearing this reply, Aurangzeb ordered the execution of Shambaji…Shambaji sacrificed his life for the sake of his religion. This sacrifice is unparalleled and it immortalized Shambaji.25

Such kind of examples can be gleaned from various textbooks prescribed for students of different standards in the state of India. Such interpretation of history tend to colour the past because of the animosities generated due to the contemporary socio-economic and political conditions. The rulers in the ancient and medieval period did not represent popular will nor the welfare of the people. These rulers were formulating their policies and practicing polities, which was most conducive to preserve their authority or to expand their kingdoms.

The presentation of national heritage in religious or caste terms is based on the understanding that society was, or continues to be, organized on religious or caste basis. It is also assumed that members of different religions or caste groups in the past have lived a glorious life in an ideal ethos of harmony and spirit of collectivity. Hence, the most widespread values today are condemned as having degenerated by comparing them with nostalgic glorious past. From this it is concluded that mixing of different cultural streams has corrupted the so-called national culture. Therefore, it is propagated that cultural assimilation (bordering with Hindu chauvinism) is the best way of solving the problems relating to morality, degeneration of human values etc.

However, the communal interpretation of history was questioned by various historians. The research which was initiated in mid-60s questioned the use of communal categorization. To quote:

> This was the period when research was initiated on new themes altogether in which communal categories did not enter at all. These were themes like rural class structure,

[24] Bharat Bhushan (1983) "Ustab Allaudin Khan", *Sahayak Vachan,* class V, M.P. Pathya Pustak Nigam, p.21.
[25] *Apna Bharat,* Dooshari Kitab, page 44, (translated from Urdu).

> forms and magnitude of exploitation of medieval Indian peasantry, the significance of zamindars as a class, production technology, trade and commercial organization etc. An important role in this shift of focus was played by research on what came felicitously to be called 'early medieval India' in Professor R.S. Sharma's terminology. This research made two significant contributions: one, it implicitly questioned the earlier clearly communal, periodization which divided medieval from ancient India at 1206 A.D., with the establishment of the Delhi sultanate, for it, again implicitly, opened up the possibility of seeing an extensive continuum of social and economic history from around the seventh or eight to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, even as important changes occurred within the range of this continuum, two, it decisively shifted the emphasis from politico-administrative to socio-economic history, where communal categories in any case lose much of their significance.[26]

Inspite of the fact that there has been serious attempts to provide scientific basis to the writings on Indian history, the media continues to disseminate a communal orientation while reporting historical events as well as other social and political facets of life. For instance, in the daily Rashtradut an item which appeared on November 30, 1985, reads as follows:-

> When Mughal emperor ruled India four hundred and twenty nine years ago, the Hindu society could not raise its voice against the actions of the imperial employees.
>
> At that time the daughters and wives of Hindus were kidnapped from their homes by the emperor and their employees. The Hindus were helpless at that time. In order to overcome their helplessness and anger they used to pour a pitcher of water at the back of the kidnapped women folk and used to pray to God for their pleasant and happy life.

Print Media – Reinforcing Communal Outlook

Newspaper reports use communal and sex issues occasionally to feed the perceptions of readers, while giving little importance to the concomitant responsibility to secularise and democratize society.[27] News is no longer information, but a commodity for sale in the media market.

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[26] Harbans Mukhia (1983), op.cit.,p.63.

[27] It is very interesting to note that rabidly communal media have a relatively less appeal but the media which feed the existing amorphous consciousness of the people is more widespread. For example the circulation of such openly communal newspapers as Organiser, Sobat, Marmik, Radiance etc. is limited.

The customers of this commodity called information are the upper and middle classes in the 3000 towns and limited upper sections in villages. The perceived demand of these customers is foremost in the minds of the news industry. For example, Amrita Bazar Patrika of Calcutta generally has a more left-oriented Bengali edition and a more centrist English edition. This is so because the Amrita Bazar Patrika wants to cash in on the left sentiment in Bengal as against its rightist competitor, viz. Anand Bazar Patrika.[28] It is observed that the saleability of news items takes precedence over information and social desirability. It might be worthwhile to examine the impact on society of the media industry which is organized on a profit-making basis. For example, in Punjab an incident occurred in which eight passengers of a bus were killed on September 12, 1984, near Udhowal when it was going from Amritsar to Pathankot. Newspapers reported this incident and exaggerated the number of those killed at 20. Besides, newspapers attributed the killings to "Sikh terrorists" when it was actually the task of anti-social elements whose gang leader was a person named Madan Lal.[29]

This news became the pretext for rioting in Dhariwal town of Ferozepur district. Mass media add to elements of communalism already prevalent in the minds of people by describing riots or other conflicts to be a fight between two religious groups rather than between two communal groups.

Not only this, some of the analysts and journalists reinforce fears, insecurities and generate competition for jobs and other economic and political benefits on communal basis by highlighting data from which they prove discrimination on religious group lines. Many middle class respondents found evidence to prove discrimination on religious group lines in journals like Muslim India, Marmik, Sobat, Organiser etc. This is done in the following manner:

(a) Highlighting the presentation of religious, caste and regional groups in jobs and services. In one of its issues the Muslim India gives elaborate statistics on Muslim representation in different classes of functionaries in High Courts. A High Court judge is treated as a representative of the whole Muslim religious group and his or her appointment is shown to be a service to the religious group to which he or she belongs. The fact is that every Judge is supposed to function according to the provisions of the Constitution and cannot favour criminal who may happen to be his co-religionists. However,

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Similarly, scientific and secular journals, newspapers and books have a circulation of just a few thousands in a country with a population of around 30 crores, out of whom more than one third were listed as literate in the 1981 census.

[28] See Subrata Banerjee (1986) *The Print Media and communalism,* this was circulated in a Six Week Methodology Course to Study Communalism organized by CRRID, Chandigarh.

[29] This issue has been investigated by Brijinder Singh Panwar as a part of his M.Phil. dissertation submitted to Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, in July, 1986.

communalists reinforce the sense of discrimination among their co-religionists by quoting such figures of appointments. Political and other communal groups use this data by feeding to the perception of the people that benefits are distributed on a communal basis. Marmik, in its issues between April and September, 1967, under the editorship of Bal Thackeray and during the period of the Shiv Sena's anti-migrant tirade gave lists of persons who were executives in some industrial establishments and Government departments in Bombay. According to this weekly, 70 per cent of executives in the sampled units of its survey were South Indians, whereas 75 out of the 1500 executives were Maharashtrians. Marmik has since the early eighties, begun using religion as an instrument to spread communal venom and mobilise a wider support base for shiv Sena. For instance, in its issue dated April 1, 1984, Marmik brought out the following passage under the inflammatory heading "Anti-national Activities of Muslim Revivalists".

> To erect or put a statue of a person (Tipu Sultan by Malegaon Municipality) who considered Hindus secondary citizens and persecuted them an encouraged conversion is an anti-national exercise. If we look at the activities of Muslims in either pre-partition or post-partition days is becomes clear that they have always nurtured separatism. They make use of religion to achieve their ultimate aims. If Muslims become a majority, it would not help national integration: on the contrary, it would mean change of nationality (Rashtrantar) and it would slowly but certainly lead to disintegration.

Such propaganda also identifies the causes of deprivation falsely. Whereas discrimination or favouritism resorted to by communalists on the basis of religions or regions is a byproduct of the pervasiveness of communal perceptions. It shall be a gross conceptual error to suggest solutions by taking symptoms like discrimination to be the cause of communalism.

(b) Analysing the presentation of awards of distinguished service to public men and for outstanding performance to artists involved in higher forms of culture on the basis of the religion they may profess. Such an analysis is an out-right aspersion on the excellence and genius, acquired by certain individuals through hard work and training, irrespective of their professed religion. Evidently, such an over enthusiastic analysis, while strengthening the tools of communal ideology further degenerates even communalism to ridiculous proportions.

(c) Quotations from chauvinistic literature and irresponsible statements of communalists are published without offering a secular critique. These quotations or statements feed the fears of the victims of communal ideology.

It is in this way that communalism of one group feeds that of another. To put it differently, communalism is not a reaction or backlash. Instead communal organisations thrive by strengthening each other. For instance, Hindustan (a Hindi daily) dated October 2, 1986, carried the following headline to a report allegedly reproduced from Panchjanya, an RSS mouthpiece:

> Muslim University is the den of raping Hindu women. Hindu women are enticed and converted as a prelude to 'Nikaah'. Pakistan's victory is celebrated and India's victory is mourned (translated from Hindi).

In the same vein, Inquilab dated 17th August, 1986, carried a report allegedly reproduced from Sobat to the following effect:

> …Riot in India should not be termed communal riots because Muslims instigate them. Hence these riots should be called 'Islamic riots'.
>
> …During Muslim rule, the brutal repression, looting and killing of Hindus and humiliation of their women-folk was an Islamic practice (translated from Urdu).

(d) Communal categories are spared while quoting figures on institutions which are commonly believed to have monopolized by different religious groups. For example, Muslim India presented data on Aligarh Muslim University by referring to regional group affiliations and not identifying the strength of students, teachers etc. on religious group lines. Whereas data on Banaras Hindu University was presented by taking religion as a category. Hindu communalists generally interpret this as an attempt by Muslim communalists to hide the gradual elimination of non-Muslims from the University. They further accuse the journal, i.e. Muslim India, of dishonesty by always beating its breast on missed opportunities, but concealing its gain on the availed ones. They think it is confusing that on everything else Muslim India talks of Hindus, Muslims etc. but on AMU it uses other categories like regional groups etc. These reports incite fears and hatred among members of one religious group against members of the other group which is perceived to be antagonistic.

These reports do not help to provide secular persons and institutions with an objective critique of the allegations traded between communalists.

Communal Politics – The Main Consumer of Communalism

Indian politics has been frequently appropriating the existing caste or religious group divisions as reflected in communal stereotypes, distorted version of history, religiosity, unascertainable beliefs which are full of hatred and contempt for any religious, caste or regional group perceived to be

antagonistic.[30] The appropriation of communalism became excessive and blatant during the eighties. Communalism was, no doubt, being appropriated by politics even before eighties. But it was more localized and subtle. It was mainly confined to the electoral arithmetic. During this period, even the Congress party have allied with the communal parties to fight elections and to form governments. Twice – one in 1948 and then again in 1956 – the Akali Dal was allowed to merge with the Congress. The Indian Union Muslim League shared political power in Kerala, in what is called the United Democratic Front. These alliances and concessions provided legitimacy to communalism and disarmed these non-communal political parties from launching an ideological and political struggle against communal forces and communal political parties. During the Janta period (1977-79) some of the leaders of a communal party demanded the NCERT text books on Indian History written by Professor(s) R.N. Sharma, Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra should be proscribed because they make derogatory remarks against Hindus and are sympathetic to Muslims. As a result one textbook i.e. R.S. Sharma's Ancient Indian History was withdrawn in a hush-hush manner.

After the eighties communal politics not only appropriated localised communalism on all-India scale, but initiated a process of communal redefinition of boundaries between the various religious and caste groups. For example, the caste bias of the Mandal Commission report and its use by politics by multiplying caste cleavages have provided a continuity to the caste system. Further the collective response of the upper castes to the Mandal Commission report was equally casteist. This resulted into the formation of new caste alliances. Similarly, the Ram janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue and its appropriation at the national scale by mainstream politics strengthened communal monoliths and resulted in communal polarization. The areas governed by caste or religious ethics and beliefs systems became consistent with the politics pursued by the dominant political parties. This was a departure from the earlier phase in which political and social discourses were not consistent with each other. The interaction was merely confined to using some of the elements of social discourse in the realm of caste and religious ethical and belief systems. For example, the use of notion of Ram Rajya by Gandhi was against colonial domination. Similarly, the Wahabis launched a holy war against landlords and the British colonialists and appealed to Muslims

[30] Politics turns communal if political groups and parties mobilise people by reinforcing such perceptions as: (a) ascriptive groups have separate and antagonistic social and economic interests; (b) these interests can only be safeguarded or achieved by ascriptive groups organizing themselves in the political sphere along religious, caste or other ascriptive lines; (c) privileges and concessions in political and economic spheres are sought and granted by political groups on the basis of the religious groups affiliation of people; (d) communalists are the bona fide representatives of all members of religious or caste groups which they claim to represent; and (e) representation in elected bodies, public employment, getting licences, payment of taxes etc. are/or should be based on religious group identities.

to unite for the defence of their religion. The use of Ram Rajya by Gandhi was a reference to the country's civilization and it transcended the boundaries of caste and religion.

It was not to reinforce religious monoliths. In no way it propagated and projected Ram Rajya as synonymous with the Hindu identity. On the contrary, the recent use of then notion of Ram Rajya was anti-thetical to the Gandhian use of it. The meaning of the term Indian civilization is distorted to mean "Hindu" civilisation. The believers of other religions are projected as culturally inferior, politically and socially aliens. Ram Rajya is used to mean Hindu Rajya and Muslims are projected as enemies and are threatened for their non-compliance with what they project as their worldview. The central thrust of this politics is to bring to the foreground the need for establishing a monolith Hindu identity. Once this identity becomes recognised and established, the VHP believes, it will make a crucial difference in determining the personal, social and institutional relations to the benefit of the so-called 'Hindu Samaj'.

Further it is also argued that political interests of Hindus and the Muslims are not common because we want to establish a Hindu state while 'Muslims' want to create a new Pakistan in India. For instance, Organiser Weekly, English Newspaper published a report on Hindu Solidarity Conference dated 11.3.84. The following resolutions were passed in the conference:

> The Hindu voters all over the country vote only those who openly and publicly promise to work and fight for Hindu interests and defend the Hindu faith. It was very necessary to have a Hindu vote Bank as the Hindu politicians were running after Minorities votes.

In this conference speakers demanded the declaration of India as a Hindu state in the interest of future of India and Hindus. It was felt that only Hindu state could protect the Hindus and not a secular state because the way secularism has practiced in India goes against the interests of Hindus.

A concern was also expressed over so-called fall in the Hindu people and rise in the population of Muslim and Christian and it exhorted the Hindus to boycott family planning. It was alleged that Hindu politicians have done nothing for the Hindus, but had only betrayed their cause. The time has come for the Hindus to assert their rights and vote for those who can protect the interests of Hindus. Similarly, an appeal was issued by Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid Delhi to all Muslim voters to vote for a particular political party for the protection of their interests.

During elections some political activists also raised communal slogans like – 'cow is our sacred mother, Bashr eats cows".[31] He who does not have tuft will not be elected' (jiske churki nahin, uske kursi nahin); 'Hindustan Mein Rahne Hoga to Bande Matram Kahna Hoga', 'Jo Hindu hite ke Batt Keraga, Vohi Desh Raj Karega, constant reinforcement and sharpening of these has made communalism more politically functional. This functional aspect has made politics consistent with social discourse having communal overtones. These trends of politics trying to appropriate the social discourse was visible even during initial years after independence. The concessions were granted to the communal forces. It was suggested that these concessions were out of conceptual error, i.e. the failure to meet communal demands will inflame communalism.

It was thought that by joining hands with communal parties to form government or to fight elections would help subsuming these forces.

Not only this the understanding that when two communal groups join hands, they can accommodate the so-called interest of their co-religionists, was another instance of the practice of communal politics. For example, in Punjab four Akali-Jana Sangh coalition were founded on communal arithmetic, i.e. Akalis represent Sikh interest and Jana Sangh represent Hindu interest.

These coalitions did not succeed. These were a marriage of expediency for the leadership while their ranks, who under the influence of communalism, held each other in deep suspicion and mistrust. To cite another example, in Bhiwandi there is an understanding among political apparatus to elect members from two different religious groups alternately to head to municipality. Despite such an understanding communal rioting continues to take place regularly in Bhiwandi and in fact has become more intense over the years. Indeed, this approach has added to the existing fears, suspicions and hatred leading to unprecedented brutality massacres and burning of human beings during communal riots of 1984 in that powerloom town. The concessions to communalist and communal coalition strengthened communal polarization and attitude.

Besides polity which uses communal ideology as part of electoral politics, some agents of the state may also be influenced by communalism. These agents may discriminate against the members of one or the other religious groups. An IAS officer under the influence of communal ideology may favour individuals belonging to his own religious or caste group. But this favouritism or discrimination is limited to a few individuals and it does not promote or protect the interests of the entire community. The operation of communal ideology among agents of the State may effect developmental plan

[31] Bashr was the Congress candidate from Ghazipur district in the 1984 Parliamentary election.

allocations, the criteria for subsidies and loans, utilization of allocated resources etc. This can, in turn, upset the pace of development. So, it those who implement government policies are influenced by communal ideology and they sometimes are then expected rate of economic growth suffers. This may also contribute, among other things, to communal tensions.

An instance of the agents of the State being influenced by communal ideology can be noticed in the manner FIRs were registered after incidents of violence. The FIRs and their officially released summaries provided communal interpretation to the incidents of violence as illustrated below.

No distinction was made between communalists and other member of the particular religious group on which the communalists may be imposing themselves as leaders. The accused and complainant were identified not as individuals but as members of a particular religious group.[32] Violators of the law and criminals are identified on religious group lines.[33]

It is our contention that these particular passages reflect the prevalence of elements of communalism among the police personnel registering criminal cases. The passages as such, the cases and proceedings initiated on them and decisions taken later are likely to further strengthen the elements of communalism and communal stereotypes among the people at large.

The State has started interfering in non-secular spheres of social activity. Rather than confining itself to protecting religions, it has started promoting them. For instance, in Jaipur a government department known as Devasthan Department has undertaken to train Pujaris. The Devasthan Department was created by the Government of Rajasthan to manage temple affairs. A three-month course for training Pujaris was inaugurated on May 17, 1984, for a batch of 23 serving priests.

Demands of a similar nature could have been raised by other communal, religious groups and political parties. Such a situation will result into the strengthening of communal attitudes. Promotion or acceptance of religious

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[32] For details see FIRs registered in Mongrol Police Station. "Kasba Mongrol Ke Rangbadi ke Balaji ki boundary ko lekar Dinak 24.6.85 ko 6 baje sham ko Hindu Muslim Samudaye ke beech meain appas mein patrao kiye…
Is par Muslim samudaye ke khilaaf Mukadma number 46/85 Dhara 147,148,149,307,324,332,353,435,427, Tajirate Hind darj kiya…
Mukadma number 47/85 dhara 147,148,149,427,436, Tajirate Hind dinak 24.6.85. Hindu samudaye ke Swantantra Kumar, Hari Om Dharampal Vaghera 32 Mulzimaan ke khilaf darz huva.
Mukadma number 46/85 ki ranjish ko lekar Shri Rasool Mohommad, Putra Hafix Mohammed Musalmaan, Bunkar Colony, Niwas Mongrol ke Virudh Hindu Samudaye dware Mukadma number 48/85 dhara 307 Tajirate, Hind darz kiya gaya...

[33] See FIR number 97/81 registered on the said date at Kaithoon Police Station. Dinakh 12.9.81 ko 7.30 pratah S.H.O. Bajrant Singh may japta ke bas stand Kaithoon ke pass pahnooncha aur sadak par khade 50-60 Hinduon ka samooh Dhariye, Gandasi, hatiyan aadi se lace the…(and they were saying that)Aaj Kaithoon ke Musalmano se nipat lo, jo hoga so dekha jayega.

demands raised by communal groups will be counter-productive for communalists will come out with new demands of a similar nature in order to protect and promote their economic and political interests.

It is necessary here to draw a distinction between state, polity and agents of state. The Indian State is the instrument of the dominant classes to maintain their economic and political power. The ruling classes share the ideology of the dominant class in certain specific situations. In a situation where there is no single ruling class, power is shared by classes. Ruling classes therefore have divergent interests. In such a system the state enjoys relative autonomy. The Indian state protects the interests of the ruling classes or strata which comprise rural and industrial bourgeoisie. The classes together may not be interested in using communalism, but a section from amongst these classes may use it. The Indian State is ruled by capital and not by religious and caste groups. The Indian State is a weak secular state but it is not a communal State. The Constitution and its practice reveal this dichotomy. For instance, concessions to ascriptive groups like reservation of jobs in seats in legislature, and the failure to enact a common civil code are clear cut examples of the weak secular character of the Indian State. Similarly, legal dichotomy is expressed in many ways. For example, a candidate's election can be rejected if he or she uses religious symbols during the election campaign under the Representation of the Act. But a political party organized on a religious basis is not disqualified from participation in the political process, including elections. On the other hand, secularism is enshrined in the Preamble and State's non-interference in religious matters guaranteed by the Constitution.

Article 26 (B) of the constitution stipulates that the state shall not interfere in the exercise of the right of religious organization to manage their own affairs in matters "of religion", unless they run counter to public order, health or morality. It is through invoking moral-cum-religious authority that religious institutions should administer their religious affairs rather than through drawing sanction from parliament, which is constitutionally committed to secularism.

Moreover, Article 51(A) says that it shall be the duty of every citizen to develop a scientific temper. Development of the scientific temper involves accepting the method of science for acquiring knowledge and recognising that a scientific attitude dispels dogmas, superstition and obscurantism which are essentially spread in the name of religion.

Political mobilisation, therefore, must take place to promote secularism, scientific temper, democratic consciousness and progressive culture. The state should not promote, administer or interfere in the affairs of religions. Therefore, it is necessary to identify not merely political parties or

groups/individuals promoting and using communalism but also the forces whose interests are served with the pervasiveness of this ideology. The identification of dominant communal forces and groups trying to use communalism to maintain and promote their interests may also help in evolving strategy to counter them.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMERGING SOCIAL TENSIONS

G.S. Bhalla

In this presentation an overall view of the pattern of agricultural development in India as a whole and a brief picture of the nature and extent of regional variations, both in terms of the institutional structure as well as in the growth of agricultural output, will be attempted. Finally, I will try to discuss the emerging relations of production in agriculture and the nature of social tensions in different parts of India.

The rate of growth of Indian agriculture since independence has been about 3 per cent per annum, which is quite creditable. This long term average rate of growth has, however, been characterized by year-to-year fluctuations.

The period 1950-51 to 1983-84 can be conveniently sub-divided into two sub-periods, namely 1950-51 to 1966-67 (the pre-Green Revolution period) and 1967-68 to 1983-84 (the post-Green Revolution period). Although the rates of agricultural growth are not very different in the two sub-periods, the main sources of growth are quite distinct. Whereas an increase in land use constituted the main source of agricultural growth in the first period, in the latter period it is yield increases that have emerged as the major source.

The two crucial measures undertaken by the policy makers immediately after Independence were land reform (during the mid-fifties) and investment in irrigation infrastructure. Both these were instrumental increasing agricultural output. Although the yield also recorded some increases, a rapid expansion took place in the net area sown as well as the gross area cropped.

The introduction of new seed-fertilizer technology in the mid-sixties, which resulted in unprecedented increases in yield levels of some crops, was an important landmark in the history of agricultural development in the country. With the adoption of this technology on a wide scale, yield increases became the dominant source of agricultural growth. Some characteristics of the new technology are worth noting. Firstly, yield-raising technology is much more expensive than an area-expansion technology and has a much higher capital-output ratio. Secondly, to begin with, the new technology was adopted only in areas that had assured irrigation. It was only later that it could be gradually extended to dry-land regions. Consequently, new technology has led to large

inter-regional variations in the level and growth of agriculture. The table appended here illustrates the nature of these inequalities. It will be obvious

Table
Regional Pattern of Growth of Production of Principal Crops in India during 1962-65 to 1970-73 and 1969-72 to 1981-84

(Percent per annum)

	STATES	Total Agricultural production I* 1962-65 to 1970-73	Total Agricultural production II** 1969-72 to 1981-84
A.	**Southern States**		
	Andhra Pradesh	(-) 0.60	3.31
	Tamil Nadu	2.47	1.12
	Karnataka	3.66	2.44
	Kerala	2.02	0.23
B.	**Eastern Sates**		
	Assam	2.54	1.96
	Bihar	0.54	0.49
	West Bengal	2.42	0.91
	Orissa	(-) 0.30	2.28
C.	**Central States**		
	Gujarat	1.95	3.92
	Maharashtra	(-) 3.77	5.59
	Rajasthan	5.10	2.47
	Madhya Pradesh	1.39	1.67
D.	**North-Western States**		
	Haryana	5.75	3.31
	Punjab	7.91	3.92
	Uttar Pradesh	2.94	3.10
	All-India	1.95	2.37

* *Growth rates are taken form Bhall-Alagh study. Performance of Indian Agriculture-A District-wise Study, Sterling, 1976.*

** *Growth rates have been worked out by fitting a trend line on indices of agricultural output constructed for each State based on production of 49 commodities. The indices have been prepared by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices.*

that it is the north-western States of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh which has recorded very high rates of growth from 1962-65 to 1970-73 and also from 1979-70 to 1983-84. It is also interesting to note that the central States located in the arid zone, namely Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, have recorded high rates of growth during the period 1969-70 to 1983-84. In the earlier period, except for Rajasthan, those States had either low or even negative rates of growth.

Except for the State of Andhra Pradesh, the performance of the southern region comprising Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala has been rather disappointing. Andhra Pradesh has recorded high rates of growth during the later period because of substantial increases in paddy production. In Tamil Nadu the growth rate has substantially declined, mainly because of a prolonged drought lasting several years.

It is the Eastern States comprising Assam, Bihar and West Bengal which continue to be the Achilles heel of Indian Agriculture. Orissa is the only State in that region which has shown some dynamism. Since the eastern States are densely populated, their poor agricultural performance has a direct bearing on the income levels of a vast number of agricultural workers in the region. To sum up, despite a fairly good growth performance at the national level, agricultural growth has been concentrated in a few irrigated regions and the achievement of many States has been rather poor. Consequently, inter-regional disparities have tended to increase.

Large regional variations in the growth of agricultural output and income in various States of India have also been accompanied by large regional inequalities in infrastructural development in power, irrigation, roads, marketing and extension. There seems to be emerging a cumulative pattern of investment in the progressive States and the lack of it in the non-progressive States.

Finally, inter-personal inequalities, both in income as well as in assets, have remained very high if not accentuated as a consequence of the Green Revolution. This is primarily because the gains of the new technology have been more or less shared according to the initial distribution of land ownership and other assets, which is extremely skewed.

It is sometimes alleged that it is the changeover from the earlier strategy of land reforms and irrigation technology to the new Green Revolution technology that is primarily responsible for the accentuation of regional and inter-personal inequalities in rural India. To me it appears that this is a basically wrong formulation. The real problem of inequality has arisen because of the failure of land reforms to bring about equal distribution in land ownership. Further, given the unequal land distribution, any technological changes are bound to lead to an unequal distribution of gains. It is obviously wrong to blame technology for institutional failures. Technology can only operate within the given constraints. It must, however, be emphasized that it would not have been possible to achieve the goal of self-sufficiency in foodgrains without the widespread adoption of the new technology.

For a proper understanding of the impart of growth on class formations and rural tensions, it is also essential to analyse the nature of land relations in rural

India. The only time when a major effort was made to deliberately change the land relations was during the mid-fifties when all the States passed land reforms legislation. Land reforms had four main objectives: abolition of intermediary interests; distribution of land through imposition of land ceilings; protection of tenants; and consolidation of land holdings.

As evaluation of the implementation of land reforms shows that the objectives were only partially realised. Land reforms were fairly successful only with regard to the first objective, i.e. the abolition of intermediaries in most part of India. Even here the level of success depended on the socio-political realities in different States. I general, the areas which had a strong peasant movement produced better implementation of the legislation. Again, the abolition of intermediaries succeeded to a better degree in the Ryotwari and Mahalwari areas than in the Zamindari areas. Finally, even in the process of implementing the legislation, a large number of tenants were evicted in areas where the landlords could wield extra-constitutional power. However, this part of the legislation was fairly successful except in a few States like Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. An important consequence of the abolition of intermediaries was that the extent of tenancy declined considerably and self-cultivation became the main mode of production in agriculture in most parts of India.

According to National Sample Survey (N.S.S.) reports for India as a whole, the area under tenancy which constituted 20 per cent of the net area sown in 1953-54 came down to about 11 per cent after land reforms were completed. In Punjab the proportion of lease declined in area from 40 per cent in 1953-54 to 26 per cent in 1970-71. With the abolition of absentee landlordism, self-cultivation became the dominant mode of production.

Legislation regarding imposition of ceilings on land holdings failed miserably due to loopholes in the law, connivance of landlords with the revenue administration, lack of will-power on the part of policy makers and the relative weakness of the peasant movement. Consequently, the pattern of land distribution was hardly changed and continued to be extremely unequal. For example, in 1970-71 the farmers who owned 25 acres of land and above constituted only 2.36 per cent of the cultivators, but accounted for 22.9 per cent of total land area owned in India as a whole. On the other hand, 58.6 per cent of all cultivators owning less than 2.5 acres of land accounted for only 9.8 per cent of the owned area in the country. In the densely populated States of eastern and southern India, land inequality is much worse than that brought out by the average all-India figures. Although the position in Punjab, Haryana and the States in the arid zone is slightly better because of a better land-man ratio, even there the land concentration is extremely high. Legislation on abolition of tenancy and security of tenants also failed to fulfil its objectives and led to the large-scale eviction of tenants.

In Punjab, partition played a very important role in changing the structure of land holdings. In 1947, as a result of large scale migration both into and out of the State, the resettlement of migrants was taken up on priority basis. In the first instance all rural immigrants were given a small parcel of land, irrespective of whether they were landless or landowners. This was perhaps the most practical solution in the circumstances and proved to be one of the most progressive steps. It was only at a later stage that this arrangement was reversed. Settlement rights were given to only owner cultivators in proportion to their claims and many of the people, especially landless labourers who had been earlier settled on the land, were evicted. I wish the progressive movement had at that time intervened in a big way to ensure that the egalitarian resettlement move was not disturbed. Unfortunately, this did not happen and large-scale eviction took place except in a few pockets like the river-bed area where the settlers were strong enough to resist eviction.

To sum up, whereas the abolition of intermediaries and the consequent reduction of tenancy have no doubt made self-cultivation the main mode of production in most of rural India, land distribution has remained extremely skewed. The new technology has been superimposed on this basic structure. It is no wonder that this has led to large-scale inter-regional and interpersonal inequalities. But the new technology has also brought about significant structural changes in many States like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh. Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where mode of production in agriculture is in the process of undergoing a basic change. Some components of this change are worth noting. Firstly, agriculture is becoming increasingly capitalized because of large investments in tubewells, tractors etc. Secondly, an overwhelming section of the producers has changed over from self-contained production to commodity production, bringing most of their produce to the market. Thirdly, at the current level of technology, despite mechanization in agriculture, the demand for labour has tended to increase with the growth of output. Fourthly, because of attractive returns, private investment in agriculture is increasing rapidly. Finally, although the rate of growth of male agricultural labourer perceptibly decline in 1971-81 when compared with 1961-70, the absolute number of agricultural labourers is increasing quite rapidly.

These changes have had far-reaching economic and social consequences. First, and the most important, the increasing demand for labour has enabled the agricultural labourers to come out of the age-old shackles of the Jajmani system and emerge as free labour without any incumberances. Secondly, the gains of the new technology have been shared very inequitably, more or less in proportion to the distribution of land ownership. The rich farmers who have

been the major beneficiaries in economic terms have also become politically quite powerful, leading to several socio-political problems. The objective reality of the availability of free labour and the subjective realization which is translated into action through distinct organisation have combined to make landless labour into a class in the Marxian sense.

As a consequence of the emergence of landless labour as a class in the agriculturally developed parts of India, the major cause of tension in these areas is the increasing assertion of the landless labour for their rights and for higher wages. The organisation of the landless labour has come about in the teeth of opposition, and coercion like Nakabandi and other forms of oppression have been used against them. The increased demand for labour has improved their bargaining power. This has also given them more freedom as they are no longer tied to a few cultivators. The result is that the landless labourers are no longer mute – they are acquiring a new dignity. This is naturally very offensive to the sensibilities of landowners who are used to treating them like dumb cattle. Consequently, the conflict between wage labour and cultivators has tended to increase and the major contradiction that has emerged is the one between agricultural labourers as employees and cultivators as employers.

On the other hand, land has ceased to be a contradiction and there is hardly any movement either of tenants against landlords or of peasants against moneylenders. Nor does one find any contradiction between the small and big peasantry, despite a big difference in their economic status. The small farmers have benefited as they are also bale to share the benefits of the new technology. However, the capacity of the small farmers to compete with big capitalist farmers is limited because of their small resource base. Nevertheless, despite a limited economic standing, they are a decisive force in determining election results because of their numerical strength. Hence they are also able to obtain a share of subsidised inputs. In fact, conscious of the potential strength of small and marginal farmers and the overwhelming votes they command, a deliberate attempt is made by the ruling party to woo them through various anti-poverty programmes. This has counteracted any tendency for contradictions to develop between small and large peasants. Therefore, even objectively there does not exist any contradiction between them and the big farmers. In fact because of caste and other affiliations all cultivators tend to come together against the landless labour on crucial issues like wages. The most serious implication is that a political combination of all categories of cultivators reduces the landless to a poor minority and further strengthens the domination of the landed peasantry. The fact that in several areas a large proportion of small and marginal farmers are forced to hire out their family labour, as their tiny holdings are incapable of giving them

sufficient income for subsistence, may lay the basis for a differentiation of peasantry in future. At present one does not see any differentiation. Consequently, one of the biggest challenges facing the peasant movement is to bring about unity between the landless labour and the small and middle peasantry in the areas of the Green Revolution.

The character of contradictions and tensions is quite different in the less-developed parts of India like Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. These are the States where, because of the clout of landlords, even the intermediaries were not abolished and semi-feudal relations, though weakened, are still quite powerful. In these parts the mode of production will remains semi-feudal and land reforms, including abolition of intermediaries, continue to be a major issue. However, even in these States there are certain sections of the population which have been able to benefit from the new technology. These are the small and middle-level cultivating owners who in general belong to the lower and middle castes.

Having become economically stronger, they are now clamoring for political power, which at the moment vests in the semi-feudal upper castes. In the process of this struggle, caste and class tensions are getting accentuated. The emerging lower and middle castes are in no way less tyrannical towards the landless labour than the big absentee upper-caste landlords. Hence the result is a two-way contradiction. On the one hand there is strife between the landless and the “nouveau riche” and on the other there is a contradiction between the middle peasantry and feudal interests. This dual contradiction is in contrast to the situation in the established Green Revolution region, where political power has already passed to the rich peasants.

It is important to remember that in some of the underdeveloped areas, particularly in Bihar, a very powerful movement of agricultural labourers, tenants and small peasants has emerged recently. Simultaneously, the aggressiveness of absentee landlords, who are gradually losing their economic and political power along with that of the new rich of the village, has increased manifold. It must be said that the power of the organised peasantry to fight back has increased sufficiently.

To sum up, it is the rapid change in the mode of production in agriculture in some parts of India that changed the configuration of class forces in the countryside. The most important development in this context is the emergence of landless labour as a “class”.

Whereas the large inequalities do exist in the distribution of the gains of the new technology, there is little evidence of differentiation taking place between the small and big cultivators. Any genuine peasant movement would have to be based on organising agricultural labourers and would have to try to extend

its base to the poor and middle peasantry. It is difficult to envisage a radical Kisan movement that tries to take the entire peasantry, including the landless labour, with it on slogans like remunerative prices at this would be overlooking the new basic contradictions that have arisen as a consequence of changes in the agrarian structure in these areas.

In States like Bihar and Orissa, where semi-feudal relations continue to prevail, the peasant movement has to carry the entire working peasantry with it for waging a successful struggle against the landlords and for bringing about land reforms and land distribution. In all these areas casteism has to be fought as a social evil to bring about unity between all sections and special efforts have to be made to mobilise the agricultural labourers to enable them to come out of their age-old bondage.

URBAN GROWTH ACCENTUATES COMMUNAL TENSIONS

M.N. Buch

I am not really going to deal with the subject in terms of social tensions. Social tension is what you might deduce from whatever I have to say, but I would like to share with you some of my views on the urban scene in India.

The 1981 census and the 1971 census figures are the basic documents which I have utilized – which I have referred to – for trying to understand the urban scene in India. Both indicate one very clearly discernible trend, and that is that the rate of urban growth in India in demographic terms is approximately double the rural rate of growth. Now, I won't enter into the semantics of how these figures are derived. There are people like Rakesh Mohan, who was in the Planning Commission, who feel that there have been definitional changes which imply that in actual fact the difference between the urban and rural growth rates is not as marked as the census figures would indicate. But even taking into account all that, the fact remains that the urban growth is 46.02% and the rural growth 18.96% in the 1981 census. So, even if you take into account marginal changes in definition and the fact that some of the urban areas are growing faster, this is the trend that is clearly indicated by the 1981 census, and this is a trend which is also observable in the previous census of 1971 and the census of 1961 as well. Therefore, it is not a new trend, and it is this trend that produces the tendency towards concentration.

In 1981, 61% of the population lived in class I towns which had a population of more than one lakh, and out of the population of Class I towns, approximately one-fourth lived in 12 metropolitan cities. This does not necessarily mean that the existing Class I towns have grown less populous. In fact several Class II towns have also become Class I towns. What emerges from this is that there is a tendency for the town size to increase and, therefore, for there being larger concentrations of people.

There are many reasons for this. It is certainly not the case that the rural birth-rate is lower and the death-rate higher, or that the urban death-rate is substantially more than the rural death-rate and therefore there is a natural accretion by birth and survival in the urban population. There is definitely a phenomenon of migration, some of it rural to urban and some of it urban to urban – people from smaller towns migrating to larger towns. This is just an observation of facts. This is what is happening, and I do not intend to go into

the question of why it is happening. Perhaps an example might give you some regional variations. In the Punjab, Haryana and Western U.P. context, you do not have any marked migration into single-target larger cities from towns or smaller cities. It is basically an hierarchical system, whereas in North Bihar and Eastern U.P. you have enormous growth at the district-level towns. The 1981 census clearly indicates that. At the district level, towns have grown at a 100% rate in this region. These are regional kinds of variations, but one of the things which has emerged from this is that we are unable, as a Government and as a people, to handle this growth. You might ask me for evidence of this. I will refer you to THE PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION OF LAND IN DELHI IN 2001. Delhi is the most planned city in India. It is the first city with a Master Plan. The Delhi Development Act and the Delhi Development Authority mean a virtual monopoly of land in Delhi. So, there is on the one hand a total planning concept and a planning input, and on the other we have the medium on which cities grow, i.e. land, under State control – the D.D.A. What is the net result of such planning and such a monopoly?

As per the Master Plan of Delhi, 45% of the population of Delhi lives in squatter colonies – slums. I am not talking about the J.J. colonies – the Jhuggi-jhonpri rehabilitation centres – I am talking of people squatting illegally on Government land. Another 25% are in various colonies built on private land, but built unauthorizedly because suitable permissions could not be given. This means that at the end of 25 years of planning, you end up with only 30% of the people of Delhi having legal access to land: 70% of the population of Delhi lives unauthorizedly or by outright encroachment.

If you consider what this means in terms of respect for the law in the simple matter of getting a house made, you create an environment and a climate whereby only by violating the law can you get shelter. What respect then are you going to have for any law either in the cities or in the country? This is one factor: this utter contempt for the law engendered by faulty planning policies. But we must consider, when we are talking of tensions within a city or the contempt for the law within a city, another fact. If you are in a city, to get the house you have first to encroach; then you have to bribe to remain on that encroached land; then you have to bribe in order to ensure that your structure is not destroyed; then you have to bribe in order to ensure that you get water and power; then you have to bribe generation after generation of inspectors, so that the next round of inspectors or the next generation of inspectors does not come and harass you. if this is the sort of culture that you are going to develop so far as integrity is concerned, if you are going to bribe for everything, and have the feeling that the post-partition influx in Punjabi refugees has resulted in corruption, that is the Punjabi refugees who have started this culture, that is not correct. It is not the Punjabi refugee who has

come here and brought along a culture of corruption or a culture of unscrupulousness into the city. It is the phenomenon of concentration in cities which forces people to resort to bribery in order to survive. This is one phenomenon.

The other phenomenon which is to be observed throughout urban India (perhaps not to the same extent as in Chandigarh, where you have been a little more fortunate in terms of land space, although there too land is getting gradually eroded) is that social cohesiveness, the social organization which existed in traditional cities, has broken down. The concept of the traditional city was the mohalla and it engendered a certain social cohesiveness. The average mohalla might have been homogeneous in terms of religion, language and caste, but a katra was not necessarily so homogeneous. The Katras of Delhis where Hindus and Muslims are living together. The ghetto mentality did not really exist to the same extent in the mohalla, and the mohalla had a certain social cohesion in the sense that you recognized the mohalla elders; you got together on festivals; you organized yourself in terms of organizing balwadis or organizing social clubs of women (I am not talking of clubs in the British sense but gatherings where women get together and they do papat together), this cohesiveness has been destroyed by modern planning. We only have the planning of Le Carbousier in Chandigarh. I personally think that Chandigarh is the biggest disaster in the history of urban India, because it stresses a style of living in which the family and the neighborhood are not so important; it has a stress on the “caste” system, if I may say so, of the 120 ft. wide road; 100 ft. vide road; 80 ft. wide road; 60 ft. wide road; and if my house is in an area which is serviced by a 20 ft. wide road, I am socially inferior to a person whose area is serviced by a 200 ft. wide road. This is, again, a very major planning failure because we have destroyed social cohesiveness.

To this we have to add this new phenomenon of urban migration. Here you have to reckon with the white-collar population in a city. That is, one factor. The other is the large number of migrants, semi-literate, low in scale, social or any other, who come into the city because the tertiary occupations of the city offer some scope for employment n an otherwise hopeless employment situation. If you look at the 1981 census, though all the data are not still in, one of the features that strikes one in a State like Maharashtra, which is the most urbanized State in India, is that the comparative share of employment in the secondary sector, i.e. the productive manufacturing sector, has reduced vis-à-vis the tertiary sector. If you try to look behind these figures, what they indicate is that the productive sector which can give gainful high-range employment is not growing. It may be growing in terms of capital investment, but it is not growing in terms of its potential for employment of labor, perhaps, because the types of production have altered and more industries

have become more technology-oriented and less labor-intensive, which leaves you with surplus labor, whether it is domestic or whether it is in terms of formal sector activities, and the result is crime. The sort of crime that you find is very largely an urban phenomenon. You cannot pick pockets in a village because most people wear dhotis and they do not have a pocket which you can pick. You need a specific kind of environment for that sort of crime. Unemployed youngsters do actually have some sort of casual employment as launderers, pulling a *thela* or pushing a cart. But in real terms the unemployed are being driven into sub-human living conditions. There is a theory that many politicians are very fond of propounding, that people come to the cities because we have failed to provide the infrastructure of cinemas, streetlights, asphalted roads etc. in the villages and it is because of this that city life attracts these people. I do not contribute to this view at all. Living conditions are indefinitely sub-human in cities. Most people are living in urban conditions which approximate to slum-dwelling, and the urban slum is definitely and infinitely worse than the conditions you find in a rural area, because in a rural area it is nothing else than the ground absorbing the effluents, the sun drying all the garbage and so on, whereas if you go to an urban area like Dharvi in Bombay, for example, people are living in a literal sea of nightsoil. If you go to an area like Seelampur or Seemapuri in Delhi, you find piles of nightsoil at every place. These are the conditions under which people are really living. I am sorry there is no decent language in which I can describe the realities.

I will try and concretize this slightly. When you are living under these conditions, and you are looking for a job, about 30% of the people of a large city are trying to look for a job – you may or may not find one. So any form of employment will do. At Bhopal I saw under a culvert a boy sitting. He had a whole pole of notes in his hands and there were people hanging around him. So I got out of my car. He ran, I chased him and got hold of him. He was an unemployed boy who was distributing the *matka* tickets or chits.

The phenomenon is essentially a Western India phenomenon, but I suppose it is there almost everywhere. In *matka*, there are numbers in the hands of someone somewhere. You get your *matka* number and there is a draw. If your number matches the number in draw, you win and get money. So, this boy had a whole bundle of *matka* chits. When I caught him, he said, “Why are you catching me, Saheb? I am earning Rs. 25 a day from this, and I am sure you cannot give me a job on even Rs. 5 a day”. Even if you become a second-grade clerk in a secretariat, you earn only Rs. 25 a day; and here is an urchin earning Rs. 25 a day selling these *matka* chits. The police go and catch these chaps whenever a crime is committed; whenever a theft is committed or whenever some other crime is committed. Thus what invariably happens – and this is a

universal phenomenon throughout the country – is that a slum-dweller is looked down upon and is regarded as having a record of crime.

What is more, the criminal bosses who live in the posh localities – and all over the country there are I think some 120 such people living in very large mansions – who engage in bootlegging, prostitution, smuggling and so on, engage these unemployed fellows. The large farms are mostly owned by such employers. They smuggle some 120 kg of hashish and it is housed in a large farm next to our Prime Minister's farm. These people find the slum-dwellers a good recruiting ground. Therefore, there is the maximum pressure on the slum-dwellers – the criminal elements recruiting there are the police going and harassing them whenever there is any little crime in the city. I wish to tell you that this is a first-class ground, a first-class field, for tension and even violence.

I do not know whether you followed the accounts, of what happened in Karachi two years ago. Karachi, as you know, is a very large city, and Karachi is in a country where till very recently there was martial law, and therefore, very harsh legal powers were available to the rulers and the administrators there. Now, Karachi has one colony – a very large colony with a population of about a quarter of a million – consisting of Bihari labourers who went there during the Bangladesh affair. Adjacent to this large colony there is a colony consisting of Pathans. The Pathans dominate the transport trade, especially passenger transport, in Karachi. Because the Pathans are prosperous, they are respected and held in greater favour by the Police, the Civil Service etc. They can give more bribe. This is a universal phenomenon. I was in Bangkok and I was going in a bus. The driver perhaps jumped the signal and a policeman blew his whistle. The driver got down, bribed the police and merrily drove away. Apparently in Karachi the differential of favoritism, as it were, between one group vis-à-vis the other group has led to such a division between these two groups that when a bus ran over a college girl and killed her, the entire colony rose in revolt and burnt some 40 or50 buses belonging to the Pathans. The Pathans, in turn, with the assistance of their supporters, retaliated and attacked the Bihari colony, causing more than 100deaths. Ultimately the Army had to be called in and things set right. These are the kinds of disturbed social tensions that can be created.

If you take the Indian example, the most recent one is that of Ahmedabad. Ahmedabad is a classic case in point. What happened? Only a particular type of disturbance occurs and we are not able to handle it. Gujarat does not have a long history of communal violence. In fact during the 1947 partition riots one of the relatively peaceful areas in this country was Gujarat. Moreover, Gujarat is one part of the country where, socially, the Muslim and the Hindu is indistinguishable in terms of living styles – in terms of *uthna-baithna,* in terms of *hookah-pani* etc. Gujarat does not have a distinction of the sort that you

find in North India. Despite this, since 1966 Ahmedabad and Baroda, cities in the north and south of Gujarat, have been experiencing a series of the most violent communal trouble that you can think of. To find the reasons for this you have to look at the structure of society on Ahmedabad city.

Ahmedabad city has two very distinctive types of structures. One is the commercial structure. The city has a very strong commercial base, and this commercial structure is prosperous and traditional. It lives in traditional city style (you have the equivalent of the walled city of Delhi) is a very highly preserved and well-maintained area of Ahmedabad. The other is the industrial structure. Now, the industrial structure of Ahmedabad has attracted a great deal of non-Gujarati labour from Rajasthan, Bihar, U.P. and other places. It is the induction of this labour which initially was prosperous, there was no trouble at all. But as soon as the textile industry went into recession in the sixties – as you know, even now if it is in recession and there are a large number of mills in Ahmedabad which are closed – the textile workers had a very genuine cause for discontent. They were unemployed, and it is these unemployed or under-employed textile workers, basically non-Gujaratis who drifted into the hands of political groups which exploit communalism and communal feelings in Ahmedabad.

The only way in which you can end the communal trouble which you find in Dayapur, Lal Darwaza and such kinds of localities in Ahmedabad is by completely demolishing these areas. That is what they did in Paris in 1850 when, after the Revolution in 1848, the communes decided to just destroy all the densely packed built-up areas and have wide avenues so that the artillery could come in and find field of fire to put down insurgents or rioters. That is not an option available to us in India.

The other alternative is to modify the economy of Ahmedabad in such a way that obsolete industry gets phased out and the employment potential of Ahmedabad improves. Once the people start getting gainfully employed, it becomes possible to undertake restructuring in terms of a better urban life – providing better housing, more open areas, more recreation facilities, etc. – so that these types of social tensions disappear.

There is one more phenomenon which is more clearly discernible in urban areas and that is mob violence. It is there in Punjab, for example. In Punjab, though you have terrorism which has communal overtones, in the rural areas you do not have communalism. One does not hear of mobs of Sikhs going through villages and burning down Hindu houses, or mobs of Hindus going around burning Sikh houses. If there has been any such communal tension, it has not been in the rural areas. Mob violence is there in cities – in Amritsar, in

Jalandhar and in Hoshiarpur. By and large such violence is an urban phenomenon and not a rural phenomenon.

Now, the difficulty is that the exploitation of such a type of communal tension has become a highly political issue. It has become a politically-exploited issue and that too is an urban phenomenon. In the rural areas, even now, this kind of tension is not prevalent. You had communal riots in Moradabad, but you did not have them in villages five miles outside Moradabad, even though there are Muslims living there. This is the phenomenon one should take note of. Why is it that communal tension is an urban phenomenon rather than rural phenomenon or a national phenomenon? I do not have an answer.

Now, I want to try and give you a picture of what urban India is going to look like in the future; what the scenario will be in the next 25 or 50 years. From this, conclusions will have to be drawn regarding what social tension is going to be like in urban India. The differential of growth between urban and rural India is definitely going to change the urban-rural mix. There is a differential mix as between the 1971 and the 1981 census; in 1971 it was 20 X 80; in 1981 it was a 24 X 75 mix: perhaps in the next 20 years, you may get a 35 X i65 mix. There is one prediction that it will be 40 urban and 60 rural; but my own feeling is that perhaps it will be 35 urban and 65 rural, but it is, still, a very substantial shift. In absolute terms, even today, 190 million people are urban. This is a very large number. This is going to grow.

Besides, with the kind of priorities and the kind of call on resources that we have in India, the funds for tackling the problems of urbanization are not going to be available to us. In the Sixth Plan, the share of urban development was 0.9% of the Plan. In the Seventh Plan, the share of urban development is again 0.9% of the Plan. There is no difference. There is no quantum jump of any sort in the share of urban development and perhaps, since most of our Plan is committed already, the Eighth and Ninth and perhaps the Tenth Plans there might be marginal adjustments. However, I cannot foresee any major readjustment in priority. This means that in terms of urban infrastructure you are going to have a situation in which water supply, housing and other services like drainage, sewerage and transport are going to be very tight. There are going to be whole areas without water or with unsatisfactory supply. Hyderabad city has a population of three million and it is getting at present 20 minutes of water supply every alternate day. I repeat, 20 minutes of water supply *alternate day*! Now, when you divide up this water supply, a person who has a sump or a tank of his own fills up water in the 20 minutes. He thus gets a certain volume of water which he stores. ON the other hand, a person who is living in a hutment, with great difficulty and after probably using a hand-pump and pushing people, he is able to collect two buckets of water, because he has to go to a public tap. If this situation covers large parts of our

cities, and more and more cities come under this kind of a critical water-supply situation, there is no need to tell you the sort of tensions you are going to get. At public taps you are going to have murders because you cannot even draw drinking water.

In terms of land distribution, as things stand today, I cannot see any more egalitarian land distribution development because land will be in short supply due to city expansion brought about by the marked influx into the cities. Therefore, the present position, as in Delhi where 45% of the area is covered by squatter colonies, will get worse, and the figure will go up. As per the scenario worked out by the Delhi Development Authority itself, 85% of the people will live in squatter colonies at one time. This is not an encouraging sign. Unless we are able to devise the kind of policy options which, within our limited resources, permit us, if nothing else, to at least disperse this population, in a more equitable, hierarchical or settlement pattern, we are going to see a lot more trouble in the cities. This is a factor that nobody seems to have given much thought to. You do not find any coverage of the problem even the newspapers. As you know, you find that the newspapers have not been very concerned about what Is going to happen in Chandigarh some 25 years from now. You will have 80% of its population in squatter colonies. That is what is going to happen in Chandigarh. This is an important factor which at least the National Commission on Urbanization could do well to consider seriously.

What are the policy options available to us? Actually, the policy options in this county are very severely hedged. They are hedged by the fact that the resources are committed. They are hedged by the fact that the call on the existing large cities is overpowering. With our limited resources we should have logically strengthened those settlements within very large ones which had a potential of growth and which could therefore, have become local employment centres. But the fact is that Delhi will get away with a Rs. 1000/- crore a year because it is the capital. It must look beautiful when the Queen of England visits it. What will she say if she finds a slum while driving from Palam to Rajpath. Leave Delhi, go to Calcutta. It is a city with a 9.4 million urban conglomeration of people who live without water supply and can give rise to a beautiful uprising and a great deal of social tension. It can, in fact, bring a government down. So attention has to be paid to Calcutta. Then go to Bombay. There also the situation is such that it will lead to tension. But Bombay will receive attention because the Prime Minister is involved in Bombay. This restricts even the available options.

The only policy option really available to us, as I see it, stems from the question: what causes growth? And the answer is: activity. Activity causes growth. Employment causes growth. Pilani has grown. Pilani is what it is

because Birla decided to put a really excellent culture of technical education in the middle of the desert of Pilani. Therefore, Pilani is what it is. It is there because of the activity in Pilani. Now one option, which is a non-fiscal option as it were, of a non-financial option, but is partly fiscal, is that any industrial activity which wants to find location in the cities which you do not want to grow, in which you want to bring some sort of, shall we say, growth-equilibrium-development, should be made to pay for locating in that city. Today we have an industrial location policy which says: "You will not locate a factory in a city with more than five lakh population." But if you do not locate it in the city; you locate it at the periphery you do not locate it in Delhi but you locate in it Ghaziabad! Instead of that, the policy should dictate that if you do want to locate it in the Delhi metropolitan region; if you want to locate it in the Bombay metropolitan region; if you want to locate it in the Hyderabad metropolitan region, you can locate it there, but you shall pay for the entire social overheads which arise from your location there. If you tell a man: "if you want to locate your industry in Ghaziabad you have to pay Rs. 1 crore per acre of land", then whether it is private land or *sarkari* land, he will have to pay Rs. 1 crore net. He will probably think twice whether he should really locate it there. On the other hand, if you want to go and locate it in Barabanki, you may get land for Rs. 5000 per acre. This is the kind of option which the industrialist can understand. He will make a choice between the two, and if he prefers Ghaziabad where he can get permission to locate if he pays Rs. 1 crore per acre for land, then he will locate it in Ghaziabad, and he will pay the market value for land. In this manner, the Government or the development agency gets the money with which it can create the infrastructure which will support this kind of activity. There is no such thing as an "insupportable" city. You can support even a city with 20 crore people of you like, provided you have the money to provide all the services, to provide housing, to provide water supply, to provide the transport system etc. So, the minute you give this sort of option, the minute you say that there will be an incentive to locate your industry somewhere else, there will be a direct disincentive to locate it in the same place – not a legal disincentive but a financial disincentive. Then you might get a different kind of urban picture emerging in this country.

Now, the question is: how are we going to follow these policies? I am not sure, but my own strong suspicion is that you are going to get the type of reaction which Jag Parvesh Chandra, the Chief Executive Councillor of Delhi, had to suggestions made at a National Capital Region Authority meeting. In the last meeting of the National Capital Region Authority, it was suggested that certain types of activities could be decentralized within the region, provided Delhi did two or three things: (i) raised its power tariff to the same rates that prevailed in Haryana and U.P., which have a higher tariff, and (ii) brought its sales tax to the same level as Haryana and U.P. There, they do not provide large-scale

industries with land; if you do not provide large-scale industries with land; if you do not provide land to medium-scale and large-scale industries in Delhi, then automatically people will be prepared to go to other towns like Hapur, Alwar, or whatever it is. Jag Parvesh Chandra said, “You are throttling these industries”. That is his view: he can have it; but he cannot simultaneously shout that Delhi is being destroyed by the overcrowding and by having too many people coming, by too much migration into Delhi. Delhi does not have the services. Delhi has got the jhuggi-jhonpris only because people are floating into it. This is there in one side and you say at the same time, “We will make Delhi the most attractive city in terms of infrastructure; in terms of power; in terms of water-supply; in terms of sanitation; in terms of taxes; and yet you complain that it is overcrowded.

STATE, DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND COMMUNALISM

Manoranjan Mohanty

It is not an accident that during the past decade or so, there has been a decline on the democratic rights front while we have seen a steady rise in communal tension in India. In the current discussion on communalism in the country, a new dimension needs to be added, i.e., the democratic rights perspective. We have seen several attempts at theorization, reinterpretation of history finding a socio-economic basis of communal tensions, relationship between religion and politics and so on. But few people see the linkage between authoritarianism and communalism. I would like to submit that attacks on democratic rights of deprived groups of various kinds are a major factor in giving rise to communal tension and, therefore, the perspective on the handling of the communal problem has to emphasize the need for progressive realization of democratic rights.

From this viewpoint let us identify the contemporary problem of communalism, attempt a diagnosis and then spell out a perspective for handling it.

The Problem

It seems to many that communalism has overtaken such serious problem as poverty and unemployment. There is widespread cynicism and even helplessness not only among leaders but also intellectuals and in the organs of public opinion on this question. Even though we see long discourses in the editorial pages of the newspapers, hear fervent appeals by politicians for communal harmony and an occasional outburst of overconfidence by managers of the state, when you scratch the surface you find helplessness all around.

Undoubtedly, the frequency of communal riots has increased. Some areas which had never experienced communal tensions before have become scenes of riots of a serious magnitude. The everyday media of communication have increasingly acquired communal overtone. It is not confirmed merely to speeches of political leaders, but has spreads to categories used in scholarly discussions. The social environment has become so surcharged that minor issues provide easy provocation leading to communal tension. At the same time, substantive issues which are of secular importance, slide into communal debates. Processions during religious festivals belong to the first category; the issues of civil code, Urdu language and women's rights belong to the second.

The problem of communalism has begun to appear in forms of crystallized ideology and organization. The ideology of communalism is no longer on the fringe of Indian politics. It has crept into the strategy of several political parties. We find a rising assertion of orthodoxy in all major religions of institutionalization of communalism not only in ad hoc action committees on specific issues, but also in stabler forms almost battle ready in defense of what they perceive as their rights.

But one must ask: has communalism indeed overtaken problems like poverty, or does it only see, so in the heat of the communal tensions?

Without underestimating the seriousness of the problem of communalism, I would like to suggest that this is part of an overall process of alienation in contemporary Indian society. Individuals, groups and classes, with diverse identities are getting increasingly alienated in the process of the functioning of the Indian state. This alienation is manifested in various ways, with varying intensity at different levels, and communalism is one of these manifestations. Democratic rights promised by the Indian Constitution and frequently deliberated upon on various platforms are being eroded in practice, causing urges of identity groups through political participation within a framework of secularism, socialism and democracy define our polity, and it is a violation of this definition which is perhaps at the root of the problem.

Diagnosis

It may be worthwhile to attempt an explanation of the communal problem. First, a word about the definition of communalism. While some scholars treat it essentially as an ideology or a belief, others take it as a social phenomenon. As an ideology, communalism refers to the belief that people belonging to one religion also share common socio-economic, political and cultural interests. As a social phenomenon, it refers to an exclusive assertion justified in the name of a group, in this context a religious group. In my view, the second definition actually includes the belief as a component of this process of assertiveness. We emphasize the aspect of exclusives as a characteristic of communalism which ordinarily sees an antagonistic relationship among groups.

As for the attributes of communalism, it is not merely a modern phenomenon though it may have modern manifestations. It represents a mix of tradition and modernity. Scholars have described this social situation phenomenon in terms of reformulating an ideal past of the religious group, even though it may be historically questionable, converting the social situation into a battle ground against a perceived internal enemy, propounding a romantic call for sacrifice, giving a radical even a utopian programme of rebuilding society and linking up all levels of the socio-political process to achieve the communal goal

by any means. It is not difficult to illustrate these aspects from our own environment. Communalism is by its very nature anti-democratic.

A theory which has gained ground in contemporary India by way of explaining the expanding phenomenon of communalism is the theory of the modernization process. According to this view as India embarked upon a major developmental process, economic opportunities rapidly expanded and competition for jobs and commercial situation led different sections of the people stake their claims, locally, regionally and at the national level, and these have often backed by communal claims. There is a feeling among the non-Hindu groups that their gains have been disproportionately low. In fact, there are some pauperized over the years and the ex-zamindars have not quite succeeded in life. In the growth of the middle classes in India, according to one view, Muslims have not achieved a rightful share. According to this theory, Hindus have reacted to demands of other communities and have asserted their rights. That is why the trend of competitive communalism.

According to another theory, the problem of communalism is a product of India's experience under British imperialist rule. The colonial power, through its policy of divide and rule, contributed to the growth of communalism leading to the partition of India. In the nineteenth century, the growth of India's nationalism gradually acquired a historical dimension derived from a reformulated view of the Hindu past. By the end of the nineteenth century, a new notion of Hinduism was born with w proselytizing character with scriptures, codes of behaviour and organization, claiming that it encompassed diverse faiths and cultural identities spread throughout India. The Britishers played up rival social, economic and political claims of Hindus, Muslims, tribals and untouchables.

Our freedom struggle had several strands in it giving rise to an ambiguous formulation on secularism. There was one tendency which persists in the minds of many Hindus and ideas about Muslims with which a Hindu child grows up, howsoever baseless they may be, are a psychological fact. Similar images about Hindus also persist in the minds of Muslims and others. We have to admit an intellectual failure in explaining the history of modern India, particularly the partition to counter this feeling.

Partition was the outcome of British colonial policies, rise of communalism, both Muslim and Hindu and the impatience of the prevailing Congress leadership to assume power in Independent India –all built up in the process of the development of the colonial political economy over the years. We are beginning to see the emergence of a new historiography which will perhaps put partition in a more objective background and, with the hind sight of the

later developments in the Indian sub-continent, new images of our recent past will emerge.

However, neither the modernization theory nor the theory of recent Indian history provides an adequate explanation of the rise of the phenomenon of communalism. They do not answer the question as to why some regions are still free of communal tensions and why new regions, having no objective historical reasons, should have become vulnerable. One has to seek an explanation for the persistence of communalism in the socio-political character of the overall development process, which is of an uneven character and which has produced growth with inequity. In this process, a centralistic state has emerged as the principal actor directing the process of development. As a result, we find politics becoming increasingly communal, education failing to acquire secular orientation and organs of the state apparatus, particularly bureaucracy, police and army, fast becoming arenas of communal orientation. Despite the growth of the Indian economy with remarkable success both in agriculture and industry, the magnitude of poverty, unemployment, inflation and regional disparity remains high.

With the mobilization of popular consciousness through political parties, growth of education and the expansion of the domain of the market, people's demands have steadily risen. Having failed to meet these demands, the Indian State has increasingly resorted to centralization of power to face the emerging crisis. This trend started in the mid-seventies and gradually we saw what can be called a structural freeze in the Indian system, i.e., suspension of the programme of structural reforms on various fronts in recent years. Particularly under the new administration, we have found greater reliance on a techno-managerial approach to the problems facing our society. The Indian State has become what can be metaphorically called a silicon state.

At the same time, parties have appealed to religious identities for secreting electoral support. The Congress, which had once provided an important instrument of secularization, began to drift into this in the later seventies and the early eighties. Simultaneously, parties like the B.J.P. which has a short phase of secular tilt, have resumed their communal banner. Thus, a trend of communalization of the India State, accompanied by the vastly powerful trend of centralization is what we have been seeing in recent years. These are the consequences of the development process and essentially are attacks on democratic rights of tribals, peasants, dalits and a large variety of identity groups. So the evolution of the Indian State into an authoritarian system provides a major explanation for the alienation of identity groups, which in turn gives rise to exclusivist assertion of rights of communities.

Over the years the official approach to national integration has essentially reflected the ideology of centralization. The central leadership has defined national integration in terms of cultural, economic and territorial unity and sees every demand for autonomy as a challenge to the unity of India. This has given rise to a 'roller' approach to culture where the central leadership in the name of producing a notion of India as a multi-cultural civilization deliberately projects certain cultural principles in the name of all.

Many liberals had believed that modernization would entail new values of enterprise, competition and rationality which would replace specific cultural identities like religious identities. Socialist believed that in the course of class struggle new values of the working class, such as those of solidarity, struggle and rationality would be the new motivating principles. History has proved both these assumptions inadequate. All new values have to negotiate with cultural identities and produce a specific mix in each situation.

National integration has become a slogan of the Indian State leadership as part of their power strategy. On the plank of the unity and integrity of the nation and making emotional appeals to fight against any threat to national integrity they win elections. In the process they have fostered communalism of the majority Hindu community. Hence the talk of composite culture in the context of the age-old Indian civilization boils down to an assertion of Hindu tradition. Hence, the package of national integration consists of centralized authority, a roller approach to culture and a Hindu bias, perhaps inadvertently so. And this package serves the legitimation process of the Indian State. Consequently, find a sense of alienation among the non-Hindus, and such alienation is equally evident among several linguistic, tribal and regional identity groups in various parts of this country.

In this context there has been an intellectual failure in perceiving the nature of secularism. Secularists, both of the liberal and socialist variety, had entertained the found belief that modernization and class movements would wipe out the grip of religion over the minds of the people. It was believed that religion was after all an element of the super-structure – 'Opium of the masses' – and with the divisive character of religion alone were the subject, not their social base and intellectual and moral functions.

It may be noted that both in the Soviet Union and China recent measures have been taken allowing religious practices to 'believers' while the state clearly encourages a rational, non-religious and secular outlook. The religious movements have themselves experienced a radical upsurge, church groups are active today in Latin American revolutionary struggles. Liberation theology has emerged as a radical ideology. In the history of the Indian freedom struggle several examples are available from the Sikh, Muslim and Hindu groups who

performed a patriotic and anti-colonial role. So the approach to religion has to be appropriately reconsidered. Secularists or non-believers have to conduct patiently a dialogue with religion rather than dismissing religious forces merely as obscurantist.

However, we should be clear about the difference between secularism and a new slogan given by Hindu nationalists today which they call Indian secularism. By the latter they mean reliance on the framework of a multi-religious society where Hindu religion is the main ethos. This is quite different from what Gandhi visualized for India. Gandhi propounded the notion of equal respect for all religions and equal validity of all religions, without ever suggesting that Indian society was to be governed on the basis of a dominant Hindu ethos.

There is a surprising convergence between the explicit slogan of Hindu nationalists in their new assertion and the implicit perspective of the Indian State. The leadership of the Indian State does not like to see the B.J.P. or some other force undermine its authority and hence this convergence. In this process secularism has been the casualty, secularism in the sense of a rational and humanist outlook engaged in a dialogue with religion and together forming part of the struggle for democratic rights. How do we reverse this process?

The Perspective

To start with, let us admit that none of the short-range options are by themselves going to work. The magnitude of communalism has become too large to respond to any immediate step. What is immediately necessary is to initiate some long-term processes, so that at least some decades from now secularism will register some advance. This is not to say that steps to maintain communal harmony, curb communal tensions, propose a code is ethic for ethics for political parties, restrict communal communication in the media should not be urgently undertaken. But let there be no illusion that these are adequate to tackle the problem of communalism.

The long-term perspective must rely mainly on the reorientation of the development process with focus on the cultural and political processes. This reorientation has to be achieved through the politics of democratic rights, so that the process of alienation of the deprived groups can be reversed.

There is an urgent need to reconsider the prevailing development model in India, especially its contemporary techno-managerial incarnation of the silicon state. The process of development has to be decentralized and made participatory so that its fruits are equitable shared by various identity groups, and particularly the poor among them. In other words, development must

enlarge the democratic rights of the deprived groups, the right to a dignified living and the political, economic and cultural freedoms of the citizen.

This also involves a redefinition of the Indian Union. This 'Union of States' was philosophically conceived as a union of participating identities. The linguistic identities were to enjoy constitutional power. But each political unit was also a cluster of religious and ethnic identities. Therefore, power should be so arranged as to ensure equal participation by the various regional, religious, linguistic and ethnic identities. This is why the Indian Union was structurally designed as a multilayered polity with provincial (state) sub-regional (sub-state regional, district, etc.) and lower level upright structures, to the panchayat. This process would compel every identity to negotiate and reconcile with others and together seek democratic rights.

Unfortunately, the operation of the Indian polity over the years has been in the opposite direction. The central leadership was abandoned the perspective of the decentralized federal polity. Besides the slogan of preserving unity and integrity, it has justified centralization either in the name of reducing regional disparities or in the name of curbing local conservatism or for purposes of implementing a central plan of development. In each case it has shown distrust in the capacity of the masses at the grassroots level to fight for their rights. Instead of aiding them as envisaged in the Constitution. It has practically suppresses such forces and has imposed its centralistic rule. This ideology is now shared by several other opposition parties as well.

Besides a reorientation of the development model and a reassertion of the federal process of decentralization, there has to be a comprehensive cultural policy to advance a democratic value movement in India. Our educational system should be geared towards democratic values. We must know history and sociology of all major religions and learn to conduct a dialogue between secularism and religion. The study of history has to be retrieved from the grip of conservative ideology and be related to the democratic rights movement. It would be wrong to replace one falsification of history with another falsification for the crude purpose of serving the cause of secularism. History is tried to ideology but is also a process of the discovery of truth and it must be squarely faced. The media and all the organs of communication, which are serving the needs of the centralized state, have also to be reoriented towards democratic rights. Above all, public officials, professions, teachers and politicians have to demonstrate through their day-today behaviour that they do not contribute to the communal phenomenon.

POLITICS OF COMMUNALISM

Asghar Ali Engineer

Every social phenomenon is quite complex and communalism and communal violence are equally, if not more, complex. Therefore, it is not possible to analyze in totality the phenomenon under investigation because whatever aspect we deal with, there will always s be some aspect which will be leftover due to ignorance or the unavailability of tools and techniques of social science research.

There is a continuity between the factors which were responsible for communal violence in the pre-partition period and the post-partition period. But in addition to these, many new factors have emerged and these factors are very important for our purposes. Because the present day communal situation cannot be properly understood and its manifestation in the form of communal violence cannot be grasped unless we take these new factors into account. It is no use repeating those factors which were responsible for communalism and communal violence in the pre-partition days. We would rather examine those factors which emerged after-partition, especially in the past two decades. Because the end of the sixties, that is, with the riots in Ahmedabad, or even if you go a little back, it would be more proper to say that the onset of the sixties was a watershed. The Jabalpur riots in 1962 followed by numerous riots in Ahmedabad in 1969. It is very important to understand why this has been happening. Many of us had thought, perhaps, naively or out of ignorance, that we had solved communal problem by partitioning our country. In other words it was widely believed that the two-nation theory was perhaps the best and the only way of resolving communal conflicts.

I think that was a very oversimplified notion. We became aware of complexity only when the process of development started. When India became free we adopted Five Year Plans and the process of economic development started and simultaneously a process of participating democracy was initiated. A Constitution giving franchise to all adults in India was promulgated after independence. It does not follow that with the introduction of adult franchise the entire adult population of India became aware and conscious of their rights and duties, because this was a matter of process. Our whole consciousness was, and continued to remain, feudal. We are used to authoritarian forms of government. In a feudal socio-economic culture loyalty is a very important criterion, loyalty to the zamindar, loyalty to the king and so

on. So even adult franchise was granted by the Constitution, which was undoubtedly, a great revolutionary step, perhaps unique in history, that suddenly one found that one had the right to cast a vote which was non-existent earlier, this kind of revolutionary step did not bring about a change in the outlook of the people. It did not bring about a change in our ethos. When universal franchise was granted not all people exercised their franchise according to their individual understanding, their individual democratic consciousness. Rather, they exercised their votes as the zamindar in the village wanted or as some Congress bosses or other political party bosses wanted in certain areas. But when socio-economic development went further, when democratic consciousness deepened and slowly and gradually we became aware of our rights, then our troubles began. Because now we want to exercise our rights either as individuals according to our democratic consciousness and according to our understanding and expectations and aspirations, or we want to exercise our votes according to our caste and community.

Let us not forget, whatever is true in theory is not necessarily true in practice. We urban elites may eulogize. Our perception is not necessarily the perception of all others. The whole trouble begins when we impose our perception on others. We think that our perception should be the perception of everyone, the universal perception. This does not happen. Perceptions vary from individual to individual. Similarly, perceptions vary from culture to culture, from one religious community to another, from one caste to another.

The problem of modernization and change, for example, is colored by the perception of the urban elite because modernization and change benefit them. If there is new technology it benefits us. If there is computerization, it benefits them. But take a peasant in a rural area or an artisan in some urban area: his or her perceptions are entirely different. For example, if a big textile mill is set up in an area where thousands depend on traditional patterns of weaving, we urban elites would day: “Why not a textile mill? It increases production and profit, it brings new technology, the West has achieved this and that, why not that new technology for us?” An artisan would resent this because the loses his job, his livelihood. He is suddenly uprooted from his socio-economic position. Similarly, if you want to construct a dam, we would say: “Why not? We require hydroelectric power. We need more industries and for more industries we need more electricity. We want airconditioners to be installed in our houses, we want fans and fridges in our houses. If there is no electricity, how am I going to get a fridge, or an airconditioner in my house? So there must be a hydroelectric dam”. But a tribal or a peasant says: “If this dam is constructed all our villages would be submerged and so we do not want this dam”. Anyway, when more electricity is produced it is not going to be benefit

that peasant, or tribal. So his perception is quite different. We should realize that our perceptions depend on our socio-economic situation. There is no perception which can be universal, which can be accepted by all. The whole trouble begins because we begin to think that our perceptions are universal. When we logically argue out things we employ very neat logical categories, we pay homage to reason and what reason has been achieved in the world. And then we think: "How is it that hits peasant does not understand? Why does this tribal fail to realize what is going to happen in our country with more dams and more textile mills? Why do these fools, these ignorant masses, not have paid homage to reason, homage to the superiority of technology. After all, every man decides according to his interests. Let us not forget reason is fundamental only in certain sense, for certain intellectual inquiries. It is a must because without its help you cannot properly understand or analyze things. But we should also understand the limitations of reason. Let us also not forget that reason, after all, is an instrument which can be used either way, like a matchstick which can be used for setting properly on fire and can also be used for lighting a fire to cook food or derive warmth. So while reason can be used for progress, change, universal good, human dignity etc., let us not forget that reason can also be sued as an instrument to further one's own interests. In 99 out of 100 cases this is what happens. At one level a scientist uses reason to discover new areas of empirical truth and facts, and at the other level the same scientist uses reason for advancing his personal interests. When we become fully conscious of this distinction about the role of reason we will begin to pursue many things which will not disturb our peace. But unfortunately this is what we do not do. We think our interests, our perceptions are universal. That is the beginning of the whole trouble. Nothing which is enforced against the interests of a community, or caste or any other unit will ever benefit society. It will only lead to strife and conflict and tension. When we talk of communalism or communal violence this concept becomes equally important. This must be emphasized again. It is very important.

We were talking of socio-economic development. Let us come back to the subject. Socio-economic development took place in such a way that it tended to benefit certain castes, communities and regions. Certain regions developed much more than or at the cost of other regions, certain castes developed much more at the cost of other castes and certain communities developed much more at the cost of other communities and this created social tension. So any process of socio-economic development let us not forget, was at the cost of some group or the other. That group could have been economic in nature, that is class, or it could have been religious, caste or community group.

This is precisely what happened. Naturally, those who were left behind were deprived. After all, socio-economic development, modern technology, modern

technology, reduced distances and communications at our doorstep widen our horizons and sharpen our consciousness. That is how Harijans became more and more conscious of their rights. Religious minorities like the Muslims, Christians and Sikhs began to be more conscious of their rights or what they perceived to be their just share in the whole process of socio-economic development. Nobody could have stopped this. Of course a lot of hypocrisy was used. For example, all our rulers always talked of socialism, distributive justice and equal rights for all, whether one has a Muslim or a Hindu, Sikh, a tribal or whatever. The kind of demagogy which was being used, the phraseology, was very fine, very appealing. That is why we urban elite often fall victim to that kind of phraseology. We become aware of things going wrong only when deprived people assert themselves.

The caste problem became very much sharpened after 1965. Untouchability has been there in this country for centuries. But though Harijans were always insulted and hated, they were neither burnt alive nor brutally killed. That kind of violence against them was not there. But suddenly after 1965 we see violence against Harijans emerging, and it began with the burning alive of 14 Harijans in a village in Tamil Nadu. A few landlords were prosecuted. The judge said in his judgment: “How can these gentlemen commit murder, it is unthinkable”. He released all of them. But we knew what exactly those gentlemen essentially were, how ruthless, how brutal they could be. They did burn 14 Harijans alive and injured many more.

Why did this happen? The Green Revolution took place in Punjab and in certain parts of UP and Tamil Nadu. Naturally, the landlords benefitted the most. They used new technologies, fertilizers, hybrid seeds, etc. and they wanted to employ landless laborers, who happened to be Harijans, at low wages. But the Harijans began to assert themselves. “When the landlord is getting so much, why should we work for only this pittance?” They demanded more. That is why our gentlemen landlords became so aggressive and the whole conflict was fought out in terms of caste. Economically speaking, it was not a question of caste. It was essentially a socio-economic question. But, as I submitted, religion or language or culture are used because these have great mobilizing power. So the idiom of caste was used to get the support of a whole caste group. “My caste is in danger, so U must act; my community is in danger, so I must act”. Always the caste idiom or the religious idiom are used for such purposes. But behind these idioms lie naked economic interests and only perceptive students of social or economic scene can understand these underlying processes.

My whole submission is that communal and caste conflicts will get more and more sharpened as and when social and political awareness increases among the downtrodden castes and communities.

Similarly, communal violence acquired a new sharpness after the early sixties, particularly after the mid-sixties because the minority communities also became aware of their rights, their political weight, became aware of the injustices which were being done to them in this country, and their leadership began to articulate their grievances. The majority communities immediately reacted by saying: “Here there is danger of another partition”. This was stated a number of times, whenever those grievances were articulated by the minorities, because it had a great political and emotional power. Anyone talking of the genuine grievances of the minorities was accused of appeasement. As I said, any social phenomenon is very complex. When such terms are used we have certain connotations. We can pursue the problem only when we can understand one fact, that connotations emerge from our emotional make up, our interests. For example, the concept of appeasement policy. There is both truth and falsehood in this. Truth in the sense that what the Congress, or any ruling party for that matter said verified this because since 1967 other parties came to power in certain states and those parties followed a similar policy. There is a falsehood involved. These ruling parties promised heaven to the minorities or to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, just to get their votes. They never meant to solve their genuine grievances. They wanted votes, promise heaven to them and got their votes. In that sense it is correct to say that it was merely an appeasement policy. But it is wrong in the sense that by using a policy based on the concept of appeasement you denied the genuine grievances of the minorities. It is wrong to go on saying that it is an appeasement policy and the policy increases their aggressiveness, because you are ignoring the genuine problem of those minorities. You refuse to take note of them by using the blanket term of appeasement. Thus the argument that appeasement only increases aggressiveness of the minority groups and scheduled castes and tribes is wrong on one level, but right on another.

When appeasement is operationalized, say, you begin to take grievances more seriously and want to resolve them. I am sure empirical evidence can be given to support my contention that at the general level of the masses it will not increase aggression but resolve the problem. After all when you have grievances and they are solved, even partly, you will certainly be happy. But a section in that community or caste might begin to demand more. In that sense one can say appeasement leads to some kind of increased aggression or increased assertion. But that section can be isolated if by appeasement we mean a readymade solution of the grievances of the people in general. This is precisely what does not happen. As said, ruling parties and groups never solve the problems of the minorities and downtrodden castes and tribal groups. They are only vocal, verbal, nothing more than that, and they take full benefit of their votes in a ballot-box oriented system.

In fact, that is what led to aggression in whole communities rather than in any small sections. There are the elite in all communities and castes. Harijans are the worst sufferers in this country but there are the elite among them too. Now there are even tribal Chief Ministers in the States like Gujarat. Thus the elite will always tend to be assertive and aggressive because, given the dynamic situation, their aspirations will keep increasing and they will keep demanding more. But the only genuine solution of isolating the elite is to cater to the real grievances of the masses in general. I do not know whether you will agree with me or not, but within the present capitalist structure of our economy the genuine grievances of the minorities and lower castes and tribal groups cannot be resolved because that means taking away a big chunk from the elite and distributing it to the masses. That is why communal conflict cannot be successfully resolved in our society. I have been predicting this for the past one and a half decades and I sand by that prediction – that caste and communal conflict will go on sharpening in our society. The greater the degree of socio-economic development the sharper this conflict will tend to be.

This may sound gloomy, but I do not think it is a gloomy forecast. I call it a realistic prediction rather than a prophecy of doom. We have to be ruthlessly realistic at certain stages. Otherwise, we will be deluding ourselves. If I say: "Let us strengthen secular forces and everything will be resolved", I will be talking in abstraction. Secularism is an anti-dose of communalism but it cannot be a successful anti-dose of communalism merely on paper. You have to go to the roots in society to find out how genuine secularism can work. Can it work when at the same time the worst unjust policies are being perpetuating? How can that be possible? If you simply keep on; telling the deprived sections in society that we stand by secularism, will it minimize communal and caste conflicts in society? It will never. That is why I arrived at the conclusion that within the present capitalistic framework these grievances cannot be solved satisfactorily on either side of the fence. Those who are deprived will become more and more aggressive about their rights and tier grievances and those on the other side of the fence, the privileged castes and classes, will also become more aggressive in order to defend their privileges. Hence, these conflicts in society will go on sharpening.

Keeping in Ahmedabad riots of 1969 in mind, again I would like to submit that I would like to submit that I am not in favor of reducing any phenomenon vulgarly to any single factor. I am not saying that only socio-economic development and social transformation is 100 per cent responsible for all the trouble. It plays an important role, no doubt. But there are many other factors at the superstructural levels, such as cultural, religious etc., which have their own autonomy. I am quite aware of that. But still we have to take note of certain predominant trends in society. Whatever I will be placing before you

now, will be in such a multi-dimensional context, not assuming that there is only one explanation for caste and communal violence.

Before the 1969 riots in Ahmedabad a split takes place in the Congress, Indira Gandhi wanted to assert her position and she used a very powerful weapon to establish her leadership. With a stroke of the pen she nationalized all the important banks in the country. This was a very important backdrop of the communal violence in Ahmedabad. When she nationalized the banks she did not do it because she suddenly just fell in love with socialism and realized that she must do justice to the downtrodden masses in the country. No. She had her own political reasons compulsions. She wanted to over-ride the another section in the Congress and establish her leadership. She could do this only by taking a measure which would electrify the political and economic scene and the masses would come to her side. She succeeded in that. When she took this step, she won massive support, but among the elite she got isolated and immediately a slogan was raised that she was taking the country towards communism and this must be fought out. The right wing forces took the whole thing very alarmingly, believing and propagating that it was a step towards communism which could be stopped only by raising the communal bogey. Preparations were made for riots in Ahmedabad and some other parts of the country just to communalize the whole atmosphere. The whole country was discussing nationalization, how it would be beneficial or harmful. The whole discussion was on economic lines. Those in favor argued that only 14 families had access to the huge funds deposited in the banks and now the middle classes and even the lower classes would have access to these funds. Directions were given to not only rickshaw-pullers but even to shoe-menders. It was a political gimmick but it was tried out. All of us discussed how it would benefit the masses. Those of us who were opposed to it said it was only gimmick. Such loans would be given to shoeshine boys and rickshaw-pullers and again the same pattern would be re-established. One may or may not agree with this point of view, but such discussions must have been really harmful to those who opposed any economic change in the country. Those who realized that the most potential weapon to oppose it was to create a communal situation. They succeeded in their attempts to create one. Then suddenly, while we were discussing the economic situation in the country, everyone began discussing the communal situation – whether the Muslims or another and everybody did so. If you see the articles in the newspapers and magazines of those days, as Punjab is the dominant problem today, as is communalism in other States, a similar situation prevailed in 1969. Everyone was talking about what went wrong in Ahmedabad. Many national newspapers attempted analyses. Most of them tended to blame the Muslims for what happened in Ahmedabad. Only certain incidents were picked up, like a Muslim sub-inspector kicking the Ramayana, stopping a Ramayana

discourse, or the stoning of Jagannath Temple. These incidents were highlighted as if they were the sole cause. Then bang came the Bhiwandi riots where a massacre took place, followed by a chain of small and big riots in different parts of the country. So this factor – the communal overtones given to the nationalization of banks – was a very important factor though not the only one, in the beginning of a series of fresh riots in the late sixties. Since then there have been phases of lull. For example, in the mid-seventies we see the minimum number of communal riots. During the Emergency also there were very few communal riots. The whole struggle was directed against the government. There were reasons for that. But again from 1977 onwards a series of riots began under the Janata regime – Moradabad, Jamshedpur, Aligarh. All three major riots took place under the Janata regime. Even the Jana Sangh was a constituent power. They cannot say that their government was following a policy of appeasement. But still communal violence continued. Therefore, it is not the policy of appeasement which leads to communal violence. You have to search for roots of such violence in socio-economic development and the conceptions and perceptions of the benefits of those developments.

Then again Indira Gandhi came to power. Perhaps the Muslims thought that there would be some relief. But bang came the Moradabad riots in 1980. These riots became another watershed, just as the Ahmedabad riots were once a watershed in the late sixties. From 1980 onwards Indira Gandhi's perception of the political situation completely changed. She had been depending on the minority and Harijan votes. If you want to understand the current phase of riots in the country, this is important – Mrs. Gandhi's perception of the political situation in the country changed. She came to the conclusion that she could no longer depend on Muslim vote and no longer depend on support from the South, which was also an important conclusion because at that time N.T. Rama Rao came to power. You will remember that immediately after the Emergency she fought the elections from Andhra Pradesh and won. She was most unpopular in northern India during the Emergency, but she retained her popularity in the South. She thought, therefore, that she had good support in the South. But with N.T. Rama Rao coming to power she came to the conclusion that she could no longer take the South for granted. Regionalism had asserted itself there, in Karnataka as well as in Andhra Pradesh, both of which were her strongholds. Her regional perception changed and rightly so because regionalism asserted itself in the South and she lost her base there. So in the one hand, her regional perception changed and on the other her communal perception changed. She could not rely on votes from the South and she could not rely on Harijan and Muslim votes. So she switched her policy over to another direction.

Now, she sought support from the Hindus. By the Hindus we mean the Hindi belt because if you want to get Hindu support you have to get support from the entire Hindi belt. That is why I call Moradabad a watershed. If you dig out old issues of newspapers and magazines you will see that until the Moradabad riots Indira Gandhi was very local in condemning the RSS for all communal riots. If any major riot took place, she gave statements directly or indirectly condemning the RSS and Hindu communal forces. But if her statements after 1980, specially after the Moradabad riots, are analyzed one will not find any direct or indirect condemnation of the RSS. Mind you, she had taken strong action against the RSS during the Emergency. The RSS was banned and the entire RSS cadre was locked up in various jails in the country. Then the same political persons switches over to another extreme and in a very subtle way – no prime minister of a country can do it overtly, it could be done only covertly – she starts seeking Hindu votes. The Meenakshipuram incident came as a godsend to her. Because you will see that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad becomes a very strong only after the Meenakshipuram incident. Again there is empirical evidence to show that in a very subtle and covert what she supported the campaign by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Of course when there was an onslaught against her by the CPI, the CPM and others she had to retrace her steps. At a number of places the Vishwa Hindu Parishad constructed temples. She inaugurated one temple in Mathura, and another one was to be inaugurated by the President of India. He had to cancel that programme and she too had to retract publicly because she same under attack by the left forces in the country. But her covert support for the Vishwa Hindu Parishad continued. So much so that she was partly responsible for the Punjab problem. She created such an atmosphere in the country that the Hindus had to look to her for support. I do not condemn or uphold the entire Hindu community as such, because every religious community is divided into various interest groups. There are certain perceptions which are valid for the entire community and there are many other perceptions which are only valid for one section or another of the community. There is no religious community in India or anywhere else in the world which could be described as monolithic. Generally it is said that the Muslims are always one, they will always stand together, they are monolithic. This is far from true. At best it can be only a highly superficial understanding of the phenomenon. No religious community in the world could be monolithic. Empirical studies in the field reveal that there are deep differences in perceptions and approaches. I am saying on the basis of several empirical studies that I have conducted that it is totally wrong to maintain that the Muslim are a monolithic community. As I said, on certain emotional issues they might have earlier united. Similarly, the Hindus might unite or the Christians might unite, but that would be a momentary and emotional unity, not real unity. When it comes to real unity they are all

divided into various interest groups, various classes. Even the class division does not adequately describe the reality. The communities are divided on the basis of a perception of their interests.

So Indira Gandhi partly created the Punjab problem and created such a situation in totality that the Hindus began to perceive that she could be their savior. If her speeches are carefully read and analyzed we find that she would not take categorical positions that was impossible. Even if a diehard communalist becomes the Prime Minister he or she cannot take categorical positions, because that would lead to very explosive problems. So, they take very subtle positions. But if her statements are carefully analyzed, we can find evidence for the shift in her policy. Since then, there have been many riots in which the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has been instrumental. I am talking of riots in the Hindu belt, in Central India, in Western India, in parts of Southern India. For example, the riots in Assam cannot be ascribed to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. In the Kashmir valley, the Jamaat-e-Islami was responsible for one riot; for the second riot which later took place there, the Jamait was not directly responsible; some Congress elements and others were responsible. So the situation would vary. The subcontinent is such a big geographical territory that no one single concept can be valid throughout its length and breadth. Therefore, we will have to take into consideration macro factors as well as micro factors in analyzing communal riots. What I was talking of earlier was the macro factor, the general climate, the general community and class-wise perception in the country.

But then there are micro factors which are also very important. By micro factors I mean local situations. It could be municipal politics, the role of anti-social elements, some local incidents. Let us take a series of riots, in one localized geographical area – in Ahmedabad and Baroda and a few other smaller towns in Gujarat. Let us analyze some of the micro factors.

I have tried to evolve a general theory of these macro factors. All the shades must be understood. It is very important. In that sense I do not call it only Hindu-Muslim strife but also strife in other forms where other material factors play a very important role.

In Gujarat towns, Patels, Harijans and Muslims live together. When anti-Harijan riots took place, it was the same situation. Patels used to throw stones. They installed pulleys in terraces, lowered buckets, filled them with stones, pulled the buckets back up and throw the stones. We were shown a number of pulleys on the terraces. Then they set fire to (lowa) structures and huts with rags soaked in petrol or kerosene. A number of Harijans and Muslims complained to us that this was a regular pattern and they were helpless, because if they threw stones they had to throw against the force of gravity

and it was very difficult to hit a target above them; and if at all they succeeded in throwing stones they would only smash glasses, nothing more than that. But the people from above threw missiles and set structures ablaze. The houses below being very often "semi-pucca", the roofs were pierced thorough and people inside them were hit. Therefore, the structure of the city, the various locations and the composition of the population are very important in understanding the logistics of communal riots, though not their genesis.

As these people migrate from towns and rural areas, the richer people leave the old city areas and settle down in affluent suburbs. Our thorough investigations show that the plush suburbs are hardly affected by communal violence. When there is a curfew, when people are being killed and burnt alive, you will find activity in affluent suburbs quite normal. You will not feel that anything is going in the city. So the rich tend to migrate to plush suburbs and these areas remain unaffected because there it is not possible to have the kind of violence that you can have in the old part of the city. It is very difficult to set fire to the 'pucca', concrete flats in the plush suburbs. People can easily take refuge within. The roads are wide and the police can easily chase the offenders. Another sociological feature is that in these suburbs you generally find upper caste Hindus with a sprinkling of rich Muslims, say a few Boras, Khojas or Memons, which are the trading communities among the Muslims. So the communal and caste structures are such that communal or caste violence or caste violence has no meaning there. Only people belonging to one community or one caste live there, while in the old city where all the problems of communities and castes living together exist the clashes are possible.

In the labour areas the population may be mixed. Hostility is aroused mainly because of job competition. If you see the composition of the population in the labour areas of Ahmedabad, specially the textile labour, you will find that a lot Hindus from eastern U.P. have migrated there. They are locally known as 'bhaiyas'. I do not know what they are known there. A large number of them have migrated to Ahmedabad in search of jobs. They constitute the political base of the BJP and formerly the Jana Sangh. The textile labour ahs a large number of Muslims. So there is acute competition between the Muslims and these bhaiyas. Many Muslims are also from U.P., mind you, not all Muslims are Gujaratis. For example, in Bapunagar, which was the worst affected by communal violence from May 11 to 22, as many as 500 houses were demolished in three days. They were 'pucca' houses built by the housing colony, of course, ground structures only, not multi-storeyed. They were completely demolishes as if they had been bombed from the air. There was a mass of rubble. Row after row had been reduced to rubble. These hostilities are aroused because of job competition which is taken advantage of by communal forces.

Another factor, when I talk of the sociology of urban growth, in these labor areas on the one hand and the walled city on the other is becoming more and more expensive. So the builder lobby becomes quite strong and it develops political linkages.

Because in cities like Ahmedabad, with their continuous growth, industrial as well as commercial, the builders' lobby also becomes very strong and establishes very deep political linkages, it gets interested in getting certain strategically located plots of land. Taking advantage of communal, regional and caste prejudices they incite trouble in very devious ways. They would never be seen on the caste scene or communal scene directly. Only a lot of investigation would produce certain empirical evidence to show to what extent these lobbies are involved. But in many cases they play an important role from behind the scenes.

The Bapunagar area, for example is a labor colony and the population continuously increases. So the value of land has been skyrocketing. There is one slum lord living nearby Bapuanagar, who was very interested in this land. The local Congress (I) Councillor who belonged to the Solanki lobby was in league with this slum lord. Most of the Muslims in the Bapunagar area clearly identified him as being instrumental in inciting communal violence in that area. The Congress (I) is not supposed to talk communalism publicly, from a public platform, because it goes against its secular ideology. But his man was openly inciting violence. He was seen doing so by several residents of Bapunagar; they very clearly told us that identifying him by name, his party, etc. because that Congress (I) councilor was in league with the slum lord, mainly because the latter could mobilize his muscle power in ensuring votes. The slum lord needs political protection and the politicians need votes, and sometimes money too for election funds etc. We told Solanki very clearly during a one hour dialogue with him. "There is incontrovertible evidence that Mr. so and so belonging to your party faction was involved. Why are you not taking action against him?" could he take action? He belonged to his faction, he mobilized votes for him. So arresting him was out of the question. Solanki at that stage, mind it, was desperate about solving the communal problem because the violence was going against him. At one stage it was said that he gave a communal turn to the situation but I could not find any clear evidence of that, and nobody has clear evidence; it is only a conjecture that Solanki tried to give it such a form. But even in that desperate situation where communal violence was going against his interests he was unable to stop it precisely because some persons belonging to his faction were involved in it and he could not take any action against them.

So you would see that in most of the communal riots the culprits go unpunished because they belong to one or the other political party; or, if they

are not members of this or that political party, they are at least their supporters. Even if some honest police officials arrests them, there would be tremendous political pressure to release them.

Similarly, most police officers also tend to become dishonest and communally motivated because they know that no action can be taken against them. If an honest politician dares take any action they can raise a hue and cry on a communal basis and he will have to retract. That is why the police is becoming very bold these days and playing a very active part in communal violence. In all caste agitations in Gujarat the police officers publicly displayed their hatred against the Harijans and the tribals. They were ruthless in beating the Harijans in all those localities, setting fire to their houses. The Press referred to police brutalities in the earlier stage when they felt that the police was going against the upper caste and supporting Solanki. You know the whole case of the "Gujarat Samachar". Ultimately the police agents burnt it. It is an open secret. They did it because it was writing against them. It is said that people connected with the Media caught hold of a prostitute who could easily accuse anyone that she was raped or molested without having any social consequences. This prostitute was interviewed by us and she confessed that she was made to make a false allegation. The allegation was that the police stripped her and paraded her naked in the streets. This was just to incite the upper class Hindus against the police. The police was enraged by the mischief the "Gujarat Samachar" was doing and ultimately burnt the office of the newspaper.

The same thing happens in a communal situation. If you do a content analysis of vernacular papers, you will find that the English papers might incite communalism in a sophisticated way, but not Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi or Urdu papers. There you will realize the naked form of communalism, how they put it across and how they incite communalism. The common man who takes newspaper reports as gospel truth has no time to investigate. Moreover, it is in consonance with his emotions. So he will immediately believe whatever is published in the newspaper.

I will give you an example of one incident in Ahmedabad. A family was living in a relief camp, the Amanpura relief camp, near Bapunagar, because their house had been burnt down and they had to live there. They had a four-month-old daughter. She died. If it is a small child they do not use a coffin. They wrap it in a cloth and take it for burial. Eleven persons went for this burial. When they were returning after the burial two policemen came and attacked them with lathis and they were joined by three municipal councilors. The father of the girl was killed on the spot. His brother was grievously injured and the remaining people ran away. The next day there was a report in the "Gujarat Samachar", which was copied the next day by "The Times of India". I read it in

Bombay, got interested in the incident and went to investigate along with others. The news was that a coffin full of lethal arms was being carried and the police came to know it in time and seized the arms. You can understand the mischief potential of this news. “The Times of India” it was under the news of communal riots in Ahmedabad, it was not headlined. In the “Gujarat Samachar” it was headlined. The common people would read the “Gujarat Samachar”, not “the Times of India”. As it is “The Times of India” news was damaging enough. But when it appears in the headlines you can understand what mischief it can cause, how much hatred it can generate. I interviewed the mother of the child. The husband was dead. I interviewed a few others in the relief camp to verify the claim of the mother. Even the police could not contradict it later on. A contradiction did appear in newspapers, a small piece somewhere on an inside page which would be hardly noticed.

I did a thorough investigation of this case and that is why I am saying that the media can really play havoc. The common people’s prejudices and stereotypes get so reinforced by this kind of selective news that it becomes very difficult to control them. It was not only caste or communal hatred that lay behind what the “Gujarat Samachar” had published. It was motivated by animosity against Solanki because the “Gujarat Samachar” is owned by an individual who was expecting his wife to be taken into the Ministry or given some important political position, which Solanki did not do. So the “Gujarat Samachar” saw an opportunity to settle scores. During the caste violence too it played a role similar to the one it adopted during communal violence, just to embarrass Solanki. Day after day it published inflammatory things, so much so that a press delegation which went there also passed strictures against the Gujarat Samachar, saying that it was playing a very unworthy role and that a newspaper should not do that.

Another micro factor in a developing city or area. When the working class population increases, introducing several stresses and strains in their lives, they feel a need for liquor. In Gujarat there is prohibition, which is a big farce. Prohibition is responsible for this mad violence to a great extent. I am talking of a particular situation. It may not be valid elsewhere. In both Ahmedabad and Baroda, the worst affected centres of communal violence, I would say that 75 per cent of the role of instigator is being played by the liquor kings. They manufacture illicit liquor which flows like water. There is no problem whatsoever in obtaining liquor in a State where strict prohibition exists on paper. When there is a continuous influx of the working class population they need more liquor and this is provided by the anti-social elements who become very powerful. When we investigated the Baroda riots we were told that a gang known as the Shiv Kahar gang was alone selling liquor worth Rs. 1 lakh in the city every day. There was another powerful Muslim gang. Its sales might

be slightly less but certainly worth not less than Rs. 50,000/-. We could not get the exact figures, but this is a guess. This means that the Shiv Kahar gang alone was selling liquor worth Rs 365 lakh per year, which is not a small sum. It means a lot of money and part of it was going to the Solanki faction. These anti-social elements developed political linkages. There was a clash between the Shiv Kahar gang and the Muslim gang. At one stage Shiv Kahar was arrested by the police and jailed. His Muslim rival wrote letters to the Government saying that Shiv Kahar was being patronized in the jail. Ultimately the Government had to stop all the facilities being given to him. Shiv Kahar was bent upon taking revenge. When he came out of jail he took a vow to teach this man a lesson. Moreover, he was a business competitor. So a fight to the finish was started between the two gangs. They wanted to involve their respective communities. An anti-social element who accumulates money and becomes very rich develops political aspirations and political linkages. They must also establish a caste or community base. This they do by spending a lot of money on religious festivals, to "wash away" all sins and appearing as very faithful Hindus or Muslims. Take Haji Mastan, for example. He does all sorts of things to give the impression of a very faithful Muslim. He is always more than generous in giving money to Anjuman-i-Islam or other religious organization of Muslims, so that his sins are "washed away". Similarly, the two gangs try to put a lot of money into religious festivals. Shivaji Jayanti is never celebrated in Gujarat. Shivaji is never seen as a hero by the Gujaratis. He is a Maratha hero. Shiv Kahar belongs to a Maratha caste. His is actually a fisherman caste, traditional carriers of *kahars, palkis* etc. He, therefore, started celebrating the Shivaji festival and in the year in which the riots broke out Shivaji' sword was worshipped. He wanted to establish a base among his own caste fellows. He also started the Ganpati festival in Baroda. This was also by and large unknown in Gujarat.

To outdo them the Muslim gang started celebrating Muharram with much fanfare, with higher and more grandiose tazias and the whole dispute started on processions – the tazia procession or a Durga procession did all this happen? Why? Because the two gangsters wanted to appear as defenders and heroes in the eyes of their own communities. It was basically a fight between the Shiv Kahar gang and the Muslim gang, but it became communal.

The clashes started. There was communal violence in Baroda. Then the Jaspal Singh incident took place. You must have read about it in the newspapers. Jaspal Singh developed some political aspirations and tried to fulfill them through this. He also tried to become a hero among the Hindus.

Similarly in Ahmedabad, clashes between the Alam Zeb gang and a number of Patel gangs became notorious. The clashes were due to trade rivalry between the gangs. Alam Zeb and the Patel gangs both wanted to monopolize the trade

in illicit liquor. While in 1969 the whole situation was politics, this time the predominant factor was the role of the anti-social elements. They wanted to monopolize the liquor business. In each and every lane in the Daryapur and Kalupur localities there are 'bhattis' (distilleries) and gambling dens. The poor, innocent residents dare not raise their voice. When we interviewed them, all of them unanimously said: "Get rid of these anti-social elements and the problem will be solved". But neither the Government nor the police want to solve the problem because both are the beneficiaries, the police getting their "haftha" and the politicians their money and muscle power. With the demand for liquor in the market always rising with the continuously increasing population, the anti-social elements will continue to fight against each other and will keep on giving it a communal or caste orientation. Even in caste riots these factors are very predominant. The Patels are the most instrumental in "teaching a lesson" to the Scheduled Castes.

Most of the muslims are carriers, not owners of "bhattis" and dens, and the owners are Patels. Clashes often break out between them on the question of payment. The Muslims collect all the money at the shop level because they are the carriers and there will always be disputes that the business was so much but the money collected only so much. Sometimes the Muslims say the police took away the money.

On 18 March, 1985, when the communal riots started in Ahmedabad it was generally know that these started because of a fight first between the Patel owners of liquor dens and the Muslim carriers. Suddenly stoning began from Patel houses on a Muslim locality which was predominated by these carriers and the situation immediately took a communal turn. A number of persons whom we interviewed in the locality said this. And the liquor kings fight ruthlessly.

For the same reason Alam zeb became a great hero for Muslims. The Muslims perceived him to be their defender. He became a legendary figure in Ahmedabad. He was finally killed by the police in Surat because he had his own animosity with certain police officers. His body was taken to Bombay. The procession was worth seeing. There were not less than 50,000 Muslims in the funeral procession. He was a liquor king and how can millat and Islam and liquor go together? Emotions were so powerful. That is why I say that empirical reality is so different from religious percepts and teachings. Nothing works there. The only predominant feeling was that he is a shahid-e-millat. For the Gujarat Press he was the greatest culprit and they praised the police skyhigh for killing him. The Hindus saw him as being responsible for all the communal violence in Gujarat. The perceptions of the two communities were so different. This came out strongly when we talked to people on both sides – Hindus and Muslims – about how they viewed Alam Zeb. It was a very rich

experience of how perceptions vary from community to community, caste to caste, situation to situation.

So what I was trying to say was that when socio-economic development takes place in certain towns, the demand for liquor goes up and with the increase in the volume of black money, there is an increase in smuggling and smuggler gangs come into existence. If there is more black money in circulation, the craze for foreign goods increases – color TVs, videos, good quality cloth, gold, electronic goods, etc. The whole trouble in Verawal town in Gujarat was a clash between smuggling gangs. When we visited Verawal, the riots had not yet taken place, there was only tension, but every common citizen was saying that communal violence was a matter of days. Today there are several towns in Gujarat, in the coastal areas or nearby which are seething with communal tension because of smuggling. So socio-economic development has these indirect, not direct, consequences: black money comes into existence and generates a demand for smuggled goods; the working class population increases due to dynamic development and the demand for liquor goes up. Similarly, the demand for drugs goes up because children of affluent families alienated from their parents take to intoxication (There are so many psychological explanations of drug addiction as well). The shift in the golden triangle from Burma, Thailand and Laos, to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, with India being a channel, has had consequences in Gujarat.

So all these factors put together increase the number of criminals and anti-social elements. These elements develop their political linkages and the whole scenario is complete.

Take for example, the growth of the Shiv Sena. Everybody knows that at the base of the Shiv Sena structure is the underworld of Bombay and at the top the middle class Maharashtrians. The leadership is in the hands of this middle class, again belonging to particular castes of Maharashtrians. That is very important, because to study the caste structure of the communal party is a regarding exercise – why only particular castes take to the kind of politics. The underworld consisted of notorious criminals, bootleggers, smugglers, matka dons, all such elements. Of course, with the withdrawal of prohibition the liquor problem has become secondary in Bombay, though it continues because there are 'bhattis' which sell liquor cheap, a pavva for a rupee or two, and that is what a worker wants to at the fag end of the day. The price of a bottle of country liquor marketed by the Government is Rs. 18 or so and even if he can afford that he cannot take it home; he has to drink at some joint and the Government does not provide any such joints. Apart from five star hotels, there are a number of hotels and restaurants in Bombay where you can have liquor and beer. The middle class people go there because they would not like to drink before parents or the wife. The working class cannot afford this. The

'bhattis' still are there, though not in such large numbers as during prohibition, with a place to drink cheap liquor. I was a municipal engineer in-charge of the demolition of hutments in certain areas and I have seen what the liquor menace was in Bombay.

So the very base of Shiv Sena consists of criminals. There is not a single political party in Bombay which at one time or another has not taken the help of the Shiv Sena. The Shiv Sena has begun to play an important role in the Bombay Municipal Corporation where it is the single largest party, and the entire administration of the corporation is today controlled by it. It did not get all the seats just by fluke. There was careful preparation and it was the result of a planned operation of three or four years.

The Bhiwandi-Bombay riots of 1984 (I have produced a book on that) were the starting point for the Shiv Sena winning the Bombay Municipal elections. Those riots were very carefully planned. They began with a certain incident. There is a yellow Urdu journal known as "Akbar-e-Alam" whose editor had once worked for All India Radio. He wanted to be rich overnight and he sensationalized all kinds of things. Bal Thackerey made a speech which, to be very objective, was not offensive. He said something about the prophet. It is very difficult to verify what he actually said, but collating all the reports and discussions my final impression is that he said something like this: that the Prophet himself as an ordinary man and when somebody urinated in the mosque he personally cleaned it. This is what he said. This was sensationalized by the editor of "Akbar-e-Alam". A very sensational headline was given. This was a spark, although this news was not responsible for the communal riots. The Shiv Sena was already preparing for riots. The news report became a spark and the sentiments of the Muslims in that area were inflamed. A meeting was held in Bhiwandi in which senior Muslims urged people to move cautiously; they had seen what happens in communal riots. But there were some younger elements among the Muslims who said "we must take revenge; how long can we tolerate an attack on our religion" etc. On Shabharat they tried to hoist a green flag near saffron flags and the incidents started from there. What a disaster it was. We visited every locality from Bhiwandi up to Colaba. Everywhere there were Shiv Sena hordes with swords, lathis and gupties – these were the three main weapons – specially in the slum areas. The houses of Muslims were reduced to a rubble. Rickshaws were burnt, sewing machines were smashed to pieces, household utensils smashed up if not taken away. Everywhere they went about with these three weapons, not firearms. Where did they get these weapons from? You cannot produce them overnight. Preparations had been going on. The localities on the fringe of Bhiwandi were completely finished, absolutely nothing was left, no utensils, no clothes. Our organization called the Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights

produced a film on this. We have made video cassettes. We interviewed a large number of persons in Bhiwandi and shots have been shown on what happened, how the houses were demolished and so on.

The communal violence paid rich dividends to the Shiv Sena. When all this was happening Vasantdada Patil was a helpless spectator because he needed the Shiv Sena's help for two reasons. One was that his faction in the Congress (I) could become strong only by winning a Rajya Sabha seat, and this could happen only if two Shiv Sena MLAs voted for his candidate. Members of the rival faction wanted to defeat the Vasantdada candidate. See the political delicacies. He refused to take any action against Bal Thackerey. That speech was not offensive, as I said, but it was wrongly sensationalized by "Akbar-e-Alam". But normally when any such speech is delivered by a leader, the intelligence agency either records it or notes it down. He could have easily got the report of the intelligence officers and published it, but he was afraid of doing that because he did not want to offend Bal Thackerey in any way. When the riots were taking place, J.F. Ribeiro was the Police Commissioner. And when riots were taking place, Vasantdada literally touched Bal Thackerey's feet – photographs if this were published in Bombay Dailies – requesting Bal Thackerey to ask his party members to vote for his candidate. How can a Chief Minister who is so abjectly dependent on the leader of the party which is responsible for communal violence take any action?

Communal violence stopped. The next month was the month of "Ramzan", in which the last Friday is very important for the Muslims. Again the city was gripped with tension. On the one hand the Muslims were preparing, led by Haji Mastan and on the other the Shiv Sena was making preparations for another showdown. This second showdown was not the advantage of Vasantadada Patil because he had already been embarrassed enough in the first phase by the naked dance of Shiv Sena hordes. He told Ribeiro not to tolerate any nonsense. Riberio sent out a circular that if communal violence broke out in any area of any police station the Inspector of that area would be suspended. Believe me, nothing happened. Forty notorious "Shakha Pramukhs" of the Shiv Sena were put under arrest and not an ant was killed. The same Ribeiro was there in both cases. In the earlier case, communal violence went on for 14 days with news everyday of firing, stabbing, people killed and houses burnt, the worst incidents taking place in Govandi, one of the largest slums inhabited by the Muslims and Scheduled Castes. The story of Govandi is very interesting but in the present context we do not have time to go into the details. It also throws light on how collusion between the police, anti-social elements and politicians works. Similar instructions could have been issued by Ribeiro in the first phase itself, but they were not. Not that Ribeiro was communal. He was helpless. Without orders from the cabinet he

could take no action on his own. He was asked to look the other way when things happened. But when he was told not to tolerate any nonsense he put it down very efficiently. Nothing happened.

The Shiv Sena follows the same policy in other areas. It has been openly saying that if there can be N.T. Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh, Rama Chandran in Tamil Nadu, why not Bal Thackerey in Maharashtra? Why should we not assert our regional identity? Here it is not merely a regional identity; it is a regional cum communal identity. It is a well-known fact the Bal Thackerey was once an RSS activist. Earlier the Shiv Sena was confined to Bombay. Now it is trying to establish its branches all over Maharashtra. The first thing they do before establishing a branch is to stage a communal violence in Maharashtra, in Nasik, Panvel and Nanded. It was the same pattern in all three places. They contested the municipal elections last time they could get only one or two seats. Now they are determined to capture a sizeable number of seats if not the majority. The easiest thing for them is to win over a section of the Hindu population by inciting communal feelings. That is what happened in Panvel where communal riots broke out. The same thing happened in Nasik. But in Nanded the Shiv Sena was not involved, it was the RSS and the Muslim League who fought each other. But Panvel and Nasik are major growing towns. Many of the factors which I described in Ahmedabad and Bombay exist because both are industrially growing towns. But Umapur is another case. It is a small town or a big village you can say.

In Nasik, Panvel and Umapur there is neither the Muslim League not the Jamaat-e-Islami. The Muslims maintain such a low-key existence there that they are afraid of even the leaders of these organizations. If Muslims League or Jamaat leaders visited their area, they would politely be asked to go away. This has been the psychology in these two places, Panvel and Nasik. But after these riots the Muslim League and especially the Jamaat have become quite active and it is being welcomed. You will be surprised that there was no trace of the Jamaat in Gujarat. Now each town in Guajarat with a sizable population of Muslims has a branch of the Jamaat-e-Islami. It did a lot of work in providing relief. Similarly Nasik, Panvel, Umapur, Aurangabad elsewhere it is very active in providing relief. In Maharashtra a section of the Muslims is quite affluent, specially the Memons, Khojas and Boras being Shias are not as enthusiastic about this. Of course, they are being greatly affected now. In Panvel and Nasik it is mainly the Boras who suffered; all their properties were destroyed. But in terms of relief, Memons are very active, being Sunnis. These are the things which must be taken into account to understand a communal riot thoroughly. Memons are rich and they are rendering a lot of relief in Ahmedabad today, a lot of money from Bombay goes to Ahmedabad. Banatwala is a Memon from Bombay. Most of the relief is being channeled through either the Muslim

League or the Jamaat. The Jamaat is much more organized and cadre-based organization. Where the Jamaat succeeds the Muslim League does not succeed to the same extent. I checked with most of the relief camps and everywhere I was told that the Jamaat was doing wonderful work and more and more and more Muslims are becoming its followers in those area.

So communal riots ultimately benefit political reactionaries from both sides, Hindus as well as Muslims. There are a number of Gandhian and Sarvodaya Organizations in Ahmedabad. I asked them very pointedly why they could not organize relief on secular lines. At least they could have gone to some Gujarati industrialists and compelled them to pay for the relief of the affected Muslims and that could have won them over again. Throughout Bhiwandi, there were hundreds of relief camps, all of them financed by either Jamaat or Haji Mastan. Haji Mastan was particularly popular in all relief camps because he went to the extent of arranging regular food everyday – sabzi, roti/chawal, and biryani twice a week – and clothes, utensils, etc. There was no secular relief. Nobody was moved to think that these helpless victims deserved some relief on secular lines.

I think that is much more dangerous in a post-violence period. Relief organized on communal basis is quite disastrous. Of course there were a few Leftist youth organizations in Bombay which did very good work. But youth organizations, and that too belonging to Left Parties, cannot have much resources. They appeal to people for old clothes or waste paper which they can sell and convert into money. How much can all that make? But they showed the spirit and came forward and rendered relief, specially in Bhiwandi.

I end by drawing your attention to one very sad thing. We believed in and idealized mixed living as that would help build bridges between the Hindus and the Muslims. But unfortunately, these riots in Gujarat and Maharashtra have widened the gulf so much that even very sensible people among the Muslims are leaving these areas to go and live with their community. This trend is specially so in Ahmedabad. After what happened in Meghaninagar, where five members of a Muslim constable's family were burnt alive, this trend could become an avalanche. Every Muslim I talked to in Ahmedabad said he would shift from his present place of residence. There were distress sales of property and the administration had to issue an ordinance banning distress sale of property. You can imagine what is happening in Gujarat. I do not know how that ordinance could be effective but it had to be issued.

So it is very sad that whatever little trend there was towards mixed living, specially among the upper classes, towards helping to build bridges, seems to be disappearing. Even among the upper-class Muslims the tendency now is to move to Muslim areas. There has been a further receding into our communal

ghettos and this was symbolized during caste riots. As I said, the Patels, the Harijans and the Muslims live together in the walled city. The walls were three or four feet high. Now they are at least ten to twelve feet high so that a person from one locality does not jump into another to commit crime. This s not only raising wall physically but it is raising mental barriers. The walls are a physical manifestation of that I was so pained when I saw those walls being raised in height. This is how the gap is widening between the various communities in India.

COMMUNALISM AND FOREIGN POLICY

V.P. Dutt

Communalism, I am afraid, is going to be our consuming passion for the next many years. It is already assuming Frankenstienian proportions and is a festering sore now. It almost seems that the dragon's seeds have come to sow. I should like to mention to you what a political practitioner with almost 40 years of experience said to me the other day, that we are all deeply tainted by the virus of communalism in one form or another. He mentioned only three categories of persons who could perhaps be called above communalism. One, those who consciously overcome it, repudiated it from analysis, and he mentioned Jawaharlal Nehru in this category, and some others too, modern people, I hope some of us, who have consciously overcome this virus of communalism. Second, those who are genuinely deeply spiritual, and he mentioned Mahatma Gandhi as being among those who overcome it because they were really deeply spiritual. The third category, he said, perhaps the poorest people, the very poorest of the poor, very poor labourers, slum dwellers and hutment dwellers who cannot distinguish between one and other because off the way they have to live. He said that the rest of us in some measure or the other were contaminated by the virus of communalism.

Communalism and foreign policy, I must warn you is a very subtle and a very complex issue. There are no easy generalizations, no simplistic analyses about communalism and foreign policy. The foreign policy of any country, first of all, is the outcome of that country's past history, its traditions, its experience, its present requirements, the perception of its leaders; if there is a consensus in the country then there is certainly a mix of ideas in that country and what is perceived to be in the national interest, and so on. So one should not have easy generalisations. Still, is there and can there be communalism in foreign policy?

I would say there are many communal States in the World today. We do not perhaps use the word communal for them but they are communal States. Firstly, there are those which declare themselves to be theocratic States. These are really communal States – Iran, Pakistan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Libya – a number of which have declared themselves to be States pursuing and subscribing to a particular religion and where those who belong to that religion are first-class citizens. Even here I would distinguish between those

states where the impulse of religion became strong, temporarily may be, but it became strong, like for instance Iran (at least in certain sections of society the impulse of religion became strong) and those States where religion has been used in order to acquire political legitimacy, as in Pakistan.

There is a second category of States that might not declare themselves theocratic, but still become part of religious groupings as and when it suits them. Even several Arab States like Egypt, Syria and Iraq have at times become part of these religious groupings – the Islamic States. There is a Conference of Islamic States which meets every now and then.

I do not know how coincidental it is, I think it is for us to examine whether it is coincidental or casual, perhaps it is causal, that more industrially and economically developed States have less of a pull of religion and community. Religious fanaticism may not disappear with economic growth but certainly large-scale economic growth appears to diminish the capacity of religious fanaticism to arouse the people. We had Christian States in the past but today the trend in these States is to move away from too close an association between the State and religion. For instance, in 1947, I was told, in the United States no Roman Catholic could become a President but subsequently John F. Kennedy became President and he was a Roman Catholic. You have had strong Christian pulls in England, in France, in Italy. But gradually those pulls have been eroded. I am not saying this due to some economic development, but it is due to large-scale industrialization, and whether this has some relationship with the erosion of the pull of religion or not is a matter that has to be studied further.

As I see it, India does not fall into any of these categories. India is not a theocratic State, it is not a Communal State, the State has not adopted any religion. On the contrary, the Constitution says that India is a democratic, secular, socialist State. I am not going into the question of the perverse use of it, or whether all religions have been or should be taken up by the State, or whether a secular State should equally promote all religions and this is a correct or wrong strategy. In my view it is a wrong strategy to play up all religions to meet the problem of communalism. But I am not going into that question. The issue I am going into is that India has not consciously adopted any particular religion nor has it promoted any particular religion in its foreign policy.

But, while communalism has not generally been consciously used in foreign policy, that is to say, it was not an instrument for promoting foreign policy, could we will say that communalism did not and does not influence or attempt to influence our foreign policy? Has the foreign policy of India been kept immune to the pulls and prejudices of a religion? Here I would say that the

story is mixed up and I will discuss the matter with you with examples. There are two ways in which communalism has manifested itself in foreign policy - as majority communalism and minority communalism – both of which have often made determined forays into the field of foreign policy and taken up positions not necessarily on merit but swayed by religious prejudices. Their approach to several foreign policy issues that India faced was determined on the basis of, or what they thought was, their religious persuasion.

First I shall take up the question of majority communalism, how it has attempted to force India's foreign policy into certain directions, based on views of their religious persuasion. Most organizations which call the majority communal organizations, that is those whose *raison d'étre is* based on appeal to religion, like in the RSS, the Jana Singh and the Hindu Mahasabha. have been sharply critical of Indian foreign policy primarily on account of a communal approach - not because it was against India's national interests, not because the question was discussed on merit, but because it did not suit their communal approach. Much of this criticism I should say stems from religious prejudices. The attitudes adopted and the policies advocated were dictated by their perceived religious beliefs and consequential perceived enmities. Your perceived religious beliefs lead you to perceived enmities where you regard certain forces as inimical. You think that certain forces belonging to certain faiths are inimical to you and that colours your attitude to foreign policy.

This was most prominently evident in relation to our policy towards the Arab world particularly and the Muslim countries in general and of course even towards Pakistan with whom the struggle was conceived of in terms of a Hindu-Muslim struggle. Not in the terms of a struggle as many of our national leaders saw it – as a secular polity against a communal approach – but in terms of the Hindu struggle against the Muslims as extended to Pakistan. These forces were demonstrably hostile to India's policy towards the Gulf region, towards West Asia, even towards part of Africa. The main charge against the Government, particularly against Jawaharlal Nehru, was of being soft towards Muslims and Muslim countries. If you read the speeches of RSS leaders during the fifties and sixties, the speeches of the Jana Sangh leaders from Atal Behari Vajpayee to Balraj Madhok, speeches of all the RSS Sanchalaks, you find this to be the main charge against India's foreign policy. Of course it was part of a bigger struggle about India's foreign policy. That I will come to a little later. Every statement made by any Muslim leader abroad, in any Arab country, in sympathy with Pakistan was seized upon as evidence of the perfidy of Muslims and the futility of continuing the policy of blind support to Arab and Muslim countries, as they thought it. Many of them took pleasure in the defeat of Nasser and the Arab countries at the hands of Israel. Of course I would add that the wobbly attitude of some of the Arab countries in the

dispute between India and Pakistan, in the name of Islam, provided grist to the mill of the majority communalist forces in this country. Naturally, Pakistan tried to get as much mileage from this kind of situation, from this kind of sympathy it got as an Islamic country, because it was struggling against India. I am at the moment not talking of Pakistan. I will come to it a little later.

But from this position it was one logical step forward to demand a change in the policy towards Israel. You read their statements and you will find they are all great admirers of Israel. A strong pro-Israeli lobby came up in India. It is still there, perhaps not as strong as it was in the late fifties and sixties, very very strong. It looked almost as if Israel could provide the key to solutions to the problems of our foreign policy. Whatever went wrong with India was because we did not have relations with Israel and because we are following a pro-Arab policy. Pressures were sought to be built up to change the course of India's foreign policy and veer it towards Israel. It went much further. You change the policy towards Arab countries on the basis of there being a struggle between Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan and you change the policy towards Israel. Of course this was not as simple as it appeared on the surface. It meant an entire change of course in India's foreign policy, leading to specific relations with the USSR and the USA. It would have meant a new track for India's foreign policy, totally different from what it was – not anti-imperialist, not anti-colonial but a policy based ostensibly on the view that some Arab countries were supporting Pakistan and since our struggle was against Pakistan we should change the whole course of our foreign policy. If you become close to Israel, obviously you become close to USA too and the entire foreign policy of India is changed. A very determined effort was actually made to get our foreign policy of India is changed, especially during the last years of Nehru's life. Even the defeat at the hands of China in the Himalayan frontiers came handy in the attempt to get the entire foreign policy changed.

What I suggest to you is a link-up of the communalist forces with the reactionary forces abroad in order to give a new twist to India's foreign policy. As I have said, there was no question of a basic change in the policy towards Israel and the Arab countries unless India wanted to change the entire direction of her foreign policy, which would have meant a different kind of relationship with the blocs – with the United States, with the Soviet Union.

Actually this was a complete reversal of the course they were looking for as a very conscious and deliberate effort.

I would like to discuss with you for a few moments what was really the rationale of the Arab policy of India. Because unfortunately our foreign policy formulators never really explained to the people why we were pursuing a particular policy towards some 12 countries in this region.

First of all, a foreign policy should be based on national interests, and we are dealing with 12 countries which we have had traditional relations. All the way from Iran to Syria we had very close historical, cultural and political relations. We had relationships which go beyond Islam because they were there before the advent of Islam. But even if you take the present requirements, where trade, capital, oil, whatever, make up what you call national interests, then you are putting national interests in the basket of one country, Israel, as against 12 Arab countries or Muslim countries. What kind of national interest is served by this? I am talking purely of very narrow national interests, but I am coming to the bigger issues involved. I believe there was a question of principle advocated here – of India in the Arab countries' conflict with Israel and of India's conflict with China and Pakistan. There was a common principle involved in India's policy towards these countries. Look back at the history of modern times, recent years. Even when the Arab countries made the loudest noises it was Israel which normally struck again and again. Only once did Egypt start a war. That was when Sadaat started it but he had a clever strategy in mind. He started the war because he wanted at some stage to go over to the Americans and he thought that this was the only way in which he could bring about a change in the situation. So he started the attack on the Sinai which was under Israeli occupation. He had probably already sent feelers to the Americans, or certainly did as soon as the attack took place. So even though Sadaat was saved by the Soviet ultimatum he immediately changed over to the American camp. I am not going into the details. According to him, he did it because there was no other way of changing the situation he faced. The point I am making is that again and again Israel struck and acquired new territories through war and a whole new concept in international relations, which of secure territories, was given. Israel believed that it must have secure territories. This meant that Israel wanted those territories which it thought would ensure its security. That meant taking away from Syria, Egypt and Jordan in order to provide security to Israel. This was a new concept in international affairs. The earlier concept was conquest by force, that is, you attack a country and win and you attach it. That was a different matter. That was the old imperialist strategy. In the 20th century this was a strange new concept – secure territories.

The argument that India used against China and Pakistan was that there should not be any territorial acquisition through the use of force. Once you accepted such an argument in the case of Israel, you could no longer argues that in the case of China and Pakistan other principles should be applied. You find India signing document after document, whether it was with neighbouring countries or with the Soviet Union or with other countries, specifically stating that territories shall not be changed by force but only by negotiations. Then how could you accept the Israeli position that territories could be changed by

force? If you even once accepted the Israeli logic then the basis of your objections to Chinese acquisition of territories which you claim are yours goes away. The same with Pakistan. So there was a principle involved in why India was supporting the Arab countries' stand against Israel, apart from the national interests which I have already mentioned. The policy of getting closer to Israel had been accepted, changing the whole course of policy towards the Arab and West Asian countries, it would have not only destroyed India's principles and national interests but would have had a long lasting impact on India's polity within, because you would then have accepted that the struggle is between Hindu and Muslim interests and that the struggle with Pakistan is really a Hindu and Muslim struggle, not a struggle between the secular, democratic ideology of India and the theocratic, reactionary ideology of Pakistan.

I would suggest to you that this struggle to influence foreign policy was very serious. It seriously went on and will seriously come back. Again there will be internal factors which made for this onslaught against Jawaharlal Nehru's foreign policy, there will again be internal factors which will demand a change, where the Indian polity will again come under pressure and foreign policy will get involved in it. Eventually foreign policy cannot be divorced from internal policy. Of course there is a difference; you cannot be mechanical about it. But I think in the final analysis foreign policy and domestic policy cannot be totally divorced. One will have an impact on the other.

As far as the Arab countries are concerned, when you take national interests I might also add one other principle of foreign policy. In certain situations even the neutrality of the other country is more beneficial to you than if the country supported another force which was inimical to you. In 1962, benevolent Soviet neutrality was far more beneficial to us and we did our best to maintain it because China and the Soviet Union were part of the socialist community. Similarly, the Arab countries' benevolent neutrality was just as beneficial, even if the radical states, let us say, did not come out openly in support of India against Pakistan. Benevolent neutrality under those circumstances was far more beneficial to us than it was for Pakistan.

I will sum up this point by saying that it is true that this situation got entangled in the conflict with Pakistan and the manner in which partition left its scar.

We have still not recovered from that because Pakistan emerged on a religious basis, not on a political basis. The communalist forces have tried to use that to promote communalism within India. Just as we had this problem in the fifties and sixties we are going to have this problem once again. It will become very acute, and as communalism spreads its tentacles within India you will find it having its impact on foreign policy. To fight communalism in foreign policy you

have to first of all fight communalism internally. You cannot do otherwise. That is what will determine whether the foreign policy will remain secular and democratic, and even whether it will remain anti-colonial and anti-imperialist.

There can be reverse kind of communalism. India has not too often fallen prey to it but sometimes has. For instance, in the sixties it became fashionable to talk of India being the second largest Muslim country in the world, and we used mullahs and maulvis, and sent them to Arab countries to show them how secular we were. The worst case was our effort to gatecrash into the first Muslim Summit at Rabat in 1968. We used this argument; that we had, at that time, 60 or 70 million Muslims and were, as such, the second largest Muslim country in the world and therefore we must be invited and we must participate. Because we were struggling against Pakistan in the Arab and other Muslim countries we thought we must be there, otherwise they might pass a hostile resolution on Kashmir or something else, and because Pakistan was one of the main sponsors of the summit. I think it was one of the most ill-advised things we could do. We got a fitting snub. We waited there, we cooled our heels there and we were not invited, fortunately I say. In the end of it just did not make the slightest difference to the situation whether we were there or not and whether any hostile resolution was passed or not. We did not even think of the fact that Syria and Iraq had not attended this summit, because they had their own differences with these countries. This is what I call the reverse kind of communalism which we have sometimes tended to use and has had harmful influences on our foreign policy. When we tried to convey to these countries, with whom we ought to have political, economic and cultural relations, that we use religious arguments or appeals, then we are going the wrong way. It is like fighting communalism through communalism. You can never do that. The communalists will always beat you in that game. So if you want to fight Pakistan on the basis of Islam you can never do it. They can always be more militant than you.

One final example. The attitude of the communalists of the majority community towards Nepal, for instance, is not based on whether there is a democratic policy there or any autocracy or a dictatorship or what the aspirations of the people of Nepal are but it is based on their belief that Nepal is a Hindu State or the only Hindu State as they put it. If you read the "Organizer" of that period you will find the same argument being given again and again, it is the only Hindu State in the world and we must support the King as the representative of the only Hindu State. The problems between Nepal and India had nothing to do with religion.

Coming to minority communalism, it is there as a factor trying to influence foreign policy. In India it is the Muslim minority communalists. Many of the self-styled spokesmen of this community have in the past tried to drum up

support whenever a Muslim country was involved in an international problem or controversy or conflict, not because justice was on the side of a Muslim country but because it was a Muslim country, and they tried to influence India's foreign policy on the plea that this would otherwise hurt the sentiments of the Muslim community. Again this is a complex problem and I would not like to simplify it. The presence of an ethnic community within the country does have an impact. You take the United Sates. There are some five million Jews there they determine the foreign policy of the United Sates towards this region. Of course they have a lot of money too and their money is indispensable in elections. Still, the presence of an ethnic community does have an impact when a member from the same ethnic or religious community does have an impact when members from the same ethnic or religious community are involved in some conflict in a foreign country. It can have a healthy reaction in the sense that you fight against injustice because you have an ethnic community which is being denied justice in another country. But it is often a manifestation of communalism to support a Muslim country just because it is a Muslim country, not because it deserves to be supported either because the national interests of India are involved or because justice is denied. Whether it is despotic tyranny or whatever, you are called upon to support Saudi Arabia because it is a Muslim country and you know what they have been doing. Many things they have been doing are quite obnoxious. It is like still living in the 17th century.

All the same I will say these are matters which have to be carefully analyzed because foreign policy is a very complex process. Even the Muslim countries have not necessarily com to each other's aid. In fact they have often come at each other's throats, as you see happening in the Iran-Iraq war. So-called Sunni Iraq, because there are other interests involved. It is not a simple question of one Muslim country supporting another or one Sunni majority country supporting another Sunni majority country. Mostly because the base of the ruling groups in these countries is so small. Iraq and Syria, for instance, belong to a very small group in this context, a very small community which is ruling by force of arms, not necessarily by the free will of the people and not because they have brought about development and socio-economic transformation. Similarly, this is true of Iran, where even war is used as an instrument for maintaining the rule of the so-called fundamentalists and keeping the country together under their grip because it helps a great deal. I am not sure what would have happened in Iran if the war had not been there. I think dissidence in Iran, opposition to the mullah rule, would have grown much more but for this war. So the war is serving a great purpose for the Iranian ruling class.

When King Hussain of Jordan first expelled PLO men and would up their camps in early 1950, who was the person who commanded this campaign? It was Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. He was there at that time. He carried out the suppression of the PLO and threw them out mercilessly. We have also seen Turkey's very lukewarm and only nominal support to the Arab countries. And so on.

I am adding these caveats when we discuss foreign policy because foreign policy has its own dynamic and is very complex phenomenon.

I would like to end by saying that by and large in its operation India's foreign policy has remained generally free from the depredations of communalism. I am not talking of individual officers. There are individual officers who have been contaminated by majority communalism or minority communalism. Even though these pulls and pressures were brought upon foreign policy many times, and at times the pressure became very strong, still I would say, overall, our foreign policy generally survived these onslaughts. Sometimes the going was very difficult when, for instance, many Arab countries openly supported Pakistan and this gave some plausibility to the attacks launched on foreign policy in the absence of reciprocity. Where is your principle of reciprocity? They are supporting Pakistan, they are issuing statements, and you go on supporting them – a good argument to use. However, Indian foreign policy I would say generally withstood these onslaughts. I would mention four chief reasons, as I see it, that could be ascribed to the vitality in India's foreign policy.

One, I would say, is the legacy of Gandhi. Gandhiji, though he could be wrong sometimes, hand one article of faith, that is, Hindu-Muslim unity. I do not have to tell you that even though our understanding on Turkey was wrong at that time, the Khilafat movement was started by Gandhiji more as a token of Hindu-Muslim unity. In 1947 Gandhiji fasted on the question of the money that was owned to Pakistan as a result of the division of assets. This legacy of Gandhiji is, therefore, an important factor. I will not dwell further on it. I just mention it.

Second, the traditions of the freedom movement – strong traditions of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, and unity with other struggling countries of the world – these could not be easily set aside or dismissed by the communalist forces. They had sweeped into the consciousness of the people and were a strong barrier to the onslaught of communal forces on foreign policy. The secular and democratic traditions, the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist traditions, were very strong.

Then of course the vision of Nehru was a very very strong factor – actually fighting communalism within the country and not allowing communalism to affect our foreign policy.

The stewardship of Indira Gandhi too was important. We must give credit where it is due. No matter whether she was wobbly at times or not, no matter whether she herself went to a temple, no matter what her superstitious beliefs, as many people say, might have been on the question of foreign policy, the question of support to the PLO and the Arab countries, on the question of unity with the struggling countries of the world and of fighting neo-colonialism and imperialism, she did not compromise. She came out very strongly on that. Perhaps this was again the tradition of the national movement, the freedom movement, that there was a strong anti-imperialist, anti-racialist streak in her and she steadfastly stood against those forces within India which would have tried to take India's foreign policy on to a new track. I would say that among the leaders in the developing world she was one of those, after Jawaharlal and the other leaders of the developing countries of the non-aligned movement, who contributed to and strengthened the non-aligned movement. By doing so she also prevented the ascendancy of the communal forces, not only in foreign policy but also within the country.

Finally, the matter still turns on the question of fighting the communalist forces within the country. It is not really a matter of fighting these forces in foreign policy. In a way, I would say, that is a comparatively easier thing to do. But it is far harder to tackle the problem on the internal plane. The struggle will finally be decided on the internal plane, on what happens here – whether we fall victim to this madness of communalism which is sweeping the country or whether we are able to survive and fight it. On this will depend how long and how far our foreign policy remains democratic and secular, in tune with the progressive forces of the world.

SECTION 5

POLITICAL PARTIES AND COMMUNAL POLITICS

THE LEFT AND COMMUNALISM

Mohit Sen

I will first try to present some sort of a definition of what is the left. One easy definition is that all are left who call themselves left but that is really too easy an approach. If we take it historically and also in the contemporary situation of India – and I am confining myself to a definition of the left in India – the left are those who advance from anti-imperialism to socialism, ideologically, programmatically and politically. Historically also there have been people who advanced from anti-imperialism to socialist consciousness socialist programme and socialist politics. By socialism I mean scientific socialism, the socialism broadly of Mars. Not that all those who are left necessarily have moved to positions of Mars, but if you take a broad spectrum of Mars, then certainly they can be included therein. The advance has to be from anti-imperialism, to use the Hegelian term, is supplanted, carried forward, transcended, gone beyond. In other words one cannot be a left, unless one is anti-imperialist. Anybody who prides himself as being a leftist but finds himself over a long period of time in the camp of the imperialists, I submit, dispowers himself or herself from having the title of being left. At the same time, simply sticking to anti-imperialism, maintaining one's status as an anti-imperialist, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for being left. One has to make the advance in terms of ideology, programmes and politics. All the time urging to remember to keep anti-imperialism firmly in place. I would say that the essence of that advance is a class approach, a class understanding of developments, basing one's work on class foundations and also in one's work endeavouring to advance the class, that is, the working class and the working people generally.

At the same time I would not like to suggest that the left can do without a front. The left cannot afford to be isolated. But this united from strategy of a system of alliances cannot be a united front which goes against the aim and objective of transition to socialism. In other words, one is making not a compromise that is the essential difference between compromise and a united front. But I submit that a united front is not a compromise. It is a system of alliances, the coming together of groups that have a common interest. The left has to form a united front, at given moment of time and in giving situation, with those whose interests are at that moment of time the same as those of the left and also bearing in mind the strategic objective of the left of advancing from that position, that is, advancing even from anti-imperialism towards making the transition to socialism. The left has to forge a united front.

Nevertheless this has to be a united front and not a process of accommodation. That broadly is the first theme of my presentation.

The second theme will be viewing of communalism, as a leftist or a left view of communalism. I do not think I have very much to add to what is already in the paper which Dr. Pramod Kumar has put forward. I agree very strongly with his point of view that communalism is not the same as religious-mindedness. This is rather important, because in the struggle against communalism we have to be very careful not to be anti-religious. We must not confuse the two. The communal identity is a false consciousness not only of the interest and understanding of the contemporary worlds, but I submit, it is also a false consciousness in terms of religion, which we may say is itself a form of false consciousness. But communalism is even a deviation from religious consciousness. Here again the essence of communalism as a form of false consciousness is not only the centering of interests of identity in terms of one's religion but, even much more than that, I would say, the centering of political identity in terms of religion. Certainly, communalism is so presenting of identities, that economic interests, the interest of an individual's personality, of family and of all those who cluster together in the same community, can only be furthered as a community and that too as a community in antagonism to other communities. That is true. But I submit, what is happening more and more with regard to communalism is that not only is it a false consciousness, not only is it a deviation from religious consciousness, it is centering of religion and politics. That I think is the essence of communalism today. It is politics which has as its basis a particular religion. Therefore, the political understanding and political perception revolves around what one considers to be in the interest of a particular religion.

Secondly, we have to see communalism as an expansion or as an advance or development from difference to antagonism. That is to say, different communities and different religions are different and there is no point in trying to wish away that difference. The Hindu and the Muslim, in terms of their religious consciousness, even in terms of their tradition, are not identical. There can be a unity but not an identity. But the difference is converted into antagonisms. That I submit is the second most important feature of communalism.

The third point to which I want to draw your attention is that communalism is the polar opposite of secularism. Communalism is not the polar opposite of the left. It is certainly antagonistic to the left and the left cannot advance in my view, without fighting communalism. But why I emphasize that the polar opposite of communalism is secularism is for the reason that the left can fight communalism best and most effectively on the basis of secularism. In other words, the front that has to develop against communalism sis not a left from

but a secular front in which of course the left will have to establish its presence. In other words, I am basing myself on the concept of contradiction and that contradiction. I submit, in this particular case is communalism-secularism.

The next point about communalism, to which I want to draw your attention, is that it has socio-historical roots. These roots have several elements. There are certain classes and forces which are interested in communalism or whose interests are served by communalism. I would say, in our country, the forces, above all, whose interests are served by communalism, are the imperialists. The Imperialists' interests in colonial India and also in the post-independence period are certainly furthered by the growth of communalism. Therefore, imperialism very actively furthers the growth of communalism.

The class interests of landlords is a certain specific sense are also furthered by communalism, not to divide the peasantry or things like that; but the ideological reflex of feudal landlordism has communalism as one of its important components. It comes naturally, as it were, to feudal landlords. So, not in the sense of imperialists who are not communalists themselves but are deliberately using communalism to further their class interests, in the case of the feudal landlords, in the complex of their consciousness, in the totality of their consciousness an important component is communalism.

So as far as class interests are concerned, I think, in India the only two classes whose interests are served by communalism are the imperialists and a section of feudal landlords. I submit that there are no other classes whose interests are served by communalism. Capitalist class interest is not served by communalism. Sometimes the clash of capitalists finds a reflection in communal riots. Many examples are given: the emerging trading class of Muslims as against established producers of certain commodities, one set being Hindu and other set being Muslims. Sometimes class competition finds a communal expression. But it is neither in the interests of the Hindu producers nor in the interest of the Muslim traders that there should be communalism, much less that there should be communal riots. This is not merely a matter of theory, it is a matter also of empiricism, that as a result of communal riots no section of the capitalist class has benefitted, whether it is Ahmedabad or Bhiwandi or Moradabad or any area where a certain amount of capitalist competitiveness is expressed in communal form.

Another factor, which is directly a matter of false consciousness, is that communalism is an ideology which, due to insufficient development in our country and the nature of our insufficient democratization, middle class competitiveness also takes communal form. Unemployment is the fertile breeding ground of communalism. But it will be travesty of truth to say of any

section of the unemployed, that their class interests, their sectional interests or even their fragmented interests are in any way served by communalism.

About the socio-historical roots, I would also like to make another point. I have said earlier that religion is not to be confused with communalism. Religious consciousness and communal consciousness are by no means the same. Communal consciousness is a deviation even from religious consciousness. But it is also certainly true that religion and the strength of religion form the foundation of communalism. A society which is not religious cannot be a communal society. One can see the contrast between Iran and the Central Asian Soviet Republics. The Central Asian Soviet Republics are totally non-religious if not anti-religious; there is no communalism in these Republics. So while the two are not the same; without religion you cannot have communalism. It is not only due to the socio-historical roots that there is capitalist competitiveness, there is the tremendous influence of imperialism and neo-colonialism, there is also the influence of feudal landlords, there is the middle class searching for jobs and finding no jobs and finding communalism in the place of jobs. While all this is there we have to understand that the task of fighting against communalism in our country, has been harder because of the great hold of religion. Religion has a hold in our country, not only because of our specific historical conditions, the traditions of our country, but also because of the growth of capitalism in our country. It is not because of, let me say, insufficient capitalism, but simply the growth of capitalism itself. This is because as long ago as 1842-43, Marx in his earlier writings had made it very clear that religion is not only the opium of the people – that is the last part of his long paragraph; remember Marx had also said that religion is the heart of the heartless world, the soul of soulless conditions, and it is man's protest against wrong. Essentially, though Marx probably did not put it in those words, what he meant was that religion is essentially man's protest or, in capitalist conditions, religion is man's protest against alienation.

So, I was suggesting that communalism has its basis in religion and the strength of religion in our country has to be understood, not only in terms of a historical inheritance, the great traditions of our country. Not all of that tradition, including the religious element in that tradition, is to be regarded as negative. There is a great deal in our religious traditions which is immensely noble, uplifting and useful, and has to be made use of in our modern struggle. Nevertheless, as I was suggesting, without religion you cannot have communalism.

Why is it that religion is still so powerful, not only so powerful but why has it such a growing influence in our country? Is it an anti-capitalist force? Is it a feudal throw back? I submit that is not true. The growth of religion in our

country is a consequence of the growth of capitalist development itself. Marx emphasized in his early writings that capitalism means not only exploitation but also alienation. You are alienated from your work, from your neighbour, from your product, from your own self. Capitalism makes man very lonely. It is highly individualistic *Homo homini lupusest* - man to man is wolf. This careerism, rat race, the uprooting capitalism involves, people coming from their villages without their families to an environment with which they are not familiar, which is an unfriendly even a cruel environment. So capitalism essentially produces alienation. As a first defence mechanism against that alienation, those who are brought into capitalist production turn to religion. It is what is most easily accessible to them. It is something in which they can, in that way, find an opium, something that has got a heart, something that is certainly not soulless, and the virtues of gods and goddesses are such are totally in contrast with the capitalist ethics and capitalist methods of getting on.

Therefore, capitalist development, with its necessary alienation, also necessarily generates an expansion of religion. Lenin put it very well, I think, when he said that in pre-capitalist societies it was natural calamities which people could not understand; why there is a storm or lightening or a flood. What they could not understand in terms of natural calamities or catastrophes they ascribed to religion, to a force beyond us: it is this or that is doing this; it is this that must be appeased. But Lenin said, under capitalism, while those natural calamities also persist and people do not always understand them, a much greater calamity is the social calamity. Suddenly you are employed and suddenly you are not employed. You are educated to be employed and suddenly you find there is no job through which you can turn your education into a means of livelihood. Suddenly there is a capitalist crisis and factories that were doing well suddenly close down. You see the phenomenon; foodgrain is said to be rotting in the Food Corporation godowns, but half-hungry people cannot be given food because it will bring down the price of foodgrains which will affect production, and, therefore, in order to keep the production of foodgrains high one must keep people half-hungry. It is a most peculiar paradox which only capitalism can produce.

So, as Lenin said, it is this social phenomenon, which is inexplicable except in terms of scientific socialism to which it takes a lot of effort to turn. Turning to religion produces and easy defence mechanism against this situation along with the defence against loneliness and alienation. Living in Tirupati, as I do these days, I find this to be very true. The symbol of religiously in Tirupati is that you should shave your head; you offer your hair to the God. Therefore, a month and a half or so before the examinations you find all the students growing hair furiously, to the extent they can grow hair quickly, and just a day

before the examination you find so many shaven heads. Exams are very uncertain things as you know; you do not know what is going to happen, and so you turn to Venkateswara.

This brings me to my last point when I discuss the strategy. You cannot, therefore, oppose communalism or the communalism which is produced by the expansion of religiosity, unless you are able to produce a counter culture and as it were a counter-community, a counter explanation, something which will absorb the totality of the personality of the man who has entered capitalism. To the extent that we do not do it, to the extent that we reduce ourselves to the economic man, the economic human being, we are left defenceless in this battle against the communalism which emanates from religiosity.

The final point about communalism in India today is that we cannot at all ignore the role of imperialism. It is sometimes said that we thought that imperialism created communalism or instigated communal riots, and now that imperialist rule has gone and yet communalism persist, therefore, there is more to communalism than imperialism. Certainly there is more to communalism, than imperialism. But imperialism is very much a part of communalism, the way imperialism helps it, the way it finances communalism, the way imperialism deliberately instigates it, trains people for it in every conceivable manner, this is a factor which you cannot forget and certainly in Punjab you cannot forget it for a single moment. So the role of imperialism in the continuing onslaught of communalism against our national advance and our class advance is also a factor which you should bear in mind.

The second theme of my talk is briefly putting forward my perception, a left perception, of communalism, that we cannot confuse it with religion. It is a form of false consciousness, even it is a deviation from religious consciousness, and it is accentuating differences to the level of antagonism. The polar opposite of communalism is not leftism but secularism, and that when we examine the socio-historical roots and try to understand the class interests of communalists; actually it is the imperialists and a certain section of the landlord class which has its class interests ideologically expressed in the encouragement of communalism. I submitted that I would say that the class interests even of the capitalist class are not furthered by communalism, though capitalist competitiveness takes on communal form. Of course, in the case of the middle classes it is much more evident. It is, therefore, the growth of religion as a form of protest against capitalist alienation and the role of imperialism which accentuates communalism.

It might be asked at this stage – and I might as well take it up straightway – that after all the ruling class in India certainly uses communalism; it tries to

win votes on the basis of communalism; it even has a certain interest in communal riots from time to time perhaps. This I think is very much exaggerated. I do not think a stage has been reached in India where the capitalist class feels so threatened that in order to divert the working class from overthrowing the capitalist class, encourages communal riots. I wish I had evidence that the working class is coming so near to taking over power from the capitalist class that has used this kind of diversionary tactic. Certainly the ruling class in India does use communalism in order to win votes, and perceives to strengthen its hold over electoral politics. But every time it uses communalism it actually weakens itself as a ruling class. The destabilization process in India, which is so much furthered by communalism and communal riots, does not help the ruling class of India which may have used it. Even the phenomenon of Bhindranwale in Punjab (the creation of persons in the Congress (I) did not help it. As a matter of fact it only helped those who were anxious not only to destabilize India, but to destabilize also Congress (I) rule in the country as a whole. Any way this is a point which I am putting forward. Capitalist class interest, including ruling capitalist class interest, is not served by communalism.

Now come to the third theme, some kind of a broad survey of certain historical facts about the left and communalism. Certainly we will critically examine what the left has been doing. The left has a lot to blame itself for in relation to communalism. But at the same time the outstanding fact that the left is an anti-communal force should never be overlooked. The left may have blundered into helping communalism. The left may have taken positions which disabled it from fighting communalism as effectively as it could. But the left is an anti-communal force and generally where the left is strong communalism is weak. With all the defects, and the mistakes that the West Bengal Government has been committing, I shudder to think what would be the situation in West Bengal if there had been no government of the CPI (M) and its allies. It is often not realized, how tense the communal situation is in Calcutta itself. The Bangladeshi infiltration is quite severe in Calcutta. With regard to the Shahbano case, the way the mullas and maulvis went to Calcutta, from mosque to mosque, and they stayed for days and weeks together, is nobody's business at all. The fact that in Calcutta, where previously Durga Pooja used to be held for ten days in the year, now there is perhaps not a single day when you do not have one or another Hindu festival. There is an alarming growth of that kind of religiosity there. The conversations of Ramakrishna Paramhamsa have now been brought out in book form. They had been brought out earlier, but their forty year copyright of the conversations of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa running into two and a half to three lakh copies.

So it is not that the left has vanished or religiosity has vanished in Calcutta; not at all. But because of the strength of the left, Calcutta has up to now stood, by and large, as a communal-free area. West Bengal as a whole, by and large, has remained a state which is free from communalism, or, let me say, communal riot-free; where communalism has not been able to put things to the torch. There is no end of examples where the left has placed itself between contending communal forces. There are many examples in Punjab; the earlier examples in Kanpur. The famous martyr of communalism, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, was a member of Communist Party of India. Certainly I think the work that the communists and other leftists did in building up class organizations, building up class consciousness has acted as a very strong antidote to communalism. I am laying this rather thick because I am going to go on to a critical analysis of the left and communalism. I am doing it in a self-critical spirit but I do not wish to be misunderstood that I am not aware of the great contribution that the left has made in the battle against communalism. Nor am I unaware of the fact that eventually it is the left that can, and I hope will take the initiative in effectively combating communalism.

During the freedom struggle, what was the role of the left in relation to communalism? It was certainly anti-communalist. But during the freedom struggle itself, the left, that is the broad range of the left form, let us say Nehru to the Communists, very much underestimated communalism. They underestimated its force, its attraction. They underestimated the mischief that imperialism could do by using the weapon of communalism. I remember that in 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru said that all this Muslim communalism is all nonsense because the Muslims are generally very poor and the poor need bread, not communalism. In 1940, when the Pakistan resolution was passed by the Muslim League, Nehru ridiculed it. He said it was not worth bothering to read or think about. Seven years later you had Pakistan.

As a student, one thing I had never imagined was that my Bengal would be partitioned and divided, I also remember the great poems of Rabindra Nath Tagore, the river of Rabindranath Tagore is not the Ganga or the Hoogly, it is the Padma and the Padma is in Bangladesh. We were brought up in a whole culture where we could not imagine Bengal without what is now Bangladesh. But at the time when I was a student in 1946-47, Bengal was portioned. So quite clearly, in any section of the left, whether communist or non-communist, there was a grave under-estimation of the potential of communalism. This was because communalism was seen essentially only as feudal ideology. Feudal ideology was something which the left was fighting but which they knew could not rouse the masses to that kind of frenzy or capture the passion of the masses which anti-imperialism could and did. How could

feudalism be an answer to anti-imperialist passion? But communalism could certainly create the passion that was an answer to anti-imperialism.

It is very significant, you know it very well, that the Muslim communalists of India were precisely those who were very far removed from being religious. After all, it was not the Deoband school which led to the advance of the Pakistan idea. It was the Aligarh Muslim University. Mohammad Ali Jinnah could not speak or read Arabic. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was, as it were, Islam personified. But for the time being who won? So it was an underestimation of communalism, and an underestimation because it was seen essentially as a feudal phenomenon.

Another mistake that the left made in relation to communalism, during the freedom struggle, was the attempt to forge unity on the basis of communal identities. Khilafat movement, for example; that the Hindus and Muslims would be able to come together into a united front to fight imperialism. That appeal to the Muslims as Muslims, and even in a sense to the Hindus as Hindus, could not bring them into the freedom struggle. Here I would say that it is not the Gandhian approach but certainly it was the approach of many of those who were disciples of Gandhiji. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his book 'India Wins Freedom' says that in the Congress Working Committee meetings, except the Gandhiji, Ghaffar Khan and Panditji, he did not feel at ease with any other member of it, who were essentially Hindu communalists. I remember that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said that there were only one nationalist Muslim in India and that was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. That was his approach.

So it is not that the Gandhian approach was wrong. I think the Gandhian secular approach was very dynamic and is a very useful one even today. But there was a strong communal element in the Congress and it believed that only as Hindus could they be roused to fight imperialism. Please have a look at the picture of the first interim government of our country, 1946. In that picture you will see how strong communalism is and where post-independence communalism begins. Except for Asaf Ali and Jawaharlal Nehru, who happened to be standing next to each other, everybody else has a Tilak on his forehead, whether it is Babu Jagjivan Ram or Rajendra Prasad or Sardar Patel or anybody else. They thought it quite compatible to be ministers of the interim government of the free Republic of India and to wear tilaks on their foreheads.

So it was this wrong belief. There I submit that Gandhiji was certainly wrong during the Khilafat movement, not in his general secularzartion of the Hindu mind, to which I will come in a moment. It is not only the congress which suffered from this. The Communist Party also. At a very crucial moment, on the eve of independence, the slogan that the Communist Party gave and very

powerfully campaigned for, was a very attractive slogan, no doubt- Gandhi and Jinnah must meet and present a united front to the British. I remember that when they met and failed to agree, as was inevitable in the situation, the other dynamic slogan that was given by another very dynamic leader at that time, the late P.C. Joshi, was 'They must meet again'. I remember as a student what a tremendous campaign we ran, that Gandhi and Jinnah must meet, without unity there is no hope for Indian freedom. So this idea that you could come to terms with communalism and forge anti-imperialist unity was another very grave error of the left during the freedom struggle.

The third grave error of the left during the freedom struggle, and it is an old and longstanding error, was that economic struggles would divert the minds of the working people from communalism, because that is after all their real interest. Just as the communalists and imperialism diverted people from their real interests through communalism, we thought we would divert people's interest. We were proved thoroughly wrong. We have been proved thoroughly wrong even right now. People who come together in trade unions or kisan sabhas or whatever, remain together in trade unions, but still communal riots take place where trade union members also massacre and kill one another. But during the freedom struggle, this was of course not a belief or concept of communists only, this was also Jawaharlal's belief. Jawaharlal Nehru very strongly believed that if you can emphasize economic interests that battle against communalism will be won. But it proved not to be so. The need is to fight communalism as communalism, as an ideology and to fight it patiently. As I said, the opposite of communalism is not scientific temper, the opposition to it is secularism; so if you have a Jawaharlal who says I am an aethiest, I am an agnostic, that is not, I submit, the way to fight communalism on a mass scale.

Here I bring in the contribution of Gandhiji. He did the greatest job that any Indian has done and that is that for many years he managed to secularize the Hindu mind. The Hindu was able to feel that, as a Hindu, he should be secular and that it is inherent in him, as a Hindu, to be secular and that a Hindu completes himself by going beyond Hinduism to being an Indian. That was the great contribution of Gandhiji. That is, a Hindu has to be secular, a Hindu by religion does not have to give up his religion in order to fight communalism, and that a Hindu goes beyond himself, transcends himself by becoming an Indian, from being a Hindu to becoming a Hindustani. That was not, I am afraid, the broad approach of the left. In so far as we opposed communalism as an ideology we opposed it not in terms of scientific temper, in terms of direct scientific socialism which was something far ahead of mass consciousness.

The last error of the left in the freedom struggle, in the battle against communalism, was of course the very serious error of the Communist Party in its understanding of the demand for Pakistan. At one time the Communist Party believed that the demand for Pakistan was the distorted expression of emerging nationalities which, in religious composition, were over-whelmingly Muslim. This led to a terrible setback. This over-sympathy, false sympathy for Pakistan, precisely led to our total drop of influence among the Muslims. The Communist Party had quite a strong appeal among the Muslims, including the Aligarh Muslim University, but because of this we lost the radicals and we did not gain anybody else. This is also another grave error, which of course was because we did not see the role of imperialism in fostering communalism.

This is as far as the left, communalism and the freedom struggle is concerned what happened thereafter?

I think, thereafter, roughly till about 1967, the left fought well and valiantly against communalism. In that period the left tried to emerge as the left, as an independent force, independent and opposed to the Congress and certainly independent and opposed to the communalists. In Punjab itself, I remember, in 1958 we had the Amritsar session of the then united CPI. It was just at the time when the Jana Sangh was slowly growing in influence and the Swatantra Party had also emerged. The tactical question arose: the Congress has to be defeated; otherwise you cannot advance to socialism. At the same time forces have emerged which are to the right of the Congress. They are communalists, free enterprise people, and so on. But they are also opposed to the Congress; they are also interested in bringing down the Congress rule. Why do they manage to grow? They manage to grow because of Congress misrule which creates discontent and which is utilized by the rightists. So the tactical question came that if you are going to fight the Congress what are you going to do to the right opposition? There was a strong opinion in the Communist Party at that time that the right opposition can only be fought by opposing the Congress more. The more you oppose the Congress the better you will be able to fight the right, the better you will be able to fight communalism.

I remember that at the time there was also a debate which turned into a bit of a joke as well. Comrade Dange said that the best thing is not to remove the cowdung, but to kill the cow for then there will not be any cowdung also. So the whole desire, a very legitimate desire was to remove Congress misrule and so also the correct perception that a great deal of the mass support for the rightist parties came from Congress misrule and the reaction to it. That is, concentrate on fighting the Congress. But that was defeated and the left as a whole fought both. There was a great difference, for example, of what the left, particularly the Communist Party was doing in Kerala in those days and subsequently. It directly took on all the communalist forces-Nair

communalists, the Christian Church, Muslim communalists and the Congress-all of whom combined against the CPI. Be it said to the credit of the communists that in spite of everything, we had a majority of one in the Assembly in 1959, just one member, and that one member remained a one member majority. That is why Nehru in the end had to dismiss our government. He could not remove it by legitimate means. He could not make the *aya rams* and *gaya rams* and all that kind of funny appeals to reduce the majority.

So as I said there are many examples I can give you, that, in that period up to 1967, the left wanted to overthrow the Congress but in a leftist way and in a leftist sense. Not only was it that the communists had no truck with the communalists, but on the contrary, it was the Congress, certainly in Kerala, which used all kinds of communalism against us.

A big turn came in 1967. I shall explain this on two grounds. One was the split in the Communist Party in 1964. If that party had not split in 1964 many things would have been different in India. It so weakened the communists, and the communists were the main force in the left, that out of weakness the left became opportunist. In 1967 you also had the phenomenon of the decisive evidence that the Congress had weakened and lost nine states. It used to be said that if you travelled by train from Amritsar to Calcutta you went through non-Congress territory. Orissa became non-Congress, and Tamil Nadu also. Even in parliament the Congress had a bare majority. Rajagopalachari said at that time that if fifteen or twenty Congress MPs together decided to abstain on a particular day from parliament the Congress would be in a minority. So on the one hand the weakness of the left made it opportunist. On the other hand the opportunity seemed to have arrived that the Congress could be removed.

Into this came the figure of, I would say, the most destructive figure of the left in India since independence, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, who believed that you could unite with anybody, communalists, casteists, anybody above all to get rid of the Nehru dynasty or Nehru rule. He it was who became the theoretician of the famous Samyukt Vidhayak Dal, that is, everybody who can agree, even without a programme, on the single point that they would not allow the Congress to rule, should come together. Therefore, you had the phenomenon of the CPI sitting with the Jana Sangh in UP, also in Punjab and Bihar. As a matter of fact in Bihar, when our party had decided that we shall not sit with the Jana Sangh, our party office was gheraoed for days together by Lohia supporters, Of course we were also not that strong in our ideological conviction. We gave in. Right in your Punjab, you had a coalition ministry with the Akalis, the Jana Sangh and the Communist Party. Mr. Satpal Dang was one of the members of this ministry.

So in 1967, with the weakening of the left and the weakening of its expectation that it can emerge as an alternative, with the Communist Party split and with the decisive evidence of the Congress weakening, there was big change in the leftist attitude towards communalism. That was essentially an attitude of accommodation of communalism. Not a united front, certainly not a desire to be one with the communal forces, but certainly a desire to accommodate the communal forces, and to begin with the accommodation was of minority communalism. A theory spread among the left that majority communalism was very bad and evil; you should probably have no truck with it except in terms of anti-Congressism, but minority communalism is understandable. After all, the minority in India is threatened against, specially as far as the Muslims are concerned. In Delhi there is no dearth of evidence. They do not get even a place of residence because they happen to be Muslims. There are circulars to say that certain jobs must never be given to Muslims. The first Major General of the artillery, Major General Habibullah was never given a command of a division because he was a Muslim. He was made commandant of the Defence Academy at Khadakwasala; never mage general of an active command.

The understanding of communists and leftists that minority communalism is justified, is natural, is even to be sympathized with, that was the beginning of the thin end of the wedge. It began also, of course, in Kerala. We united with the same communal forces who had defeated us. The Muslim League, above all, on the spurious theory that the Muslim League is different in Kerala and certainly Muslim minority communalism is not so bad as Hindu communalism. Our General Secretary, Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, who made a very good speech at the National Integration Council in 1962, made many valid points among which he very strongly emphasized that our main battle is against majority communalism and then we can take on minority communalism. Frankly, the result was, the greatest debacle. As far as the left is concerned, it was not that we were not able to prevent riots of UP or Bihar or whatever, but because of our compromise with the communal forces, the way in which the communal situation deteriorated in Kerala, where the left was such a powerful force. Mr. Achuta Menon, the ex-Chief Minister, put it very well. He said the situation is like this, that first Nehru and the Congress used communalism against the communists, then the communists used communalists against the Congress, and now it is the communalists who are using both the Congress and the communists. That is the situation in Kerala. One may win elections, one may not. That is why the whole controversy in the CPM, with a very powerful personality like Raghavan, moving out precisely on this basis.

From this theory that minority communalism is not so bad as majority communalism there was a further deviation as far as the left and

communalism was concerned. That is, that we can have a non-aggression pact with communalism, politically though not ideologically. That is, in order to defeat the Congress we need not enter into election alliances and adjustments with the communal forces, but we can have a non-aggression pact. They will fight, we will fight and we will see that we do not fight each other. This non-aggression pact theory has also naturally led to just the opposite of what was hoped, that ideologically we may advance while politically we may have non-aggression. The left ideology has also weakened.

Since 1967 another very negative feature in relation to the left and the communalists or communalism is that the left, I would not say has lost its identity, but has not insisted on its identity. The left in that sense has ceased to be left. What we have attempted to project is alternative policies, but not alternative left politics where the left will be completely distinguished and differently demarcated, not in a sectarian manner but in a sense of identity acquisition from any other force in the country. There has been a dilution of the left. This is not just because of the compulsions of the election situation but above all because of a wrong belief that the left can somehow smuggle itself into power. If the left disguises itself sufficiently, somehow people will vote for the left without knowing that they have voted for the left- in other words, Hindu communalists can also vote for the left because they will not know that the left is antagonistic to Hindu communalism. I would say it is a smuggling in theory.

It is just like the quarrels we have had with our CPM friends in West Bengal, who are now trying to change. In textbooks, for example, you should not smuggle in Marx so that suddenly the students, without knowing it reads a text of Marx, Naturally those who are anti-Marxists point it out and it becomes a big problem. Rabindranath's texts were removed and Marxist texts were substituted. As one of the great teachers of Marxism, Sushuban Sarcar said in Calcutta, Marx is too great to be smuggled in through the window, when his time comes he will knock at the door and say Í am here, let me enter'.

The left wanted to smuggle itself to victory in a way the non-left or anti-left would not know whom exactly they were voting for. This loss of left identity has been very little commented upon. Much more has the left been subjected, very legitimately, to criticism that sections of the left, specially the CPI, went very soft towards the Congress. Yes, certainly it should be criticized for that. But I submit a much graver weakness has been, this general dilution or covering up of the left in order to advance itself, which has certainly led to a weakening of its battle against communalism.

The last two weaknesses of left and communalism, which I will mention here are: one is an old one and so I will mention it and leave it, and that is the same

old idea, that you can divert the masses from communalism by taking up economic issues, that trade unionism will be an answer to communalism. The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh for example, is part of the trade union United Front in which both the CITU and the AITUC and even the INTUC are involved. However, this is an old weakness which I have already mentioned. So I will leave it at that.

The last, and I think the most important weakness from the ideological angle is, what is the relationship between communalism, nationalism and class? The essence of the left advance is to have a class approach, to instil class consciousness. Neither communalism nor nationalism is class in that sense. Communalism is definitely not and nationalism is certainly a conglomerate of many classes. So the left, which sincerely believes in propagating class consciousness, has tended to equate communalism and nationalism as both being the enemies of class consciousness. Therefore, for the workers or the organized masses to have class consciousness will mean to have to eschew both communalism and nationalism. They are not saying that communalism is against the interests of the working class but that nationalism is something which has to be transcended, to grow into class consciousness. It is not possible to grow from communalism to class consciousness but it is possible to grow from anti-imperialist nationalism to class consciousness. Therefore, one of the jobs of those who are wanting to bring about class consciousness is also to help the growth of anti-imperialist nationalism as against communalism. Therefore, the two are not the same. One is an enemy; one is something from which one must advance. This has been, and continues to be, a matter of confusion.

Nationalism is very wrongly understood. The famous statement of Marx in the Communist Manifesto is often bandied about without being properly understood, that the workers have no fatherland. But in the same Communist Manifesto, a few lines thereafter, there is the statement of Marx that the workers must themselves become the nation. There is no dearth of examples in recent contemporary history, whether you take Ho Chi Minh or Fidel Castro or the French resistance of Yugoslavia or the great patriotic war of the Soviet Union also, where class consciousness finds in anti-imperialist nationalism an ally.

There are differences but no antagonism. Just as communalism converts differences into antagonism, so the left in India has tended to covert the difference between nationalism and class consciousness, which is only a difference, into antagonism. This has been and continues to be a standing mistake of the left as far as fighting communalism is concerned.

It is understood in a highly simplistic sense. The left very much lags behind in its insufficient appreciation of the role of imperialism in the spread of communalism after independence. So the first element in the strategy is a clear understanding of communalism. It is very strange, is it not, that the left has never met to discuss communalism. We have held conventions to combat it, but never a meeting of the left forces to understand communalism, how it has come, what have been our mistakes in relation to it, and all that.

The second element in the strategy is, the development of what I will call left fundamentalism. That is, we must propagate the ideology and programme and carry out actions of the left also which will bring the left as the left before the millions of our people. This will not make them leftists but will make them conscious that there is such a thing as left. I remember that when I was a student or even later, never had I to tell somebody that here is a communist. Even in a distorted way they knew that the Communist Party is a distinct entity, left is a distinct identity. That is not so now. What is the left? What does it stand for? Even Socialism; everybody is a socialist. Everybody is a friend of the Soviet Union. In that sense it is good, it gives you an approach. At the same time unless one comes forward and projects with all demarcations, and here I would say even with all sectarianism, the left as the left, preach left fundamentalism, it will not be able to create a cadre base to fight communalism.

The third point is to be very clear that, to fight communalism, national secular unity has to build left unity or left and democratic unity, whatever you call it, is totally insufficient when it comes to combating communalism. I think we have to try our best to secularize the mass mind and that can best be done by nationalizing the mass mind. If we can achieve the transition from communalism on a mass scale, if India becomes dearer than to a Muslim than anything which is in his religion or India becomes dearer than anything to a Hindu, of it is India that counts more than anything else, then I think we will have achieved really the basis of success in the battle against communalism.

The fourth point is, the defence of the national state. The left has to realize that the national state is a national acquisition, that the Republic of India born on 15 August 1947- may be in very broad terms we can say it is a capitalist state, perhaps, but it is certainly a national state- is a national acquisition, a national victory. Just as we fought for well nigh one hundred years in order to destroy the colonial state, now that neo-colonialists are trying to destroy our national state, the battle against destabilization of our national state is as important and is likely to take as long to win as the battle to destroy the colonial state. So the defence of the national state against the neo-colonialist attack against it, the neo-colonialist offensive of seeking to destroy it and using communalism as one of the most potent weapons in that offensive of

destruction, is I think, another very indispensable element in the strategy of the left.

About national secular unity, I will only come back to one point which I mentioned earlier, that is, the left must not be taken to be anti-religious. It is anti-communal, but not anti-religious. It is our enemies who will constantly try to prove that we are anti-religious, whereas what we are saying is that religion is irrelevant in terms of politics. We are not an anti-religious force, we are an anti-communal force. Therefore, the last element of strategy, is the need for the left to take the initiative, the leadership and also to offer physical combat to the communal forces. We have not taken the initiative, we have tended to just be a fire fighting brigade. We are not taking the lead, we have tended to just be a those whom we can lead into the battle against communalism. As for physical combat, really that has been very much absent. It is a great tragedy and a great mistake, because there was a time when the left could also match a great deal of the communal forces in terms of organization and discipline and capacity to hurt, when it becomes necessary to hurt.

So broadly, these are the points about the strategy that the left must pursue, in my view, if it is to acquit, and also acquit itself with credit, in this battle against communalism, and to realize that unless this battle against communalism is won the objective of transition to socialism will be impossible to attain.

COMMUNALISM IN THE AKALI PARTY

Harish Puri

Communalism is basically a phenomenon of the modern state when rationality, competition for secular material gains became an important consideration, when as one social psychologist, Vance Packard put it, the 'hidden persuaders' were around. It is a very interesting study of the use of the communication media, the role of language; the myths and symbols and how these are utilized to persuade the people, so that people do not know what is happening to them at the level of their consciousness and how their beliefs are developed by the manipulator.

Communalism cannot be studied without taking into consideration the socio-historical context and also the fact that when we study political parties we have to be clear that political parties primarily struggle for political power. Their objectives are not confined to what they profess in their ideology. These also include material objectives (i.e., political as well as economic) of the leaders. Since it is so, there would always be factions, splinter groups in a political party, to whom their material objectives and personal ego-related objectives of individuals may be more important. They may use communalism with devastating effect against their adversaries. The fact that a communal party or its faction comes to insist upon the unity aspect should not be allowed to mislead us. It may emphasize ethnic identity and the politics of culture, which tends to distort the reality of social relations and differentials.

They try to distort things, but they do not completely succeed in the end. The tension between social realities and the need of the ruling elite in a party to distort that reality may always be there and the shape of the balance may go on changing from one situation to another. So that, the shape which communalism takes in the Akali Party would vary from one phase to another. The same people may at one time be talking in a communal, even secessionist, fashion and at another time in a somewhat secular nationalist one.

Another point, on which I may put a little more stress, is that once a party tends to derive sufficient dividends from the distortion of reality, by turning the social questions into religious ones, and when it builds a structure of political communication, uses symbols and constructs a mythology complex (the belief system and what some people may call loosely the political culture of the party), this last acquires in a certain way an autonomy of its own. It may become difficult for a different kind of leadership to break away from it. This is

because the force which that superstructure acquires inhibits a different kind of maneuvering by the political leaders. Therefore, willy-nilly even a different set of leaders are driven into the same vortex, sometimes irretrievably. That is happening to the Akali Dal also. Keeping all this in view we will briefly survey the developments in the Akali party and the shape its communalism has taken.

Emergence of Akali Dal and Growth of Communalism

When we study the emergence of the Akali Dal in 1920 it seems to us that the Akali Dal could not be seen as the creator of Sikh communalism in Punjab. It was born in a particular socio-historical context; at a point of time when the growth of communal thinking, communal identities and communal consciousness was taking shape. So we go a little further back.

It is said for example, that before the eighteen eighties there was nothing like a very distinct Sikh identity. We know that when the census enumerators went about and a strict definition was given that only one who is a 'Khalsa' of Guru Gobind, who is a proper kesadhari, observes all the norms, wears all the five 'k's, would be enlisted as a Sikh, the replies that they got were interesting. Richard Fox has described these in a recently produced book, The Lions of Punjab, which is a book on the making of culture. He, and of course some others, found that the kind of replies that people gave at that time to the question 'what is your religion' included such as 'I am a Nanakpanthi Hindu'. Where do you put him? Among the Hindus, or, among Sikhs? Many others said, for example, 'I am a Nanakpanthi Sikh', or 'I am a Guru Gobindi Hindu'. The enumerators found it very difficult to list them in one category or another. Later on, in 1901, the census authorities had to dispense with the kind of a definition for a Sikh.

We are aware that it this development of identity a very important role was played by both colonial mercantile capitalism in the beginning and, what is more significant (to which Fox particularly draws attention), a certain mid-19th century European bent of mind, looking at people in terms of racial categories. Social Darwinism had taken roots by that time. You find that when the Europeans came they tended to identify people by their cultural traits and they also almost forced the indigenous society to take shape according to their categorization of the Indian people.

The new economy turned the peasant into a petty commodity producer, that too with a rising level of indebtedness, and in the canal colonies, to prosperity also. Malcolm Darling correctly put the two aspects together in his book Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt. Further, as for the army, the British laid down the condition that a proper Khalsa would be preferred for recruitment. Obviously, the economic and social factors dictated the choice in terms of religious identity. The British made it profitable to be a Khalsa Sikh.

This became a crucial factor. The indebtness of the peasantry increased; more and more land went into mortgage. This peasantry became and had to become the major source of recruits for the Army. The criterion for preference made its impact.

An important role was also played by the religious reform organizations. I need not go into the activities of the Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabha and later on the Chief Khalsa Dewan and the growth of competitive communal beliefs. What you find is, that all these developments were taking place before the Akali Dal was born.

Alongside these, there were the denominational institutions where the medium of instruction was chosen on separate religious considerations. A significant factor in Punjab, as against Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and some other regions was that the regional language was not developed. At the administrative level, even below the district level, Punjabi was not the language of administration. Punjabi was not the medium of instruction in government schools, not even at the primary level. During Ranjit Singh's regime the language of administration was Persian. During the British period it was Urdu or English. It was interesting to read in Gobinder Singh's book, Religion and Politics in the Punjab, that when the SGPC came into being in 1925, it prepared a set of rules and procedures and do you know the title? It was named Dastur ul Amal. Punjabi did not emerge as a basic factor necessary for the development of a nationality. In addition, the role the language press played hindered that development.

The market economy also created also created a new class of traders and professionals, naturally urbanite and mostly Hindus. Upto a certain stage they reaped a rich harvest both from the cuts they took as commission agents or profits from lending and professional fees. But it reached a point where the colonial government found that this was becoming counter-productive for their bigger designs and that led to the Land Alienation Act. This class which was actually the product of the colonial economy now came to confront the colonialists, because their interests were threatened. They joined the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha. They tended to see in that Act not an intent to benefit the peasant but to favour the landlord, Muslim or Sikh. Those who belonged to the agricultural castes could now be favoured moneylenders; they could acquire land in case of non-repayment of debts; but not so the non-agriculturist castes. So it harmed in fact mainly the urban Hindus who were not the agriculturist castes.

All these factors combined. The Singh Sabha and initially even Arya Samaj were pro-British. The Singh Sabha and then the Chief Khalsa Dewan thought that they could better serve their interests under the cloak of representing the

Sikhs by being totally loyal to the British. Actually at one stage they said that they had never had it so good, not even under Ranjit Singh, as they had under the British.

During the First World War, there was massive recruitment from among the Sikhs; almost every fourth recruit was a Sikh. A calculation says that at the beginning of the War sixty-five per cent of the Army came from Punjab. This further strengthened the belief that the British regime benefitted them in a big way. They were the landlords– the elite, with the rulers on their side. But when the war was over, the peasantry in central Punjab, because of the indebtedness, felt more oppressed. Even though moneylender changed – it was no more an urban Hindu or Sikh moneylender, it was a landlord moneylender who belonged to the agricultural caste – the indebtedness increased. Further, again differences were created between that peasantry, which had moved on to the canal colonies and the peasantry which was in central Punjab. The central Punjab peasant suffered all the more. Earlier we had had large scale emigration from central Punjab to foreign lands. Those doors were also closed before the war began.

When the war was over, the army had to be demobilized. More and more people returned home from the army and from foreign lands. They had had experience of other lands, had seen the other parts of the world. They compared their own life with those in the other parts of the world. Large tracts of lands were under mortgage, because those who went abroad had to raise money by mortgaging their lands. Price escalation was another problem. And you find a protest emerging in the soc-called loyal peasantry. Then we had the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh. There was a strong reaction against what the Chief Khalsa Dewan was doing and what the *Sarbarah* of the Golden Temple did. Even General Dyer was given a saropa and made a proper Sikh; he was baptized – token of honour for whatever he did in Jalianwala Bagh. It was revolting. The peasantry obviously felt provoked by it. So there was anger against the Chief Khalsa Dewan. What you have is that whereas the Chief Khalsa Dewan's politics was also communal, the communalism of the Akalis was a different shade.

Meanwhile, the Indian National Congress had launched the Non-cooperation movement. The khilafat movement brought Muslims, in large numbers, into an anti-British mass upsurge. The Central Sikh League and the Akali Dal were also influenced by the nationalist protest.

It is in this kind of situation that there emerged the struggle for liberation of the gurudwaras from the kind of *mahants* who could give a *saropa* to Gen. Dyer; who were absolutely corrupt; and like *mahant* Narain Das of Nankana Sahib - anti-colonial, anti-British thrust combined with the urge for the

liberation of the gurudwaras and have control over them against those who were loyal agents of the British. For a considerable period the Akali Dal, which emerged as a militant volunteer corps of SGPC to fight the battle of liberation of the Gurudwaras, fought two struggles; one for liberation of the gurudwaras and the other, a national anti-British struggle. For example, when the keys of the *Toshakhana* of Darbar Sahib were handed over to Kharak Singh, Mahatama Gandhi interpreted it as the victory of the first battle of freedom of India. It is, therefore, a question of what the Akali Dal thought of its own struggle, and also how Gandhi and others perceived it, and the importance of that in the anti-colonial movement.

During the struggle for the liberation of the gurudwras and the various other agitations, such as Guru Ka Bagh and Jatio morchas, immense sacrifices were made, and non-violence was adhered to as a perfect unfaltering creed throughout. There was tremendous influence of Mahatma Gandhi. Partha Mukherjee's article in *Man and Development* discusses how non-violence became a perfect creed, despite the ideological hold of the martial instincts of the Sikhs and a sanctioned legitimacy of violent tirade against detractors, and they observed remarkable military discipline with uncompromising emphasis on non-violence. That is what made it a successful mass movement which sidelined the Babbar Akalis by rejecting terrorist violence.

Another important development related to the formation of SGPC - a statutory body, by the legislation of a Sikh Gurudwaras Act. This was a very significant development which created a structure of power for a community via the control of the religious shrines which became a major factor for conditioning and even directing the politics of the community. Because its basis was democratic election, it meant that some political party was going to contest the election for its control The Akali Dal, initially, was the army of the SGPC, but after this Act was passed, when elections were held, the Akali Dal, as a party became a force for contesting the elections. Whatever the SGPC did now in the name of religious affairs had to be done according to the ideology, the priority, the policy and programme of the Akali Dal. And what would be the priorities of the Akali Dal? Those which were the priorities of the ruling economic class controlling the Akali Dal.

The SGPC was thus established as the religious parliament of the Sikhs, that is, a body concerned with the management of religious shrines. Surely, it was to control the gurudwaras, lay down the norms, the *maryada* and decide on other religious concerns. All that seems to be a religious domain. But how would that be done? The priorities would be political. Here the significant study made by Gobinder Singh becomes very important, though it deals with a later period. He has gone into great details about a variety of aspects, as to which kind of people went into SGPC. He found that almost eighty per cent of

the nominated candidates were from the Akali party during the period 1966-1980. He enquired about the orientations of the members of the SGPC. It was found that 89 per cent were those who initially had taken part in some political movement and that not more than ten per cent of the members of the SGPC during this period were those whose initial interest lay in matters of religion. Their basic training, mental orientation, motive, all these were primarily political.

So the SGPC became a political body, working under the penumbra of the religious concerns of the community. The Akali Dal as a political party stood outside, in a way, but the Akali party was inside the SGPC also. The two stood together. There could be conflicts between the two and more often collaboration, depending upon who controlled the SGPC and the Akali Dal at a particular time. It could play an important role in cutting down the hegemony of the ruling leadership or in strengthening it. This became a significant factor. Even towards the end of the last *morcha,* the Jaito *morcha,* one finds a kind of rupture. Because by this time the question of which groups and interests should control the SGPC had become important.

From 1925 onwards, their interests in secular domain of politics confined to the proportional representation, the share in the weightage, appeared more salient. The Nehru Committee Report related to that. The All India Congress Committee, in spite of rejecting separate representation and condemning it, still considered ways and means of accommodating representation on the basis of communities. When they made one kind of adjustment others, feeling deprived rejected it. During this period these concerns became significant.

During this period one does not see the Akali Dal as the key political party on behalf of the Sikhs. There were the Chief Khalsa Dewan, the Central Sikh League. The Central Sikh League leader Baba Kharak Singh felt the need to fight against the Jallianwala Bagh atrocities thought that there was the need for the Sikhs to join the national mainstream. Then came the Akali Dal. The three different groups – the Chief Khalsa Dewan, the Central Sikh League and the Akali Dal – each one of them talking about community interests. Since no one was taken as a monolithic representative organisation of Sikh interests they had to have recourse to the All Parties Sikh Conferences. So the claim of any one of them to be a spokesman of the Sikh community was openly challenged. What you again see is that in various kinds of parleys - the first Round Table Conference, the Second Round Table Conference – the Sikhs were represented by those who did not belong to the Akali Dal. It may be Ujjal Singh, it may be Baldev Singh, it may be Sir Joginder Singh. They were not the leaders of the Akali Dal. They did not belong to that strata of the middle class urbanite leadership with middle class and poor peasantry as the support-base. These people who negotiated belonged to the upper strata, aristocracy. All of

them could not be clearly identified as such with the Chief Khalsa Dewan, but certainly they did not toe the line of either the Centre Sikh League or the Akali Dal.

When the Muslim League raised the demand for Pakistan, one finds a social situation in which what is being debated is, how do we confront the Muslim League onslaught and see that Pakistan is not formed and also how the Sikh interests can be accommodated? The new strategies were born out of a new situation, a far more threatening political situation. Because they knew the colonial interests, their preferences had also gradually developed apprehensions about how far the Congress party would have the power or the will to resist Jinnah's demands. Rajagopalachari presenting his own formula or members of the Legislative Council of Madras passing a resolution that Muslims could be given some area of their own, enhanced their fears.

In this kind of a situation, the earlier developing sense of separate interests was overlaid with a consuming fear that Punjab was going to be partitioned. What was going to happen to the Sikhs settled in canal colonies or Rawalpindi? Where shall they go? Their first reaction was that they were opposed to partition; they wanted that there should be no Pakistan, but if the Pakistan idea could not be defeated, they would struggle for a separate *Azad Punjab or Sikhistan*. Communalism of the Akali Dal grew in this historical context.

Pakistan was formed. Partition was not merely a division of territories. It made a great impact on the minds of men. It affected the Sikh community the most. Somewhere in the backyard of the mind, particularly of the urbanite refugees, the idea of a homeland for the Sikhs gained a strong enough foothold.

Pakistan also symbolized the developing hatreds and the division of people along the idea of nationality and politics, based n on religion. These notions cannot evaporate by any significant manoeuvre so easily.

The leadership of the Akali Dal, earlier and after independence, was largely in the hands of the urban non-Jat sections. In the new situation, the social situation in particular, they seemed to be more adversely affected. Socially, even the people who were in the canal colonies, the Jats, were also affected, but they were compensated considerably by the allotment of alternate lands in Punjab. The problem was more of the educated, urban, non-Jat trading and professional sections, who were faced with fierce competition from the already well-established people of other community. In this situation, here was this group, which could never really separate the interests of Punjab from those of the Sikh community, and they used this language as if the two were interchangeable terms – Sikhs and Punjab. They still did not do much to develop Punjabi as a language. They did not do much to develop the Punjabi identity. It did not suit them.

Among these sections, Bhai Sahib Kapur Singh was a kind of a patron saint supplying most of the rationale to the leadership in the Akali Dal. He developed a theory of Sikhs having been divinely cut out for having not only a separate social identity, but also a separate political identity. He was considerably helpful in providing political guidance to master Tara Singh.

So we find two developments hereinafter. At the social level, the majority of the Sikhs, 70 per cent or more, were settled in the rural areas as agriculturists. Now, of all the Sikhs more than two-thirds are Jats. The small proportion of higher caste non-Jat Sikhs live in the urban situation competing in the field of trade and service with Hindu higher caste groups. In this situation the peasantry by and large lined up behind the Congress party, much more prominently during the period of Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon. The urban section tried to win the support of the peasantry under the monolithic idea of the separate political interests of the Sikh community. For political unity, panthic unity was most crucial. So the notion that without political power Sikh religion is not safe. On the other hand, if you want to gain political power then panthic unity is crucial. To whom? Largely the urban higher caste non-Jat section of the leadership, because for the Jat in the village social situation, there was no problem.

The Jat dominated the scene. There was no danger to his identity. For him a Brahmin was at least slightly a word of opprobrium, in no case regarded as of a higher status. A Jat may cut his beard, he may trim his hair, he may smoke occasionally, he may take opium, he may go to gurdwara and the Devi temple, he may go even to Pir's grave; nothing happened to him, he remained a Sikh. But this affected more and more the urban, non-Jat Khatri, Arora Sikh for whom sheer survival seemed to be cast in the shape of panthic unity. He wanted the peasantry to gorge panthic unity. What was very advantageous for him was that with the gurdwara at the centre of Akali politics and the great sanctity of the gurdwara in the ethos of the Jat peasantry, the latter would always be available for agitations when the call was given from the gurdwara that the *panth* is in danger. But the Jat was not so much concerned about the so-called loss of Sikh identity which seemed to disturb people like Khushwant Singh and others who always felt that the major problem related to the Sikh's fear of getting absorbed by Hinduism. Who was in fear of getting absorbed? A Jat was not. He did not seem to bother. So this hypothesis was one given by the urban Khatri and Arora Sikhs, often called *Bhapas.* This came in handy for Pratap Singh Kairon, who always made a distinction between the *Bhapa* and the Jat, ridiculing the former for his bania like behaviour.

Politics of Punjabi Suba: Reinforcing Communal Fears

With the background of pre-partition politics and the events of partition, the demand for more weightage for Sikhs in the legislative assembly and reservation of seats for Sikhs in the services was followed by that for a Punjabi Suba in which the Sikhs should have greater autonomy. Further justification for that line of argument was supplied by the so-called 'Hindu leaders'. This was when a majority of Hindus, during the census operations of 1951 and 1961, persuaded by the Arya Samaj and the Hindu communal leaders of the Congress party, registered their mother tongue as Hindi. This was a political act – disastrous for Punjabi Hindus, harmful to Punjab and the country. They thought that these

Akali dealers had earlier talked of *Khalistan,* and Azad Punjab, more weightage to the Sikhs in the Assembly, larger weightage for the Sikhs in the army, and now they were talking of Punjabi Suba. It was the same idiom. They came to believe that if they also registered Punjabi language, perhaps that would suit the Alkalis' suspected design of a Sikh dominated state or Khalistan. It was thus a political act on the part of the Hindus. It was not that these Hindus did not speak Punjabi. All of them did. Their act was meant to weaken the support for the Akali demand. But instead this helped the Akalis.

The rationale of the struggle for Punjabi Suba was also provided by the Congress party's acceptance of the linguistic principle for states and supported by the logic of country-wide movements beginning with Andhra Pradesh. Master Tara Singh decided to fight for Punjabi Suba but conceded a number of times that basically it was a struggle for some kind of Sikh homeland. It is not that all the Akalis were absolutely behind Master Tara Singh. There were Akalis who decided on the merger of the Akali Dal with the Congress, in 1948. Tara Singh stayed out. Another merger took place again in 1956. These leaders were more for a linguistic state. In the 1962 split in the Akali Dal, the two streams fell clearly apart; one talking of a pure and simple linguistic state, the other of a Sikh state. Fateh Singh even said at one stage that his demand was for a province or a state based purely on language, the percentage of the population was no consideration to him at all. He said, those who talked of a Sikh homeland were now marginal to Sikh politics. The Mater Akali Dal, which raised the slogan of a Sikh homeland, would be completely rejected by the masses. Khushwant Singh conceded that Fateh Singh at that point of time was actually representing and speaking for a predominant majority of the Sikhs in Punjab.

Hereafter, in the Akali Dal these two streams ran parallel, one was broadly that of Tara Singh Group advocating Sikh homeland. Tara Singh was defeated in 1962 and became almost marginal to Akali politics after being the chief

leader for almost four decades. But the salience of the ideas he had planted persisted and became important in a difficult historical situation. Kapur Singh, Master Tara Singh and Khushwant Singh articulated the idea of Sikh homeland as a political goal. One finds a close connection between this resolution, the Batala resolution and the Anandpur Sahib resolution.

The Sikh homeland resolution which the Tara Singh Dal passed at Ludhiana in December 1966, talked of a reconstitution of the boundaries of Punjab and listed areas of Ambala District, Una tehsil, Ganganagar district of Rajasthan, and other areas, and the goal was 'to create a homogeneous Sikh state'. In the Anandpur Sahib resolution the Akalis talked of a homogeneous Punjabi speaking state. But if you see all the contents, these are taken verbatim from the resolution adopted by the Master Akali Dal on the Sikh homeland. Similar was the case with the Batala resolution of 1968.

After the death of Tara Singh in 1967, and the first election the reorganized Punjab, the internal feuds and fights were accentuated. These caused the fall of the Gurnam Singh Ministry and then of the Gill Ministry. In 1968, before the mid-term election of 1969, there was a merger of the Master group and the Fateh Singh group. The political goal which was adopted in the merger resolution did not talk of a Sikh homeland directly. The political goal of the Akali Dal adopted in that resolution was the same as appeared in the Anandpur Sahib resolution.

When Sant Fateh Singh came on the scene, it appeared to distinctly alter the face of the Akali Dal's communal politics as he emphasized Hindu-Sikh unity, condemned the homeland demand, and condemned Master Tara Singh for communalizing politics. He came in the forefront as a devout nationalist during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 and again during the war in 1971. During his leadership the insistence was on the economic programme, that Punjab should be made into the modern province. He talked even of land reforms, of nationalization of industries, appreciation of the foreign policy of India based on non-alignment, which, for example, the Anandpur Sahib resolution rejects. This tendency has always been present in the Akali Dal, becoming dominant in one situation and subordinated or subdued in another.

Overt Communalism to Covert Communalism

It was understood that in the secular political domain there had to be a struggle for power and that the Akali party could also capture power. In the election manifestos of the Sant Akali Dal, right from 1962 to 1980, the words 'discrimination against the Sikhs', 'fear of absorption of the Sikh' , 'Khalsa panth in danger', or 'demands of the Sikhs' - just did not appear. One finds the adjustment of their communal demands to the changing political situations. The major emphasis shifted to economic demands. This happened because by

now the social base of the Akali Dal had undergone a change. Now the emerging capitalist agricultural class had greater stakes in economic growth. They were more interested in subsidized inputs, in loans for buying tractors and other assets, remunerative prices for foodgrains, etc. In this political and economic situation, the interests of the Sikh community were spelled out in a very different manner. It was not that the Akali party had discarded the communal approach. While, in the Akali party meetings there was a certain persistence of the idiom of Master Tara Singh, in the secular political domain, in the election campaigns, in the assembly debates, in the government organized functions, the emphasis was on the economic needs of Punjab. So in one set of structures the emphasis was on Punjab, in the other set it was on the interests of the Sikhs. Communalism was there, but it was tempered by regional economic issues and interests.

There were differences between the Master Akali Dal and the Sant Akali Dal on these issues. But then the less structured ideal was always there as a political environment in which the Sikhs must have a dominant role. It was rather vague and for that reason more appealing. That is what some leaders like Tara Singh and Kapur Singh thought was the most significant aspect of Akali aspirations - cutting across the two groups.

The SGPC is an institution through which the sectional interests of the ruling leadership of the Akali Dal are legitimized. Once SGPC supports a resolution of the Akali Dal it is deemed to be the demand of the entire Sikh community. This is believed to be so despite the fact that Sikhs are not a monolithic group. There are Sikhs who are communists, Sikhs who are in the Congress and the *mazhbis* whose interests may not figure in the Akali leaders' concerns.

A crucial factor which may determine the nature of the dominant trend in Akali politics is related to the group which controls the SGPC. The Sikhs, like any other community are obviously differentiated by class interests. But once a programme goes through the SGPC and is adopted by it the demand or the programme is taken as the demand of the entire Sikh Community. So, in the struggle of contending groups, control over the SGPC remains very significant, necessitating reversion to the vague but powerful ideal 'Khalsa ji ke bole bale'.

It is important to take note of the powerful impact of factional strife in keeping the Akali Dal pinned to communal politics. The more intense the factional strife, the more communal and sectarian becomes its political thrust. The questions which become more decisive are: what are the ideas for a party which claims to be the chief spokesman of the whole panth? What are the panthic interests? When they talk more of Punjab interests, or economic gains, they are seen as deviating from the primary concerns. So, in the factional fights the groups would like to use the Akal Takht. The Jathedar of

Akal Takht could be made to pass a hukamnama against Jagdev Singh Talwandi; Singh Sahibs could form a council to administer the affairs of the Akali Dal. The Akal Takht could punish Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal to come and appear before it, or ask Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala to apologize for an action which was deemed to have violated panthic norms.

The crucial factor in Akali politics is the superstructure, the belief system, which has been built gradually over the years. This a great asset for the Akali party when it is out of power, because then it can use it for mobilizing the entire community. However, when it is in power, the interests of the ruling class within the party demands more stress on secular, material, economic interests. Once that is being done, the detractors of the ruling leadership will use the fundamental objective, the basic goal of the party: á homeland in which the Sikhs would dominate'. They may then have recourse to *gurmata, hukamnama*, Akal takht, and to fundamental symbols. There was a *hukamnama* issued from the Akal Takht, against the Sant Nirankaris. The Akai Dal was in government. But nobody in the government could come out and say that in free India, where there is equality, no party, no group, no community could be allowed to pass such strictures against another community, as was done by the foes of the ruling group against the Sant Nirankaris.

When in 1980 the Nirankari chief was killed and a Bhindranwala had the courage to say Í will weigh in gold the man who has killed the Nirankari baba', the Akali Dal did not have the courage to counteract it. It could not say it is inhuman, it is against the principles of Sikhism. This was because the Akalis had been using precisely the same idiom through the SGPC in their mobilization for agitation.

So in the later period, after 1980, the idiom the Akali Dal capitalized on throughout became a ring round its own neck. Harchand Singh Longowal despite a weak protest against Bhindranwale (he used to call Bhindranwale's fortress in the complexes as Chambal Ghati), did not have the courage to confront the formidable threat. When the same Ranjit Singh, who allegedly killed Baba Gurbachan Singh, was arrested, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was the first to come out with a statement that in all the gurdwaras there must be prayers that no harm should be done to this great son of the Sikh community. These kinds of observations smack of double standards. Not that Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, left to himself, would have done that, but these were the compulsions of the politics of the political party which had always used religion and eighteenth century symbols as very strong instrument for its survival. And we know what happened.

The tragedy which Punjab faces is partly because of sheer opportunism, the communalization of politics abetted by the congress party in building up a Bhindranwale, in building up a Dal Khalsa, because of trial kind of factional fight between Giani Zail Singh and Darbara singh. The other crucial part was the role of the Akali Dal. The Akalis could not stand up, precisely because they too were bound by that hold of the mythology complex, which they always used. And the political entrepreneurs of the Congress knew well that the Akalis could be beaten on their ground, that they would be irretrievably trapped in this web.

The democratically elected political party, the Akali Dal, which won 73 seats (a tremendous success indeed), finds it extremely difficult to confront that element which appeals to the same fundamentalism on which the Akali Dal had thrived. These elements captured the Gurdwara again, carried on armed terrorism from their and the Akali Dal, whether at the ideological level or at the political level among the masses, just could do nothing. I am sure Barnala realized that the future of the Sikh community, if that were the priority, necessitated that these terrorists, the Sikhs Students' Federation, the Damdami Taksal etc., had to be checked and the Sikh community would have to pay the price if they were not checked. Inspite of that, the Akali Dal was not really in a position to go into the villages, to the masses and to mobilize them against that, mainly because they had always mobilized then people around similar idiom. So they were caught in a cleft.

Factors Accelerating Communal Politics

However, if the Akali Dal had remained wedded to communal politics, its activities cannot be explained exclusively with reference to opportunism. There are various other factors. One factor is the economic conditions, the decline in the agricultural incomes, after the mid nineteen-seventies in particular. It is not as remunerative to the farmers today as it was earlier. Almost 70 per cent of the farmers have landholdings of below seven acres. The larger assets are owned by another section which seems to control the Akali Dal. There is, therefore, among the peasantry a definite feeling of being caught in a difficult economic situation. Punjab is prosperous. One may recall the expression of Darling. There is prosperity and debt. The per capita income, per capita consumption of electricity, assets held, the number of tractors, the number of tubewells, and the lush greenery around, all this gives the idea of prosperity. At the same time, the small peasantry, marginal peasantry, the landless labourers are extremely oppressed. Young children of the farmers, many of them with some degree of education, see their world as cruel. Their unemployment is becoming a big problem. Punjab does not have a good industrial base so far. This is an important side of the picture.

But the other is more significant. When does communalism of any party gain support? In a situation in which ideological politics becomes less important. It could not lead to the manifestation of communalism in the politics of one party if the decline of ideology did not effect the total political situation in the country. In the Congress party itself, over a period time, there has been a very persistent and conspicuous decline of the language of politics. With the hollowness of *garibi hatao or* Nehruvian socialism, the language of politics was devalued. When politics is devalued and the fight is not on the ideological plane (even the Communist Party has not been a very active fighter for the ideological struggle in Punjab) it becomes easier for a party such as the Akali Dal, based as it is in the Sikh community in particular and having vested interests in the SGPC. This party could not be expected to break in a big way from its basic roots.

Another factor is the retarded kind of capitalist development in the country which tends to break the individual's sense of roots, identity, relations, without transforming the consciousness. Rationality has not come up in a big way, while technology has. There was a good poem in the Indian Express some time back, on Chandigarh: that here the people handle machines, wear jeans, use modern gadgets, they speak English, dance rock and disco but their culture is one brought from the village. So a village scene, including the brawl scene, are brought to the town. The brawl is now supported by high technology; people carrying carbines, sten-guns, LMGs, identifying in a technological fashion, methods to ensure transfer of community populations and to capture the state. Yet the overall sensibility remains feudal and primordial. It is a queer amalgam. This retarded capitalist growth has also contributed to the crisis of the political institutions. Over the period, when these changes were taking place and a new kind of political awareness was accompanied by ethnic orientations, in the struggle for material gains and political power, the primordial forces came to invade the arena of secular politics and the state.

On the other hand, given the shape of politics, the state had to conciliate the primordial forces to seek a workable compromise. The most orthodox elements were approached by the state for the purpose of dealing with demands raised by an ethnic community. In Punjab, some time ago, three or four people got together in Kapurthala, and came out with a crazy idea that Sikhs must have a Personal Law. A statement on such a demand appeared in the next day's newspapers. I believe more than 99 percent of the Sikhs thought this was stupid, crazy. In what sense do we have different social norms or customers from the others in Punjab? What do we include in the Sikh Personal Law? But behold, Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, of all the people, hurried to make a statement that she had asked the bureaucracy to find out what we should include in the Sikh Personal Law.

The character of the state has changed, because of the weakening of the institutions. The state has found it difficult to recorder the changing social relations in the wake of problems born of a retarded kind of capitalist growth, which has led to uneven development, increasing poverty and decline of institutions. The relationship between the social level and the political level has got fractured and the primordial forces at the social level have invaded the arena of political decision-making. When such a situation develops, it leads to corruption and the dismantling of norms and produces a moral outrage among the people against politics. Ideological politics atrophies; it does not seem to deliver the goods. Competitive political groups and leaders conciliate or arouse communal forces, caste forces, tribal forces and take to the non-rational idiom of cultural symbols. Within the ruling political party, factional fighting mortgages larger interests of the country for taking on adversaries in the party. In such a prevailing phenomenon, parties like Akali Dal find an advantage. The more desperate elements with the Akali party, who are not in the ruling position in the party, can take to fundamentalism or terrorist violence without compunction.

Communalism, as I said, always has some streak of or a tendency towards separatism. This is more likely to develop when a community is concentrated in one territory.

Communalism, as I said, always has some streak of or a tendency towards separatism. This is more likely to develop when a community is concentrated in one territory. Built on the hatred of an identified cultural or political enemy, say the Hindu majority sate, the emphasis, 'we are distinct, we are separate' has an emotional appeal. Its escalation is potentially separatist. But communalism *per se* is not separatism. So, by and large, the ruling leadership in the Akali Dal has always come down to emphasize that what they wanted was such an autonomous area in which the power would be in the hands of the Sikhs, but that such as arrangement should be within the framework of the Indian Constitution. However, the desperate elements, which are not or cannot be accommodated in the power structure, have come to believe that nothing could be secured for the Sikhs in the given political situation, unless they had a separate state of their own.

Concluding Comments

While concluding let us take serious note of some new facts. First, because of the nature of socio-economic development in the country, the past history and its legacy, and the decline of political institutions, the potential strength of religion or of separate community interests in politics, cannot be ignored or dismissed lightly. Javed Alam made a study of Bengal, its class, community and nationality formation, covering the period upto 1947. He has raised pertinent

question; can religion in some historical situations become a key factor in the formation of a nationality or in fracturing a potential nationality? The answer he got from this study was: 'yes, it can'. The communal orientation of politics, i.e., religion-based politics, can be a potential factor both for the development of a Sikh nationality – i.e., by destroying the potential for Punjabi nationality – and can become the basis even for separation. That the present day state is far too powerful to allow secession is a different matter.

Secondly, the Akali Dal sees its strength, its existence, as almost inconceivable without the control of the SGPC. In the SGPC it finds a source for the legitimation of all partisan, sectional economic interests and political interests of the leadership. It provides immense moral resources, financial resources, and manpower for elections. The Akali Dal cannot really break its umbilical cord with the SGPC. This would always keep the Akali Dal tied to some form of communal politics.

Thirdly, this points to, as Partha Mukherjee indicated, a big dilemma before the Akali Dal: if it continues to confine itself to religion-based politics it has much less chance of being in power for a sustained long period. But if it separates politics from religion it loses its linkage with the past ancestry. But the significant point which he raised was that the only other alternative in which this kind of a contradiction becomes redundant is such a political situation in which only the Sikh dominate. That means a kind of Khalistan. The Akali Dal cannot, for long, afford to remain wedded to its ideology and continue to remain committed to function within the secular democratic constitutional framework. Whether it was Bhindranwale or today's Damdami Taksal, they posed the question more sharply to the Akalis. There are no soft options for them.

Fourthly, communalism of a territorially concentrated minority, which verges on separatism, feeds communal forces rooted in the majority community, overtly, as a question of Hindu interests and covertly, in the name of strengthening the unity and integrity of the country. There is a threatening tendency among a variety of cultural and political groups to evolve a politics of culture among the Hindus. The ruling party, which needs the support of the majority, would be seen cultivating these forces and co-opting them. These forces feed on apprehensions, fears, hatreds against divergent cultural idioms of minority cultural/religious groups and prompt and abet ruthlessness of the state in curbing such divergent expressions. This makes for an incipient fascism. The danger is real and cannot be ignored.

Knowing the fact of the religious propensities of the people; the fact that religion could and does become a material force in particular situations; that political institutions in the country are facing a crisis; that there is rise of

anomic behaviour in the politics of the country, we cannot confront communalism of a political party by simple manipulation of a particular section of the leadership. The distinction between moderates and extremists is situational and can be misleading.

Dealing with it requires and concerted struggle at various levels first, the fight at the ideological level is very important. Secondly, we have to strengthen the salience of political institutions, because unless the capacity of the political institutions is re-established and strengthened, ideological struggle will remain superficial and ineffective. Thirdly, a way must be found to give purposeful direction to economic development which attends to the redistributive aspect. The very concept of development, which is neo-imperialist, which is no way people oriented, has to be replaced and accordingly a new strategy of development, in which the people play the central role, needs to be adopted. Fourthly, the federal arrangement must provide for a real sense of participation by ethnic groups. National integration is not a territorial concept. All the four steps are inter-linked. Weakness at any of those levels is bound to weaken the entire effort. The Akali Dal's communalism is a product of the malaise at the social, economic and political levels. It cannot be explained, or dealt with, without reference to the totality.

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI AND COMMUNALISM

M.S. Agwani

Communalism is a political attitude to religion. Therefore, the main thrust of this presentation is to see communalism in the context of politics and politics in the context of communalism, as they have evolved in India.

Politics and Communalism

Perhaps there are as many definitions of politics as there are political theorists. You will find elements of commonality between some of these definitions for the simple reason that they deal with the same phenomenon. Hence, one definition of politics cannot be totally at variance with another, unless we are talking about two different things, two different fields of study, two different sets of phenomenon. I shall give a very simple definition of politics. Politics may be defined as a continuing contest for the control of public power, the power to decide what resources are to be mobilized and how these resources are to be allocated to different sectors of society. In other words, politics deals with things that are scarce in society. People, therefore, attach a great deal of value to how those things are distributed. If most things that people value are available in abundance or in unlimited quantity then there will be no politics. Politics exists because there is scarcity of things that most people value.

The contest for the control of public power can be conducted in an orderly fashion if the political community in question accepts common rules governing the acquisition, exercise and transfer of power. Consensus must also exist on the norms governing political opposition. In the absence of such consensus, the political game tends to assume chaotic, even violent forms.

Communalism as defined earlier is the practice of employing religion as a means to attain political ends. And I shall leave it at that.

Jamaat's Ideology

Let us now examine the case of Jamaat-e-Islami in the context of communalism. The Jamaat-e-Islami presents Islam as a political ideology, and not as a religion concerned strictly with the relationship between man and God. Abul A'la Maududi, the founder of the Jamaat had no hesitation in making it explicit that Islam was a political ideology comparable to Communism and Fascism. It covered all departments of life, whether private or public. In other words, Islam dealt with the totality of human life.

The Jamaat-e-Islami also presents Islam as a creed whose mission is to fight all other creeds, because Islam is the only true creed and all other creeds are flawed or false. Maududi reasons that just as God has made the laws that govern physical nature, he has also made laws that govern social relations. The first set of laws can be ascertained by observation and experimentation. But God conveys the second set of laws concerning man's duties towards God and towards his fellow human beings only through revelations. Accordingly, divine messages have been transmitted to mankind from time to time through prophets. The Quran says that God had sent prophets to all nations, the last one being Prophet Muhammad. It follows from this that all religions have emanated from one God and no religion can claim superiority over others. But Maududi adds a caveat here, which, in turn, opens the flood-gates of discord. He argues that no religion except Islam has preserved the divine message in its entirety and without being distorted by the vicissitudes of time. Hence Islam has precedence over all other religions.

Indictment of Secularism

Another feature of Maududi's ideology is that he singles out secularism as the chief adversary of Islam. He argues that secularism makes a distinction between the personal life of an individual and his public life, and banishes religion from the latter. Hence anyone who believes in secularism will inevitably allow his secular values to influence his social, political and economic behaviour and thus violate the teachings of Islam, which draws no boundary line between the domain of the spirit and the worldly domain.

Some ideologues of the Jamaat go a step further and argue that secularism is the road that leads to atheism because when you separate your personal beliefs from your social and political principles, the latter develop their own momentum and eventually dominate the former. According to Maududi, Communism is the final destination of secularism.

Curiously enough, despite his hostility to communism Maududi had a sneaking admiration for Communist methods. For example, the Jamaat borrowed heavily from the organizational techniques employed by the Communists - complete with cells and study circles.

The Jamaat-e-Islami is not only communal in its outlook, it is militantly communal. Communalism of a minority community often centres on grievances of a political or economic nature and tends to be paranoid. The Jamaat brand of communalism, however, is not concerned about immediate or short-term gains for the community. It projects Islam as an ideology and calls upon the Muslims to organize themselves into a revolutionary party with the object of capturing total power. The Jamaat-e-Islami is not bothered about jobs for Muslims or for a share in power. On the contrary, the Jamaat's

constitution requires its members not to hold any key office under an 'ungodly' political system.

Theo-democracy and not Theocracy

I might mention at this point that Maududi was the first religious figure of note in the history of Indian Islam to propound the thesis that the supreme purpose of Islam is not the spiritual salvation of mankind; but to establish the sovereignty of God on earth or an Islamic State. All other purposes are secondary and subordinate to that of establishing an Islamic State. Before launching the Jamaat, Maududi did a great deal of preparatory work, which included the compilation and dissemination of literature. This he did initially through his journal *Tarjuman-al-Quran.* He started it in Hyderabad (Deccan) in 1932, and later shifted it to Pathankot, which later became the headquarters of the Jamaat-e-Islami as well. Shortly before 1941, he circulated a draft constitution of the proposed Jamaat-e-Islami among those who had become admirers of his journal. A convention of his supporters, held the same year, adopted the constitution and the Jamaat was born. The constitution stipulated that members of the Jamaat shall accept no one except God as sovereign. Second, members of the Jamaat shall obey no government except one based on God's sovereignty. Third, members of Jamaat will not recognize any law not sanctified by the Quran and the Prophetic traditions. Man-made laws may be acceptable only in areas no covered by the divine law or the Shariat.

Maududi enunciated his ideas on the theory and practice of Islamic State at length. He explained that the Islamic State shall not be democratic. A democratic state, he argued, is founded on the assumption that sovereignty is vested in the people, that people have the right to elect their representatives, and that these representatives have the power to legislate. In contrast to this, sovereignty in an Islamic State is vested in God.

Maududi further adds that an Islamic State is not theocratic either, because in Islam there is no priesthood. So he coined the term 'theo-democracy'- a State in which Muslims shall exercise self-government in accordance with the Shariat ordained by God. On closer look, one finds that Maududi has no use at all for democracy. He frankly admits that the Islamic State of his conception shall encompass all departments of life, individual or social, private or public.

What will be the status of non-Muslims in an Islamic State? Well, the Jamaat will educate non-Muslims about the true nature of Islam; and once non-Muslims become fully conversant with Islam they may in all probability embrace it voluntarily. Besides, non-Muslims can always live in an Islamic State, albeit as *dhimmis* or the protected people. The *dhimmis* will have certain rights but not the right to influence state policies or to hold key executive, legislative or judicial offices. Maududi cites this argument as

evidence of superiority of Islam over Communism: whereas a Communist State will not tolerate non-Communists within its fold, an Islamic State not only tolerates non-Muslims but grants them rights if not full equality with Muslims.

How is an Islamic State to be set-up? Here Maududi borrows from the Marxian lexicon the concepts of revolutionary struggle and vanguard party. As a vanguard party the Jamaat shall educate and mobilize the masses for revolutionary struggle leading to capture of power and the establishment of an Islamic State. The Islamic State shall be headed by an Amir. The *Amir* will have an advisory council that may be constituted by election or else be nominated by the *Amir.* The Amir shall not be bound by the advice of the advisory council because Islam does not attach importance to numbers. He shall be liable to deposition if he digresses from the divine law. How this will be done remains unclear, considering the fact an Amir of Maududi's conception is likely to wield considerable power and hence not be amenable to disciplinary action.

Maududi and Indian Politics

A word about Maududi's role in Indian politics before partition. He started with the premise that India had never had an opportunity in the past to have an idea of true Islamic rule or true Islamic culture. What India witnessed, regardless of whether it was Sultanate rule of Mughal Empire, was anything but Islamic. It was a distorted version of Islam. That is why not many in India were attracted to Islam. That is why Hindus developed a prejudice against Islam. A leader of the Jamaat in Madhya Pradesh once told me that Muslims who came to India from Central Asia were the riff-raff of that society, not its cream in terms of Islamic beliefs and practices. In turn, they attracted the riff-raff of Indian society to Islam. If the cream of Muslim society had come to India, the outcome for Indian Society might have been very different. He went on to say that it was the misfortune of India as well as of Islam that the true faith of Islam was never presented to India, whether in terms of political rule or in terms of culture or morals. Hence, the issue before Muslims of India is not that of saving the community but of creating one afresh.

Maududi had violent disagreements with nationalist Muslims who stood for secular nationalism and aligned themselves with the Indian National Congress, even as he decried the Muslim Leaguers who upheld Muslim nationalism and demanded a separate Muslim State. Maududi declared that the goal of Islam was not to create a nation-state, which is what the concept of Pakistan was all about, but to create a world-state based on Islam. To him, any state based on territory, race or language was un-Islamic.

Maududi's opposition to the demand for Pakistan did not, however, prevent him from migrating to Pakistan soon after it came into being and raising the slogan that it should be turned into an Islamic State.

Jamaat after Partition

According to late Justice Munir, the author of *From Jinnah to Zia*, the total strength of the Jammat on the eve of Partition was 999. A majority of them went to Pakistan with Maududi; only 240 were left in India. In 1956, the latter decided to establish Jamaat-e-Islami Hind. The main object of the reconstituted Jamaat was the establishment of Islamic creed in India – in place of the establishment of an Islamic State, as stipulated by the 1941 constitution. Later on, the Jamaat ideologues explained that the redefined goal was more precise in that an Islamic State could only follow the establishment of the Islamic creed.

The constitution of the Jamaat says that it will use constructive and peaceful methods to achieve its goal. These will consist mostly of two sets of activities. First, it will endeavour to familiarize Hindus with true Islam. Second, it will strive to protect Islam and the religious and cultural identity of the Indian Muslims.

According to the party's own claim, its membership stood at 2831 in 1981. The number of sympathizers was placed at a much higher figure of 36,243. Then there is another category, the helpers of the party, those who help the party in different ways: their number was 1,240. The membership of the Jamaat-e-Islami is rather unevenly dispersed over the country, a large number being concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Uttar Pradesh has 894 members; Kerala 450 members; Andhra Pradesh 385 members; and Maharashtra 353 members. As I said, the number of sympathizers is much larger than the number of members. Andhra Pradesh has the largest concentration of sympathizers (9,250), followed by Bihar (6,077), Kerala (4,444), and Karnataka (4,000).

The party has set up 13 zonal units, each consisting of one state or more. A zonal unit is headed by a zonal *Amir.* Each zone is further subdivided into district and local cells. Then there is an *Amir* at the all-India level and an advisory council.

Although the membership of the Jamaat is not very large, it claims to have established informal contacts with a much larger number, that is 285,395 Muslim men, 26,253 Muslim women, and 29,691 non-Muslims. The Jamaat's following in schools, colleges and universities are put at 29,162 male students and 9,085 female students.

The Jamaat also commands a network of institutions through which it establishes contacts with people and sustains them. These include 548

libraries and 386 reading rooms, where party literature and party newspapers are made available to readers, together with other reading material of general interest. The Jamaat also runs 240 study circles in different places all over the country. In addition, it has established its own educational system, comprising 266 nursery schools, 344 part-time *maktabs or* elementary schools, 36 junior high schools and 23 colleges. A novel feature of the Jamaat's educational system is that unlike the *maktabs* and *madrasahs* set up by Nadwah, Deoband or Bareilly seminaries, the schools and colleges set up by the Jamaat-e-Islami, offer secular education side by side with religious education. In other words, they offer courses in religion in addition to those that are taught in government schools and colleges. The Jamaat has also established a central institute called Markazi Darsgah at Rampur. It provides intensive ideological training for its cadres and refresher courses for its activists. The Jamaat, moreover, claims that there are at least 700 mosques where party members address Friday congregations.

Over the years, the Jamaat has built up a formidable publication programme. Its publications can be seen in party bookshops in all major cities in India. As of 1982, the Jamaat had published 496 books in Urdu, 77 in Hindi and 78 in English - all dealing with various facets of its ideology. Of late, the Jamaat has started publishing books in Bangali and Malayam as well, and their number is growing steadily. More importantly, the Jamaat publishes its own dailies weeklies and bi-weeklies from a number of places. The weekly *Radiance* and bi-weekly *Da'wat* are issued from Delhi. Its main ideological journal *Zindagi* is based in Rampur. Then there are newspapers published from Calcutta, Guwahati, Ahmedabd, Hyderabad, Mangalore, Calicut and Madras in different languages.

The Jamaat considers itself as part of a worldwide movement for Islamic revival. Hence its close affinity with organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world, the Masjumi Party of Indonesia, and, of course, organisation in India which has been giving consistent moral support to Khomeini. Other Muslim organizations are a bit suspicious of Khomeini's aims and methods both at home and abroad. The Jamaat, for its part, believes that the Iranian revolution is a shot in the arm for the struggle for establishing a world Islamic State under the banner of Islam. Hence it deserves full support of Muslims everywhere. It also believes that the rise of Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan is also a step in the right direction.

Jamaat in Kashmir

Finally, a word about the Jamaat-e-Islaimi in Jammu and Kashmir. Curiously enough, the Jamaat-e-Islami based in Delhi neither covers Jammu and Kashmir, where a separate organisation of the same name was established in 1953, nor recognizes the finality of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to

India. And that explains why a separate party was set up in Jammu and Kashmir. The latter tried to build up its following in the wake of Sheikh Abdullah's dismissal and arrest in 1953 but did not make much headway. It was not until the seventies that the Jamaat began to win support, mostly among students. In 1977, it launched the Islamic Jamiat-e-Talaba or student wing of the party.

Jamaat–e-Islami does not openly question Kashmir's accession to India. Its constitution is silent on the subject; but its public pronouncements are patently secessionist in tone and content. The Islamic Jamiat-e-Talaba as well as Jamaat-e-Islami, Jammu and Kashmir, have often equated the so-called Kashmir question with the Etritrean and Palestine problems. In its leaflets and pamphlets then Jamaat-e-Islami depicts Kashmiris as oppressed and enslaved people' and urges then to establish the Islamic way of life and launch liberation struggle.'

The Jamaat-e-Islami of India has decided, for the time being, not to enter into electoral politics; but its counterpart in Jammu and Kashmir has no inhibitions about elections. It fought the 1978 elections and won four seats.

The Jamaat's growing popularity in Jammu and Kashmir during the last decade needs to be explained. My hunch is that the Jamaat has been more successful with the younger people in the Valley than with the middle-aged or older groups. And the reason is not far to seek. Unlike the older generation, which has been exposed to the influence of the National Conference and other secular parties, the younger people have remained largely apolitical. The Jamaat has merely stepped into the vacuum thus created.

I learnt from the *Amir* of Jamaat-e-Islami in Srinagar that the Jamaat runs 125 schools in the Valley and the overall enrollment in these schools is 17,000. Besides, the Jamaat and its student wing are fairly active in government schools and colleges and on the campus of Kashmir University.

I shall now sum up my conclusions on the role of Jamaat-e-Islami in the context of communalism. First, the Jamaat not only believes in the inseparability of religion and politics in Islam but regards the establishment of a full scale theocratic state as the supreme purpose of Islam. Communalism is thus an article of faith for the Jamaat. Secondly, unlike other communal groups among Muslims the Jamaat employs the most modern techniques of organization and propaganda to disseminate its ideology and to pursue its political goals. Finally, the Jamaat concentrates its energies on impressionable young minds which ensure it a steady supply of party workers and sustain its militancy.

RSS AND GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM

D.R. Goyal

I am not going to mention any kind of theory, because I have never been through the scientific process of conceptualizing experiences. So, if any observations do not stand the test of rigorous scientific analysis, I would beg to be excused for wasting your time. My views, which I am going to share with you, are mere observations of what I have seen and experienced. I would like to share with you some of the feelings and experiences that I have had in my interaction with society and with the articulators of social urges and needs.

My subject today being the RSS, I would like to put before you my view of RSS as a phenomenon, which may be called the manifestation of communal consciousness. This is communal consciousness in that segment of society which is described broadly as Hindus. Similar consciousness has developed in other segments of Indian society also and in societies outside India too.

For example, among the Muslims the same kind of communal consciousness finds concrete manifestation in the form of Jamaat-e-Islami in India; outside India, Jamaat-e-Islami had its counterpart in Ikhwan-al-Muslimeen, which emerged in Egypt round about the same time as the RSS came on the scene in India. Jamaat-el-Islami developed in India a little later than RSS, but Ikhwan-al-Muslimeen was the exact contemporary of RSS in Egypt. Again, in the same region of the Middle East, another communal consciousness find manifestation, which is also the outcome or on aberration of a semetic religion – Hebrewism or Judaism, that is Zionism. Zionism is the command manifestation of Judaism.

Now why do I call them communal manifestations, when they all claim to be not only national manifestations, but also human manifestations? For example, when Judaism became Zionism, it claims that those who believe in Hebraic religion or Jewish religion are the chosen ones of God and they have been sent on this earth to reform human beings and make society progressive. Similarly, Ikhwan-al-Muslimeen or Jamaat-e-Islami would claim that they are a party of God on a world scale.

RSS in India, which is Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, that is, national volunteer organization also has a similar perception. It says, and I am generally using the words of Golwalkar, not exactly quoting from his book, *Bunch of Thoughts,* that Hindus are the custodians of divine India and they alone are the guarantee of peace and progress in the world. So, communal consciousness

always tends to claim that it is universal consciousness. In fact, it arrogates to itself the capacity, the caliber, the knowledge, the wisdom, the light which can remove darkness from the world. It is common to all.

Now we look at the phenomenon of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. It developed at a particular stage in the history of Indian national consciousness. It is another matter of discussion, how a nation gets formed, is it an accident of history, an imposition by an outside power, or a natural evolution of a certain society? I will not go into a discussion of that; I would only say that Indian nationalism was a response to imperial domination by the British over India. Here we have to make a distinction between the British and those rulers who came from outside and settled down here. For the first time, after the establishment of the British Empire, Indian society became conscious that here are a people who live somewhere else but rule here and whatever we produce is for their benefit, not for our own benefit. However, good may be our products they cannot be sold in the world market, if they do not yield profits to those who are sitting in London, Birmingham, Sheffield or somewhere. This was a strange kind of ruler. There were oppressive rulers, there were benign rulers, there were tyrannical rulers, but there were never rulers of this kind, who would not permit the ruled that is the people of this country to produce for their own benefit for internal prosperity. Therefore, they started or developed a consciousness, in a very embryonic stage, of resisting this rule which was alien. There was a kind of alienation between the ruler and the ruled.

Before the establishment of the British Empire, the process of evolution of enemy ruler in the country was that the ruler would try to come to terms with the morass, the norms the religious beliefs, the aspirations of the people of this country. If he promoted trade it was for the traders of this country; may be, he wanted a share from the traders for his empire or for his army, but the major share of profits that accrued from Indian trade with outside world came to the Indian traders. The British ruler was another kind of person. So, this is the first consciousness. I would, therefore, say that Indian nationalism emerged as the Indian response to alien British rule or, in Marxist terminology you can call it colonial British rule. It was Indian response to colonial exploitation of Indian society by British imperialists.

Now this consciousness, as it grew, interacted with the consciousness of the British, who looked upon India as the Kingpin of their worldwide empire. They had built a large empire, which could not be controlled and ruled and managed from a distance. So, within the empire they needed an operational theatre. Indian was, therefore, utilized by the British as the operational theatre of the colonial exploitation of the Empire. So, India provided agricultural goods, supplies for the army; India provided soldiers, who went

and fought in Messopotamia, Malaya, Hong Kong and Singapore. So, whatever be the extent of the British Empire, the empire builders were not only the British; the empire building process had an infrastructure, which was provided by India. Therefore, India, the jewel of British Crown, had to be treated differently from a mere colony.

If you compare the Indian situation under British and the situation of other British colonies, and even more the condition of the Portuguese, Spanish, French, German or Belgian colonies, you will find that in none of these colonies are the post and telegraph, developed as it was in India; in none of these colonies are the railways as well developed as in India. In none of these colonies do we find a canal system. Although Messopotamia had the historical tradition of a canal system, the British were interested more in the Iraqi coast than in the Iraqi mainland or in the Iraqi people. Therefore, they did not think of building a canal system there; they built a canal system here. This is sometimes called the benign aspect of British system in our schools. These were the benign benefits that accrued to the Indian people from British domination. But these developments also had the side effect of developing a consciousness that we are, perhaps, if not as good, only slightly inferior to the British and so we must have a share in all the empire that is being built.

So, the first manifestation of Indian national consciousness, I may describe it as client nationalism, was that the leaders of the Indian nation demanded from the British a share in the administration. What has been the first demand of the Indian national movement? It was that we should be given higher posts in the police and in the army; that we should be allowed to appear for the ICS and that the examinations should be held in India. These were the rudimentary forms of the national consciousness.

The British wanted to respond to this consciousness, because they did not want the Empire, the look a leaf out of the practice of the rulers of the Roman Empire. It may be interesting for researchers – I am just making a suggestion – to understand the character of British imperialism in India. It would be very fruitful probably to study carefully the rise and the fall of the Roman Empire by Gibbon. It was almost a text-book in 18th century England. Therefore, all those empire-builders who came to India and their successors were fed on that. Like the manuals that are given to Foreign Service Officers these days, Gibbon's Roman Empire was the manual for the empire builders of Britain. Divide et empira is the basic theme of Gibbon. His history at least gives the impression that as long as the Romans were in a position to study the contradictions of a society which they were ruling and play upon those contradictions, of a society which they were ruling and play upon those contradictions, so long did their rule survive. When they lost that capacity, their empire began to crumble.

So, the British Deputy Commissioners in India, British Sergeants of Police in India, British army officers in India, all began to cast their very microscopic eyes on the diversities of Indian society, and the gazetteers were the result of that close study of Indian society. Even where the distinctions, differences and contradictions were not on the surface of Indian consciousness, the Indians were told 'You have these contradictions'. A whole mythology about the bravery of the Rajputs was created by Col. Todd; a whole mythology about the martial qualities of the Sikhs was created by Cunningham and McCunliffe; a whole mythology about the loyalty of the Gurkhas was similarly created; a similar mythology was developed about the loyalty of the Pathans.

What I am driving at is that the imperialist response to the embryonic stage of Indian national consciousness was to start finding out contradictions in Indian society, so that they could be played upon. I am insisting on this because, during our discussions, we often tend to forget how ideology is made false, how religion is distorted, how religion is put to, what may be called, the most brutal secular use. It is the secular deployment of religion which manifests itself in the form of communalism. This happened in the last two decades of 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th. During this period, the British rulers told the Indian leadership 'You have never been a nation, you do not have the characteristics which make a people a nation'; The Indian reply was, why do you say we are different; we have been one nation from times immemorial'. Annie Beasant said that; not the RSS. Annie Beasant became part of the nationalist pantheon. Whether it was Annie Beasant or Aurobindo the reaction of all of them was that we have been always a nation; it was the outsiders who are trying to dominate us, and we were not prepared to be dominated. This was one response. The other response was: 'All right, you want to be even handed; we are prepared to give you our demands as groups'. So, there was a Hindu group and it produced demands as the Hindu Mahasabha; there was a Muslim group, which produced demands as Muslim League; and the Congress was on the other side. The problem of linkage that arose during the Janata Party period did not arise in those days. That was the second stage of client nationalism.

What could you use against the mighty British Empire? Their guns were superior; their gun powder was superior; their tentacles were spread all over the world; they feared; they could get soldiers from everywhere, including India. So, we could not fight them through insurrection. There was a party of violence, which thought of insurrection and a prolonged war. But, there was also the consciousness, at the same time, that we could not build up an army which could fight the Britishers, Therefore, we had to find out a different way of fighting the British, and here came handy the experience of Gandhi in South Africa.

Gandhi had been talking of his struggle in South Africa to the Indian leadership and had been making speeches. It was only after the end of the First World War that the Indian leaders began to pay more attention to his experiment. So the idea of Satyagraha, boycott, the non-violent struggle, civil disobedience, all these grew and all of them had some kind of precedence in the historical consciousness of the people. Islam had at some time adopted boycott as weapon. Hindus also had the tradition of boycotting those who did not practice common mores; the tradition of denying *hooka pani.* Its political form was civil disobedience and boycott of all things British. Now people had to be brought in. The boycott to succeed had to be a total action. So, the people's consciousness and their needs began to be articulated. Here I have a slightly different approach to what Gandhi did. I am giving this background because it is significant in the context of the RSS, because the RSS has its own reading of all these things.

Now Gandhi started by taking up the cause of different segments of Indian society, because that was not the stage when the whole society had risen; when national consciousness had become pervasive; it was still segmented. Awareness of the world was at the level of the caste, at the level of the locality of the village; not even of the region and the province; and, in some areas, it had taken the form of trade or industry. In Bombay it was the textile industry; in Calcutta it was the jute industry and in Nagpur it was the railways. It was trade and industry only at a few places; generally it was local consciousness.

So, the first growth of Indian nationalism, as anti-British nationalism was in the form of awareness of the neighborhood. Gandhi was the first leader who, rather than calling the people to him, went to the people. He went to Ahmedabad, found the textile labour in difficulties and, therefore, formed an organization for them called Mahajan Sabha. He used the word 'Mahajan' for the labourers, whereas the labourers had been using it for the capitalists. That was his way of trying to boost the ego of the lowly by giving him the nomenclature of the higher order. The untouchable is called Harijan, labourer is called Mahajan. So, that was his approach to labour. Then he went to Champaran, all the way to Bihar, and organized the tenants. Thus a peasant movement took shape. The Kisan Sabha of Swami Sahjanand Saraswati grew out of that. The Kisan Sabha began to spread all over. So he organized the Spinner's Association. That was another segment of society which was all pervasive. So, he was articulating what might be called mass consciousness on secular issues.

The commonly held image of Gandhi is only of a saint whether of the Bhakti variety or of the Sanatan variety or of Jain variety. But he was not merely a saint. I consider Gandhi as a shrewd politician; not in the bad sense; a politician inspired by the ideal of freedom for his people, using all his

shrewdness for building strength to snatch freedom from the British. So, this shrewd politician, not in the sense of a crafty man, but in the sense of a fighter against the mighty empire, tried to build up his own army of unarmed people. Gandhi, therefore, was the first to raise the secular consciousness of people on the basis of their mode of production.

It was after that he turned to the oppression in the princely states. But, as a part of strategy, he thought that maybe we would have to use the zamindars in our struggle; therefore we should not immediately pick up conflict with them. Gandhi thus tried to instill anti-imperialist national consciousness that they understood – weavers at the weavers' level, peasants at the peasants' level and the mill workers at their level.

Here comes the question of the Khilafat and the Akali Party, for which Gandhi is quite often rather unfairly upbraided. For Gandhi at that time the main contradiction in India was between the entire Indian people and imperialist British rule. Gandhi has to be appreciated as the foremost leader to have developed this awareness of the basic consciousness or the basic contradiction in India. The basic struggle of India was against imperialism. Every force that could be mobilized in this struggle, which was anti-imperialist, that force had to be mobilized.

I would submit that researchers might look at the phenomenon in terms of their later impact. What were the contributions of the Khilafat and of its secular opponents to the national movement? Jinnah was certainly not in favour of the Khilafat; he was opposed to it. Badshah Khan in the Frontier was against the abolition of the Khilafat. He was in the Khilafat movement and brought with him the whole of the North-West Frontier, the small tribes, into the national mainstream, who fought till the bitter end to remain in the mainstream. It was a small contribution.

Again, let us come to the Akali Part. Before the Firs World War, it was Singh Sabha. The Singh Sabha movement fought for the demands of the poor agriculturists of Punjab. They first articulated the problem of debt of water tax and the water rate; the problems that touch them intimately. They were part of the Akali movement. The Akali movement did not grow merely as a religious movement. The Akali approach to religion became acceptable to Punjab peasantry, because their demands were not raised by anybody else.

I would say that the origin of the present conflict in Punjab lies in that period when the urban Hindu, who dominated the Punjab Congress, found the demands of the peasantry in conflict with the interests of his co-religionists. If debt was abolished, if the Land Alienation Bill was passed, then the Sikh would gain and the Hindu lose. From there started the divide. This divide, the Congress was not able to bridge. In fact, the Congress fought more for the

Vyapar Mandal demands than for the Kirti Kisan Party demands. So, the Kirti Kisan Party, which was the predecessor of the Akali movement in Punjab, got merged into the Akali movement. When Akalis began to purify their Gurudwaras, to abolish the corruption of the mahants, to democratize the management of the Gurudwaras, at the stage Gandhi thought that this was a progressive movement; it was fighting against the British. So, he welcomed the Akali movement. It is unfortunate that the Punjab Congress did not. He had to send an emissary form outside. Pannicker had to be sent to get in touch with the Akali movement. Pannicker was Gandhi's emissary to the Akalis. Thus, Gandhi tried to pick up all anti-imperialist elements in Indian society to bring them together to build India's freedom movement.

The British thought that the rising tide of nationalism could be stemmed if non-secular ideologies could be promoted. They had been making these insinuations, innuendos, since the last quarter of the 19th century. The preface to the book on Indian history by Elliot and Dawson is an indicator that British imperialism would like to utilize even conflicts in history as instances of communal conflict. So, the whole historiography was built up to show that various religious communities in India had always been in conflict.

Some of those who were articulating the demands of participating in demonstrations in the name of Hindus as a group, began to turn in another direction and developed an ideology. They said that Hindus are the nation, Hindus alone constitute the nation of India. This slogan was for the first time given in 1925. Before that, Hindus alone were not the nation. In 1857, the way there was a revolt; the way it was fought, the anti-imperialist people considered it as war of independence, of both Hindus and Muslims, not as a united front. The best example is V.D. Savarkar. In 1937 at the Ajmer Session of the Hindu Mahasbaha he gave the slogan that Hindus and Mussalmans, are two nations and cannot be one. But in 1907, thirty years before that, that is, in the pre-Andaman period, he wrote a book and lavished fulsome praise even on Bahadur Shah Zafar and Bakht Khan and called the 1857 revolt an India's war of independence. So till 1857, that Muslims in India are alien or outsiders was not a part of Indian consciousness; this began to come about only when the Congress was formed. The talukdars of UP were told to set up an alternative in the form of a patriotic association and call upon the Muslims not to associate with Congress, because it is a Hindu organization.

Upto 1920-25 this consciousness, of a separate entity to secure concessions from the British, as a separate sector or segment of client nationalism, had not yet become an ideology. In the twenties, it becomes an ideology. You call it false ideology or unreal ideology but it becomes an ideology because it had all the attributes of an ideology. It has its own concept of nationalism. It insisted

that uniformity of religious beliefs and sameness of approach to culture and tradition were essential to nationhood.

The idea of the Hindu as a nation is explained by RSS: he alone is a Hindu and he alone is a national of this country who considers this land *Mathru Bhumi, Pithur Bhumi and Punya Bhumi*- motherland, fatherland and sacred land – and nothing outside India. Now this concept of nationalism is essentially and basically different from the concept of nationalism that was growing inside the Congress in the post First World War period. The Congress concept tried to identify the interests of Indian nationalism with those of Egyptian nationalism, Chinese nationalism. All those countries which Indian soldiery had helped the British to conquer became, for Indian nationalism, comrades-in-arms at a time when it began to develop its anti-imperialist dimension. So, anti-imperialist Indian nationalism made common cause, not only with the various segments of Indian society, but also with all those segments of humanity which were trying to overthrow imperialist colonial exploitative rule.

So, we began to think of joining hands with all the anti-imperialist forces. It was not an accident of history that Jawaharlal Nehru attended the Brussels Conference of the Exploited Nations in 1927. It was a conscious step. There were predecessors of Jawaharlal Nehru also. Manavendra Nath Roy went to America and tried to find support from the Mexicans. There were people who went to Turkey, to Berlin and to Moscow. So, as soon as Indian nationalism became anti-imperialist nationalism, it tried to become one with struggling humanity.

Therefore, I would like to use an oft-repeated phrase for it: anti-imperialist Indian nationalism is progressive nationalism. The word 'progressive', is so often used and so glibly that it seems to have lost all its meaning. I prefer to call this nationalism progressive for two reasons; one that it is a nationalism, that transcends the narrow to the broader within Indian society and beyond. Therefore, it is progressive. It is the response to the human urge for being one with humanity. In Indian religious and scriptural terms also, you can explain it as an attempt to be one with the spirit of entire *Brahmand.* Anyway, I need not go into metaphysics, but the trend, the tendency, the thrust and the direction of Indian nationalism is progressive.

As against this, what is the concept of RSS nationalism? First it insists we have nothing to do with the rest of the world. A kind of inward-looking, autarchic nationalism is sought to be developed, which tries to look upon the rest of the world as adversary, not as complementary with whom it can have relations on the basis of mutual benefit. It is not perceived as a part of a beneficial international relationship. So, the outlook towards the outside world

projected by the RSS is different form that which developed in the mainstream nationalism in India.

Coming to the internal problem, the RSS first confines nationalism only to Hindus; Hindus alone can be nationalists. If Hindus alone can be the nationalists, who should rule? It is not a question of participation; it is a trained leadership, who is cultured into organizing and managing society. The concept of democratic evolution of society is absent in the RSS view of Indian nationalism. Therefore, RSS does not per se or instinctively mobilize people. It began by developing a cult or a group – I will come to it later – it was a process of developing a section of society, which does not have roots in society but in the cult; developing a group which is uprooted from its natural habitat and transplanted into a new organization called the RSS, whose loyalty is not to the family, not to the neighborhood, not to the trade, not to the class, not to the region- I would say, not even to religion - but those total loyalties to the RSS. Their concept of organization is called *Ek Chalak Anuvartitwa;* that is the basic principle of the organization of the repository of all wisdom, the leader is the repository of all power.

It is different from the cult of Stalin. The cult of Stalin was built up by over-publicising some of the very wise things that he had done. Those wise things were praised not only by his followers, but also by the outside world, by people like H.G. Wells or Bernard Shaw. Some of the best minds of the West appreciated what Stalin was doing in Russia. They called it the best, they called it a new civilization which was being built under Stalin; so, Stalin's cult of personality was based on achievement.

The cult of personality of the RSS is based on myth and legend. I will give you one instance. I was a member of the RSS. There I heard stories that Guru Golwalkar had *Adhyatmik Shakti* with which he gained knowledge of events without reading any newspaper. There is another story. When he was a student, he read only the scriptures. He was a student of Zoology incidently. He was all the time reading scriptures and not the text-books. But one night before the examination, he was able to master all the knowledge necessary for passing the examination in M.Sc. (Zoology). And under what circumstances? He was sitting in his room and was bitten by a scorpion but had no reaction. Another story is that he could travel several miles on foot. All these kind of stories are built around what are called cult figures. About Stalin there is poetry that whenever he spoke, the sun rose. But that was poetry. Here all these stories are seriously meant chapters of Golwalkar's biography. Even the biographies that have been written contain these stories and all RSS people believe them as true.

I will give you another instance. In 1973, because I was a close student of the organization, I came to know that Guru Golwalkar was suffering from cancer. Now cancer is a disease which everybody can contract. It is no crime, nor is it a sin. I mentioned it to a friend of mine belonging to the RSS; and he said, you will always try to find some fault with the RSS. It is not the fault of the RSS. It is an unfortunate development. They did not believe it till the man died in Bombay hospital.

What I am pointing out is that, instead of allowing the natural development of a democratic leadership, they believed in culturing and fostering and creating a nursery of leaders who would ultimately rule the county. But who should these leaders be? We find invariably that RSS leaders have to come from what are called *Deshasth* Brahmins. It is not the *Chitpavan* Brahmins who have roots in Western Maharashtra; they have never come to an organization like this. It is the Maharashtrian Brahmins living outside Maharashtara, that is, Vidarbha area, which is not Marathi area, the western part of Andhra Pradesh. The Brahmins of that area are called *Deshasth.* It is the *Deshasth* Brahmin who has to be at the top of RSS. Not only the Sar Sangh Chalak, but even in each state the provincial organizer or the state organizer has to be a *Deshasth* and if such one is not available, he should at least be a Brahmin. If a Brahmin is not available, he will have to be a Rajput. So, the caste hierarchy is not only approved, but sought to be perpetuated in the organization.

It is often repeated in discourses that the Brahmin was the head. Rajput or Khashatriya were his limbs, the Vaishya the stomach and the Shudra the feet; women do not come anywhere. They are not considered part of the human family. Therefore, the RSS, for a long time did not have a women's wing. The organizers of RSS were not encouraged to marry, because contact with women was supposed to weaken the male will, which is necessary for Parakram, that is, activism. So, the activist Hindu not only restricts nationalism, to followers of one religion, but attributes qualities necessary for defending this nationalism to only a small layer even among the Hindus.

So, as you grow into the RSS, your concepts begin to grow narrower and narrower. It is narrow nationalism that the RSS fosters. I do not have any evidence to show that the British promoted it by design, or that the Privy Council, or the Colonial Office in London passed a resolution or gave some instructions of this kind, but this concept of alternative nationalism was encouraged. Therefore, when Indian nationalism had to be attacked by the British, this alternative nationalism was stepped up. During the 1942 movement, during the war period, when nationalist Indian leaders were being arrested, the RSS was allowed to flourish.

SECTION 6

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AND COMMUNALISM

TEXTBOOK WRITINGS AND ELEMENTS OF COMMUNALISM

Arjun Dev

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant features of the Indian nation is its rich variety in culture, religion and language. Its culture is best described as a composite one and one of unity in diversity. The unity of the Indian people, which is essential for their strength and welfare, can be further fostered and national and emotional integration achieved by developing, appreciating and understanding of and respect for the variety in culture, religion and language. Education can play a vital role in this by promoting a scientific, rational, secular and human outlook among children, who are the future citizens of our country.

The study of history is crucial to the understanding of the present as the present cannot be understood independently in isolation of the past. As history presents continuous process of development, the problem, big or small, cannot be perceived and understood apart from its historical context. The study of history helps in promoting independence of judgement as it creates an awareness of the variety and diversity in humanity and shows that the world of man is not stationary but subject to constant and continuous movement, change, and development. However, the study of the past has often been distorted. In the earliest times, historical writings were used to legitimize and sanctify the authority of the king and the status quo. In more recent times history has often been used to serve narrow sectarian and chauvinistic ends. Historical writings were often influenced by narrow prejudices and, in their turn, helped to further promote these prejudices.

Very often personal prejudices of the text book authors are projected through history text books resulting in distortions of facts and poisoning of the young minds and thus standing in the way of promoting national integration.

It is, therefore, necessary that history textbooks are continually evaluated and the materials and approaches that are likely to create prejudices are identified and eliminated. Each school textbook should be thoroughly studied and objectionable expressions, words, statements and passages, illustrations, exercises etc. identified. Omission of the subject matter that is likely to help in developing correct understanding should also be pointed out. Many a time the

way facts are selected, presented and described without providing a proper perspective, vitiates the writing. Thus the reviewers have to examine the entire approach of selecting the facts and their presentation in the text books and see if it is, in any way, prejudicial to national integration. The reviewer should also identify significant inaccuracies of facts and sweeping generalizations which may not have a direct bearing on national integration but may otherwise present a distorted picture of history.

It may be further noted that historical material presented nu proper perspective will itself develop correct understanding of the present problems. It is not suggested that historical material be selected or presented with the specific purpose of national integration. What is suggested is that efforts are to be made to correct the distortions which has vitiated historical writings and have fostered various kinds of prejudices.

The present guidelines are designed to assist the reviewers in evaluating history textbooks with a view to identifying objectionable materials and approaches of selection and presentation of matter, as well as factual inaccuracies and sweeping generalizations.

A. GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

The evaluation of history textbooks may be undertaken with two broad considerations:

(a) To see that the content does not foster communal, caste, racial and regional prejudices.

(b) To see that the presentation of the past is authentic and is also free from myths and factual inaccuracies.

Some of the prejudices and attitudes and how they are sometimes reflected in the history textbooks are briefly described below. Suitable historical approaches that help in countering these prejudices are also indicated.

Communalism

The term ‘communalism’ has acquired a special meaning in our country where communities are mainly identified on the basis of religion. Hence, it may be treated as synonymous with religious intolerance. Communalism is a strong force that prevents the process of national integration. It is often reflected in the descriptions and interpretations of the events of the past. Communalist historians try to present the past of their own community in a bright colour and exaggerate the weak points of the others. As our democracy is wedded to the ideal of religious freedom and secularism, there is no room for discrimination and rivalry on the basis of religion. Religious books, personalities and tenets should not therefore be derided.

All the descriptions which project contemporary communal prejudices to the study of the past, are unhistorical and should be rejected. This may often occur in the presentation of medieval Indian history and certain aspects of modern Indian history. It may also manifest itself in over glorifying the civilization as it developed during ancient times and condemning the medieval period as the Dark Age. Certain descriptions tend to suggest that the entire history of medieval India is nothing but the history of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims; the two communities are presented as being in a state of permanent hostility, living in complete isolation; conflicts between rulers are presented as primarily religious conflicts. Similarly, the past attitudes are projected to the present. For example, intolerance practiced by a ruler is presented as the essence of the practice and beliefs of a particular religion. The periodization of history in religious terms and describing kingdoms primarily in terms of the religion of the rulers are also done. All such descriptions and characterization are unhistorical and tend to foster communal attitudes. Certain descriptions also tend to attribute certain undesirable features to specific communities and religions. Descriptions of the tenets and practices of various religions in textbooks are not always accurate. Similarly, any description which implies that any religion that did not originate in India or any community which follows a religion that originated outside the country or whose ancestors came from an area outside India is un-Indian, is not suitable as a teaching material.

While dealing with historical developments in which people following different religions are involved, emphasizing only the conflicts and ignoring the process of intermingling is unhistorical. Conflicts have to be presented in proper perspective. The role played by reform movements in narrowing down differences, in attacking dogmatism and bigotry and in furthering the process of synthesis should be prominently brought out. The acts of rulers belonging to any particular religion should not be presented as the acts of the religion or of that religious community as a whole. While describing conflicts between rulers, the political nature of the conflicts should be brought out. While dealing with communal politics in the modern period the use of religion for political purposes and attempts to provoke hatred against other religious communities to serve narrow political ends, should be decried and the damage caused by communal politics brought out.

Casteism and Untouchability

It pertains primarily to the feelings and practices related to the observance of social class exclusiveness based on birth (heredity) among Hindus where, in addition to the four Varnas, there exists a shatter-zone of caste variety accommodated into the Varna system. The institution of caste manifests itself in some form in other communities as well e.g., among Indian Muslims. Since

social class exclusiveness or social privilege or social hierarchy on the basis of birth is undesirable, the reading materials should not in any way lend support to it.

The description of the caste system is an important component of the description of the social conditions in various periods of Indian history. The description which present the caste system as an ideal form of social organization or which present mythological versions of the caste system (e.g., divine origin) as true, perpetuate casteist feelings and should not find any place in history textbooks. The descriptions which present the caste system as something that was not subject to any change throughout the ages, are also historically fallacious.

A correct historical approach to deal with the caste system in any period would be to present it as a part of the social and economic system of that period, its place and importance in that system, the changes which it had undergone or was undergoing, and the influence that it exercises on the entire history of that period. For example, the fragmentation and lack of unity in society, which were the consequence of the caste system and its rigidity, hampered social progress and had serious repercussions on the political history of India. A good historical description should also give adequate emphasis to the ideas and movements which in various times questioned the validity and desirability of the case system.

In a way, the practice of untouchability flows from the caste system in which a section of the community it treated as unclean. Consequently, they may be forbidden entry into temples, use of wells, etc. Observance of such a discrimination has now become a penal offence.

The descriptions of the practice of untouchability which tend to rationalize or justify it in any period, should not find a place in any, text book. On the contrary, it should be referred to as an inhuman practice and one which reflects adversely on the character of the society in which it was practiced.

Regionalism and Linguism

India is a vast country with a good deal of cultural and linguistic variety. Various regions of the country, besides having many common features, have throughout history developed their distinctive identities, in terms of language, culture, traditions and customs. It is important to promote an appreciation of, and respect for, this variety in Indian culture, which is best described as ‘composite culture’ or one of ‘unity in diversity’. However, there are certain approaches in dealing with the history and culture of regions which are unhistorical and tend to foster regional and linguistic chauvinism. The descriptions which depict the history of a particular region in complete

isolation from the developments in the rest of the country, hamper a proper appreciation of the historical development of that region. The descriptions which tend to glorify a particular region at the cost of or by denigrating, other regions, are objectionable. For example, the presentation of a particular ruler of one region as a hero and the denigration of the rulers of other regions, who may have been in conflict with that ruler, as villains, fosters prejudices. Similarly the descriptions of cultural developments in a particular region, which ignore the influence of other regions, are unhistorical. The descriptions which glorify the cultural developments in a particular region at the cost of the cultural developments in other regions, are objectionable. While promoting an appreciation of, and respect for, the cultural developments and language and literature of a particular region is desirable, presenting it as being superior to the others and denigrating the others is objectionable.

Similarly, the presentation of heroic figures of a region on the basis of myths and exaggerating their role is unhistorical. The neglect of the process of give and take between different regions is also unhistorical. Total neglect of developments in certain regions of the country in textbooks in the history of India as a whole is also undesirable.

Racialism

Historical descriptions sometimes reflect racial prejudices and tend to promote such prejudices. Such descriptions occur in relation to certain periods and areas of world history. Any description which divides humanity into superior races, must be discarded. In the same category are such descriptions as associate beauty or ugliness and repulsiveness with any particular race(s), present racial purity as a virtue, and tend to relate the backwardness or the advances made by a particular community or people in a particular historical period to its race. Similarly, the use of the term ‘race’ as a substitute for ‘nation’ should not be allowed. It should also be stressed that throughout history the various races have intermixed and that references to some races being pure are unscientific.

The Indian population is made up of different groups who have so intermixed throughout history that it is difficult to call a particular group as racially ‘pure’. The term ‘Aryan’, it must be remembered, is not a racial category but denotes groups of people speaking a particular family of languages.

Obscurantism and Superstitions

Sometimes such incidents and events are found in history textbooks as are based on legends and are not based on historical facts. Such materials in textbooks promote obscurantism and superstitions and are not conducive to the development of critical inquiry. Such materials are often used to support

outmoded and unscientific ideas. Superstition of any kind is bad. Sometimes myths, legends and folklore are presented as historical truths; this is objectionable. Such literature in itself may be enjoyable but to present it as historical is not desirable.

Glaring Inaccuracies

Apart from the prejudices described above, a textbook should not include glaring historical inaccuracies or sweeping generalizations. Such materials, even though they may not have any direct bearing on national integration, lead to the development of wrong understanding of history. Accuracy and authenticity of facts is of utmost importance in a textbook.

B. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING MATERIAL PREJUDICIAL TO NATIONAL INTEGRATION RELATED TO SPECIFIC PERIOD OF INDIAN HISTORY

Ancient Period

Characterization as 'Hindu Period' – The use of the term 'Aryan' as racial category – Over glorification of the ancient past – Overemphasis on the spiritualistic character of the ancient Indian culture – Over-reliance on and use of myths as history – Presentation of Indian culture as monolithic and its identification with Aryan culture or the culture of a particular region or period – Lack of emphasis on material culture – Lack of emphasis on interaction between Aryan and non-Aryan cultures – Neglect of the contribution of other cultures to Indian culture – Lack of emphasis on describing the process of change – Neglect of the impact of foreign contact, etc.

Medieval Period

Identifying the period as Muslim Period – Characterization of the period as a dark period or the period of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims-Identification of Muslims as the rulers. Hindus as the subjects-Identification of Muslims as foreigners (the early invaders only who did not settle down here could be termed 'foreigners') – Description of the State as theocracy without examining the actual influence of religion – Highly exaggerated role of religion in political conflicts – Describing the relationship between the rulers and the subjects on the basis of religion–Overglorification of medieval rule – Neglect and omission of the trends and processes of assimilation and synthesis-Growth of composite culture and socio-religious reform movements – Development of language, are and architecture.

Modern Period

Emphasis on the process of modernization isolated from the problems created by the British rule – Neglect of the social conditions in the eighteenth century, stagnation of society, non-occurrence of the Industrial Revolution in India –

Lack of technological break-through – Glorification of regional phenomena – Neglect of some weaknesses of the nineteenth century reform movements, e.g., the revivalist aspect of the movements (This may be more relevant at the higher classes) – Partial explanation of the nationalist movement in India e.g., neglect of peasants', workers' and socialist movements, neglect of the movements in Princely States – Emphasizing the role of any particular communal organization and neglecting that of the others in the freedom movement – Identifying communal organizations with communities – Under-emphasizing the secular character of the freedom movement – Neglect of socio-economic content of the freedom movement – Lack of emphasis on the role and contribution of all regions and communities and also of women in the freedom struggle- Inadequate coverage of freedom struggle – Underemphasising the sacrifices made by people during the freedom struggle.

Communalism and History Textbooks: An Analysis

Communalism was found to be the 'most serviceable' of the divisive forces by the imperialists. It was fostered and promoted to disrupt the nationalist movement's mobilization of the people for freedom from foreign rule and for their common political, economic and social interests as Indians. The imperialists rejected the existence of or the emergence of an Indian nation and asserted that the population of India basically comprised of religious communities which were mutually exclusive and antagonistic to one another. Hindus and Muslims particularly, according to them, represented two distinct civilizations and had interests which were mutually incompatible. Independence has not diminished the strength of communalism which continues to pose a threat to the integrity and unity of India and to the social progress of the Indian people by weakening their unity for pursuing common political, economic and social goals.

A distorted view of India's history is a major component of the ideology of communalism. Many scholars of Indian historiography have traced the communalist distortion of Indian history to the works of a number of early British historians of India, some of which were sponsored by the British Government in India, and to Indian historical writings, some of which were inspired by certain aspects of Indian nationalism in its early phase.

J.S. Mill's 6-volume *The History of British India,* first published in 1818, divided the history of India into the Hindu, the Muslim and the British periods, a periodization which remained unquestioned almost throughout the period of the colonial rule and continues to be followed by some even now. About half a century later, Sir H.M. Elliot, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, undertook the collection of a carefully chosen and biased selection of some source materials of Indian history in the medieval period. These selections

were translated into English and published as the History of India as told by its own Historians – The Mohammedan Period (1867-77) in eight volumes. For a long time, these volumes remained the main source book for the historians of medieval India.

In his introduction to these volumes, Sir H.M. Elliot, wrote,

> They will make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule. If instruction was sought for from them we should be spared the rash declarations respecting Mohammedan India, which are frequently made by persons not otherwise ignorant. Characters now renowned only for the splendor of their achievements, and a succession of victories, would, when we withdraw the veil of flattery and divest them of rhetorical flourishes, be set forth in a truer light and probably be held up to the execration of mankind. We should no longer hear bombastic Babus, enjoying under our Government the highest degree of personal liberty and many more political privileges than were ever conceded to a conquered nation, rant about patriotism, and the degradation of their present position.

These volumes were frankly designed to divide India on communal lines, besides teaching the 'Babus' the great virtues of the British rule. The study of the ancient period suffered from another kind distortion. D.P. Mukherji, in an essay on Indian historiography, wrote, "When people want to acquire self-respect, they may adopt various means, one of which is a trip to ancient times where food for self-respect is abundant." This resulted in an uncritical glorification of the ancient past and acceptance of the "evaluation of Indian as being primarily a spiritual people, that is a people lacking in socio-political interests and objective attitude, with an overriding bias for 'spiritual' thoughts and tendency to be lost in subjective speculations". Another myth which characterized much of the writing on Indian culture was that Indian culture emerged in its fully developed from in one particular region of India. Drawing attention to this, H.K. Sherwani, in an address to the Indian History Congress, said,

> We are apt to regard Indian culture to be monolithic, stagnant and unprogressive, centred from the days of yore somewhere on the banks of the Ganga and the Yamuna in the Western, Central and Eastern part of what is now the Uttar Pradesh, and not only culture but religion and politics are made to hang around this rather circumscribed region…. This near sightedness has caused many a fallacy and many a bickering both in the cultural and the political fields….. Those who belong to this school would much rather ignore

> the impact of history at least during the last one thousand years and more and to think that they are living in a self-created paradise where life is lived or should be lived as it was at the dawn of history.

The process of the correction of these distortions initiated by nationalist historians in the pre-independence period has been carried forward by a large number of historians during the four decades after independence and it can be said that at the level of historical scholarship, generally speaking, these distortions have been corrected. This is, of course, not to suggest that all historical scholarship in independent India is free from writing history in a communalist framework. One series of voluminous volumes in the history of India, for example, has consistently followed this framework and a number of eminent scholars have associated themselves with the preparation of these volumes. But perhaps it would be true to say that the communalist framework no longer occupies a dominant position.

Most people who go through the process of formal education learn their history at school. The main, and in many cases the sole, source of historical knowledge for both students and teachers are the textbooks which are recommended and / or prescribed by the educational authorities in the States. Realizing the importance of history textbooks, efforts have been made during the past two or three decades to free history textbooks from communalist distortions. These efforts have been initiated by the State or have had the support of the State except for a short period when the process was sought to be reversed. The NCERT also has made consistent efforts in this regard. It has brought out textbooks, most of them written by eminent historians, which have played some part in combating communalist distortions. A programme of textbook evaluation also has been undertaken with a view to helping educational agencies in eliminating some of the more gross distortions from the instructional materials.

Most of the school textbooks upto the upper primary and, in some States, up to the secondary level are brought out by State agencies though a large number are still brought out by private publishers. Some of the evils associated with the textbook industry such as profiteering, malpractices and intrigues, which had been pointed out by the Education Commission, have been ended as a result of nationalization. But the general quality of the textbooks, both private and nationalized, has not improved very greatly. The programmes evaluation of history textbooks undertaken by state agencies have helped in eliminating some gross distortions but the progress achieved in this regard even in the case of nationalized textbooks is not quite satisfactory. There have been cases in which a textbook has been found suitable after evaluation by the educational authorities in a state but soon after its contents have become an issue of communal controversy, the book has to be

withdrawn. In the case of books brought out by private publishers, the situation is far worse. Many of these books are used by a large number of private institutions without ever being evaluated and even without being prescribed or recommended by any educational agency. They include a variety of 'cheap' books, though they are quite expensive, such as notes, keys and questions and answers which are used by those teachers and students even where educational agencies have prescribed a textbook.

An effort has been made in this note to indicate some of the communal distortions in history textbooks used in schools. The examples from some textbooks given in this regard merely illustrate the kinds of presentations which are still found in textbooks. Not all textbooks can be painted with the same brush but at the same time the same paint can be seen on quite a few textbooks.

The periodization of Indian history into Hindu and Muslim periods is no longer commonly used though some continue to use it. R.C.Majumdar's *A Brief History of India*, first published in 1925 and revised in its 34th edition in 1977, continues to divide India history into the Hindu period, the Mohammedan period and the British period.

The second volume of a three-volume history of India by V.D. Mahajan, which is used also by undergraduate students, is entitled *Muslim Rule in India*. R.C.Majumdar concluded the portions on the ancient period with two chapters entitled 'The Last Days of Hindu Independence' and 'Hindu Civilization during the Post Vedic Period'. Most other textbooks, even when they do not use terms like 'Hindu period', and 'Muslim period' basically follow the same framework. The ancient period is presented basically as a period of Hindu rule and medieval period as a period of Muslim rule. The first part of a two-part book entitled *A New Textbook of History of India* starts its chapter on the Aryans with the following statement: "The history of India is generally regarded as the history of the Aryans in India". The very first chapter of this book which describes geographical features and historical sources gives the reader a clear idea of what this book has in store for him. It starts by blaming the north-western passes for having 'always been a cause of trouble for the Indian people' and holds the 'hot climate coupled with the immense wealth of this Indo-Gangetic plain' responsible for converting 'the once martial races…into lazy and easy-going people'. It further says that the Deccan which is separated from northern India by the Vindhya and Satpura ranges 'maintained its separate identity and did not play any important role in the history of India'. According to this book, two 'quite different civilizations' developed - one in Northern India and the other in the Deccan. However, this separation is not without its uses. It says, "There is no doubt that this separation of the north and the south has sometimes led to separatist

tendencies but it has benefited us too. In times of danger it has served as a 'Safety Zone' for the culture of the North. Whenever the Hindus were persecuted by the Muslim rulers in the north they slipped away to the South and saved their lives. The Hindu culture, literature and religion were thus saved from extinction. All this was made possible only due to the existence of the Satpura and the Vindhya hills". It says that 'Rajputana always stood up as a torch-bearer of Indian freedom' because the 'Rajputs carved out their independent States (in Rajputana) which continued to flourish even under the Muslim rule'. The book refers to the Gupta period as 'the Golden Age of Hinduism and 'An Age of Hindu Imperialism' of which the 'Indians, especially the Hindus, will ever remain proud'. This book and another book entitled *Neelam History of Ancient and Medieval India* (a question-answer book) blame Buddhism for many misfortunes of Indians. According to the former, the people began to hate 'such a faith which made them quite impotent' during the period after Ashoka. Later, in 712 A.D., it was 'because of the treacherous act of some Sindhi Jats and Buddhists, who went to the side of the enemy, the Indians were defeated'. According to the later, 'the concept of Ahimsa preached by Buddhism *killed the martial spirit* of the people especially of those who followed this religion thereby making them so weak that they could not protect their own honour and freedom. As a result they suffered the bonds of slavery of several centuries". Further on, it says, "Buddhism was also a factor in the emergence of new castes. When the Buddhist converts came back to the fold of Hinduism they formed themselves into distinct castes". It attributes the decline of the Guptas also to the effects of Buddhism because some of the later Guptas had adopted Buddhism. These books tend to treat Buddhism as a kind of aberration while the real glorious periods were those when Hinduism was revived and it is of those periods 'of which Indians, especially the Hindus', should be proud.

The period which has suffered the most blatant communalist distortions is the medieval period, sometimes still referred to as the Muslim period. In most textbooks dealing with this period, religion is treated as the main, and often the sole, determining factor. The entire period is sometimes treated as a dark period and mostly a period of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. If the ruler is a Muslim, then 'Muslims' are the rulers and 'Hindus' are the subjects. Every conflict and war between a Hindu and a Muslim ruler is presented as a conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Every act of a person is seen as the act of the religion of that person. The States that were ruled by Muslims are almost invariably described as being theocratic, as Islamic states, which are run almost exclusively for the purpose of converting people to Islam. Hindus and Muslims are presented as the two main categories, each reflecting a homogeneous entity without any differentiation. Hindu kings who resist the expansion of a 'Muslim' kingdom or empire or Hindu chieftains who try to

establish their independent kingdoms do not fight merely for their kingdom's independence but for the country's freedom and against foreign rule. Some textbooks even trace the partition of the country to the beginning of this period. The language used in many textbooks is often highly charged, almost as that of a participant in the events described. Some examples of such writings are given here.

A textbook entitled New *History of India says* about Mahmud: "Mahmud was a robber. He did not intend to set up his rule in India. He was very greedy. *He was a true Muslim.* He destroyed the temples and killed the Hindus". (Emphasis added) About Qutbuddin Aibak, this book says, "Aibak was fond of constructing new buildings. He constructed two mosques on the ruins of Hindu temples, which he himself destroyed". (emphasis added)

About Timur's invasion, A *New Textbook of History of India says*, "From certain contemporary sources… we come to know that the chief aim of Timur's invasion of India was not the thirst for conquest but to purify India from the unbelievers and to spread the Muslim faith". Further, it says, "As a result of Timur's invasion of India the bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims greatly increased. Timur was very cruel to the Hindus. He looted them and murdered them in lakhs. On one single day he massacred as many as 100,000 Hindus at the very gate of Delhi. For all their destruction and ruin the Hindus blamed the Muslims and this led to strained relations between them."

How the modern sense of nationalism is transferred to past conflicts may be seen from the following examples. R.C.Majumdar, while describing the conflict between Mahmud of Ghazni and Anandapal, says,

> …but the Indians were not insensible of the danger which threatened their country and religion…. It was the last desperate struggle for India's freedom and so profoundly did the sacred cause impress the heart of the Indians that even Hindu women sold their jewels, melted down their gold ornaments, and sent their contributions from a distance to furnish resources for this holy war.

About Rana Pratap, he says, "But in spite of privations and sufferings, he never ceased to carry on the struggle for liberating his country…. The story of his bravery, heroism and untold sufferings for the cause of the country has become almost proverbial…." About Shivaji, he says,

> He conceived the noblest idea of liberating his 'country and religion' from foreign yoke, and nobly did he carry it out by consecrating his whole life to the sacred cause…. His grateful countrymen have ever looked upon him 'as an incarnation of God' and even today no other name stirs the pulse of the mighty Hindu

community from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin as that of the great Maratha leader.

A New Textbook of History of India says about Prithvi Raj Chauhan: "His fate did not come to his help and the circumstances were against him, otherwise he would have saved his motherland from the foreign yoke. Even as it is, the like of him are seldom born in India and we are always proud of such great sons of India who laid down their lives for the sake of their country". The textbook entitled *Muslim Rule in India* describes the rise of Vijayanagar kingdom as the result of a 'freedom movement' Some textbooks use the terminology of modern mass movements in describing medieval Indian developments. A textbook brought out by the Haryana Board of School Education, while referring to the religious policy of the Sultans, says, "It is for this reason that the Hindu masses never accepted Muslim rule and they went on trying to gain their lost independence."

Most of the books also blame 'Muslim Rule' for most of the evils of the Hindu society such as caste rigidity, purdah system, child marriages, etc. Most of the textbooks surveyed in this note pay little attention to the history of the freedom movement. However, it can be said that while some attention is paid to Muslim communalism, hardly any book refers to Hindu communalism. Here again, Hindus and Muslims are referred to as homogeneous entities, each having its own interest and having little in common with the other. The Muslim League is also generally presented as the authentic representative of the Muslims.

A New Textbook of History of India has a chapter entitled 'From Lord Curzon to President V.V. Giri', indicating an unbroken line of rulers of India. (This chapter has been updated to cover the period up to Shri Sanjiva Reddy.)

Most of the textbook authors seem to have little familiarity with historical writings other than a few textbooks. Each one of the textbooks by such authors is a collection of borrowed ideas and words from other textbooks. One can find a number of paragraphs which occur in a number of textbooks without almost any change in vocabulary. There are long quotations, mainly from Dr. Ishwari Prasad, Lane-Poole and V.A. Smith. In most textbooks there are often many mutually contradictory views quoted without any evaluation or comment. At least a part of the reason for the kind of history they write is their almost total historical illiteracy as far as the historical writings of the past half a century are concerned.

Textbooks in all subjects for all stages of school education are either prescribed or recommended by educational authorities. Generally, up to the secondary stage, textbooks are prescribed–up to the upper primary stage by the directorate of education in each state and by the boards of secondary

education for the secondary stage. The common practice for the higher secondary state (+2 stage) is not to prescribe a textbook but to recommend a number of textbooks from which the school, the teacher or the student can select. For this purpose, the boards concerned with higher secondary stage invite books which are then got evaluated by experts before these are recommended. In either case – whether the books are prescribed or recommended – the educational authorities bear a definite responsibility regarding the quality of textbooks that are used in schools. The only exceptions to this in most states are the schools - which are quite large in number – which do not fall in the category of recognized schools, do not receive any state funds (the so-called public schools) or some other categories of private schools run by 'religious-cultural' organizations. The 'freedom' of such schools in respect of textbooks is also limited to the presecondary stage. At the secondary and higher secondary stages, these schools also have to use textbooks prescribed or recommended by the boards to which they are affiliated. Only one board in the country claims that it does not follow any procedure for recommending textbooks for its schools but the number of schools affiliated to this board is not very large. For the vast majority of schools in the country, however, there are definite procedures for evaluating and selecting textbooks to be used in schools. How ineffective these procedures have been in ensuring the quality of textbooks would be clear from the report of the evaluation of twelve textbooks on Indian history which had been recommended for the higher secondary stage by a board of secondary education.

The teaching of history, as of other subjects, at the higher (senior) secondary stage, is envisaged as a discipline providing foundations for higher academic studies in the subject. This requires ensuring textbooks of a certain minimum academic standard. They should not only be free from historical inaccuracies but should also reflect the current state of historical knowledge. They should help develop an approach of objectivity to the study of the past and should be free from communal parochial, racial, regional and other narrow prejudices. The textual material should include suitable illustrative materials and maps which are authentic. The language and style of presentation should be clear and unambiguous and should promote critical thinking and understanding of the processes of historical development.

For the work of evaluation, the guidelines provided to the reviewers mentioned two broad considerations viz. i) to see that the presentation of the past is authentic and is free from myths and factual inaccuracies and ii) to see that the presentation did not foster communal, casteist, regional and racial prejudices and attitudes. The guidelines made it clear that facts of history are not to be suppressed or tailored to suit the purpose of national integration.

The purpose was to free history textbooks from inaccuracies and distortions which may have vitiated their quality as a result of inadequate knowledge and lack of familiarity with modern historical researches on the part of the authors, or by misconceptions and prejudices. The evaluation brought to light the extremely poor quality of most history textbooks. Most textbooks were found to be abounding in inaccuracies, gross distortions, communalist, casteist and even racialist presentations, irrelevant and unauthentic and aesthetically horrid illustrative materials, and usages of language and styles of presentation unsuited to promoting clear understanding and objective study. Most of the textbooks were found to be totally unsuitable as teaching materials. Only a few examples of such materials selected at random are being given below.

Most of the textbooks use the term 'Aryan' as a purely racial category and even tend to glorify the idea of racial purity, sometimes bordering on racialism. One textbook, for example, says, "Aryan race is considered among the famous, superior and civilized races of the world…. Most people in India, and Englishmen, Iranians, Germans, Spaniards, French, etc., feel pride in considering themselves descendants of the Aryans. According to them pure blood of the Aryans flows in their veins." Hardly any book refers to the correct usage of 'Aryan' as a linguistic category denoting people (s) speaking languages of the Indo-European family of languages. Hardly any book refers to the intermingling of people and 'races' in India or elsewhere, much less emphasize it. Many textbooks use the terms Aryan, Hindu and Vedic as synonyms. The term 'Indian Culture' and 'Hindu Culture' are generally used as interchangeable.

Not a single textbook evaluated gives a proper historical account of the Varna system, the conditions under which it evolved and the role it played in different periods of Indian history. Some textbooks uncritically quote the mythological version of the origin. Some others try to justify it as a highly rational system. For example, one book says.

> Division of people according to occupation was also the work of Aryans. They saw that no person on his own could do the work of a soldier, a Brahman, a Vaishya and Shudra. Hence they divided society into four varnas. These four varnas were…. This way because of division of labour all things were done in a proper way. This way work was done better than before and the problem of livelihood was also solved.

The practice of untouchability rarely arouses the textbook authors 'abhorrence'. Some of them give highly misleading explanations of its origin. One of the books mentions it thus: "People (during Harsha's period) generally

ate wheat, barely, milk, curds and vegetables…. Meat eaters were called untouchables or pariahs."

The treatment of India's cultural contacts with other countries in the textbooks is generally chauvinistic. Some of these textbooks give the impression that the culture of some other countries, as a result of Indian influence, was a total limitation of Indian culture in which their own traditions did not play any part. An example of unhistorical treatment of relations with other countries is being given here. One book, in its section dealing with India's cultural contacts with Asian countries, says,

> In this way we see that Greater India is one of the most beautiful creations of ancient history. For about 1500 years Indians taught the lesson of civilization to the uncivilized races abroad. By giving them the knowledge of religion, language, script, literature, social customs, thinking and manners, moral and political ideals, and various arts, Indians made them civilized.

Some of the most imbalanced presentations are those relating to foreign invasions. Here, the style is highly emotionally charged and the description highly exaggerated. For example, one textbook describes the Huns in India thus:

> Thus Huns were a cruel barbaric and fighting race of Central Asia…. The Huns were cruel and oppressive. They took great pleasure in plundering, killing people and setting fire. Wherever they went, they would plunder and kill people, and set fire to the splendid temples, monasteries and buildings…. But the absorption of Huns in Indian society led to the beginning of the decline of the moral life of Indians. The worst effect of Hum invasions was that they caused great damage to Indian culture. They killed many learned men and artists. They turned many big cities into ruins and set fire to many monasteries, temples, monuments and many literary works.

The description of the Arab invasion of Sind is similarly charged with emotion. It is also communalist in interpretation, presenting the conflict as basically a religious conflict, and reflecting an attitude of hostility to Islam. One book says, "Some traitor Buddhists and Jats went over to the enemy and in this way Hindus were defeated."

Another book dealing with the same topic says, "…But the invaders could not establish the supremacy of Islam in the face of the greatness of Hindu religion. With the help of the sword, only a few weaklings became Muslims but in the entire Sind region the people expressed their contempt for Islam…. Brahmins

kept up the morale of the Indian people and destroyed the influence of Islam." It is surprising that hardly any of the textbooks evaluated refers to the contacts of India with Islam through the Arab traders on the western coast of India.

Most of the textbooks evaluated give a grossly distorted version of medieval Indian history. They abound in unhistorical usages of terms, give a highly exaggerated role to religion, make no differentiation between the formal and the real, present simplistic explanations of complex historical phenomena and are totally uncritical in their presentation of historical events, developments and phenomena. Most of them present the history of medieval India solely in terms of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Little attention is paid to the processes of intermingling and cultural interaction and the emergence of a rich composite culture in the country. By projecting later communal and sectarian prejudices to the study of medieval Indian developments, they tend to foster those prejudices. Most of the textbooks show little acquaintance with historical researches of the past half a century.

In their description of Mahmud Ghazni's invasions, most of the textbooks give highly exaggerated place to the religious aspect and religious motives. Most textbooks present Mahmud's invasion as having been motivated by the desire to spread Islam. Some books give an impression that because of the destruction of idols by him, Mahmud was accepted as a religious leader. For example, one book says, "By destroying idols, he became a religious leader". The treatment of Muhammad Ghori's invasions is also generally in the same style. Hardly any textbook deals with the West and central Asian developments which had such a close bearing on India. Most textbooks present the Islamic world as a monolithic entity under the all-powerful Caliphs. Developments such as the ascendancy of the Turks, the emergence of absolutist monarchies, the decline in the power of the Caliphs, the effects of Mongol invasions on West and Central Asia, have been almost totally ignored. Because of the lack of understanding of these developments, the primary, and in many cases the sold, element which is presented is the religious one, often accompanied by all the details of a horror story.

The entire period of medieval Indian history is presented as one of Muslims as rulers and Hindus as subjects. Some of them treat the period from the time of Prithviraj's death to 1857 as one of slavery. One book, for example, says, "With the fall of Prithviraj India had to suffer under the strong chains of slavery." The acts of the Sultans and of their soldiers and officers are generally presented as acts of the 'Muslims' and no distinction is made between the rulers, the soldiers, and the Muslim community. For example, one book says, "…But his (Gujarat ruler's) wife fell into the hands of Muslims and she was sent to the Sultan's harem. Muslims also looted Somnath temple."

Many textbooks trace the rigidification of the caste system and various other evils to the 'Muslim' invasions. Some of the explanations appear to be rationalizations of caste rigidity. One textbook, for example, says "…But Turkish invaders, instead of adopting Hindu religion and culture, had started destroying it. Because of this Brahmins who were specially honoured in the Rajput period made the rules of the caste system more rigid." Another textbook says, "Because of the influence of the social equality of Muslims, low class Hindus had started adopting Islam. Therefore, the bonds of the caste system became more rigid than before for the defence of Hindu religion." The practice of child marriage is also attributed to the "Islamic" state.

Hardly, any of the textbooks evaluated critically examines the relationship between religion and the medieval Indian State and differentiates between the formal aspects and historical reality. Almost all of them described the medieval Indian State as an Islamic State. "The State of Sultans in Delhi was an Islamic State and its basis was religion…. Sultans ran the government according to the laws of Islam." Another textbook terms the Sultanat theocratic in which "Every ruler owed his allegiance to the Khalifa." The author of another textbook who refers to the Sultanat as an Islamic state, quotes another author's view that it was a theocracy and says,

> In fact the Muslim ruler considered himself not only a ruler but also a person who had been sent by god to spread Islam. Hence he made all efforts to convert non-Muslims to Islam and for this he used all the power of the State." He further quotes, approvingly, another author to say, "The goal of Islamic State in India was to convert the entire population to Islam, to destroy the religions of the country and by forcing the people to follow the religion of Muhammad to transform dar-ul-Harab to dar-ul-Islam.

Another textbook, after saying that "Muslims established Islamic state in India" adds, "Muslims wanted to finish the Hindus." Hardly any textbook mentions, much less emphasises, that the Delhi Sultanat was a completely independent State and that the practice of receiving investiture by the Caliph and mentioning him on the coins and in the *Khutba* was a formal act which was resorted to by the Sultans even when the Caliphate did not exist. No book mentions that no Sultan permitted the Ulema to determine or influence the policy of the State. Similarly, Hindus are generally mentioned as the 'ruled' and hardly any book refers to the fact that throughout the period they not only controlled the trade but also constituted the bulk of the rural aristocracy. Similarly, most textbooks refer to 'Muslims' as the rulers and no kind of social differentiation existing among the followers of Islam in India is shown. Hardly any textbook also refers to the fact that for a long time the high offices of the

State were not open to all Muslims and were given only to members of the Turkish nobility.

This lack of critical attitude is shown in the treatment of almost every other topic in the textbooks. Even Timur's invasion which finally put an end to the Tughlaq dynasty is presented as basically motivated by the desire to spread Islam. One textbook says, "He was a staunch Muslim and by killing idol worshipping Hindus and destroying temples and idols he wanted to earn the title of *Ghazi*." Even though Timur invaded the truncated Delhi Sultanat, the textbooks nowhere critically examine the so-called religious motives behind his invasion. Here, as elsewhere in most of the books, terms such as 'Kattar Musalman' (staunch Muslim) and 'Kattar sunni Musalman' (staunch Sunni Muslim) are used as synonyms for 'intolerant Muslim'.

In the description of the war of succession among the sons of Shah Jahan and of the policies followed by Aurangzeb, not a single textbook gives a balanced treatment and shows any acquaintance with historical findings of the past four decades or more. One textbook says, "The war of succession between the four sons was not a question of politics but of religious dogmas." The treatment of most other books is on the same lines. Not a single textbook mentions that all the ulema did not support Aurangzeb, that while Dara was supported by 24 non-Muslim nobles, Aurangzeb was supported by 21. That the Rajputs joined hands with Aurangzeb against Dara after the first battle of the war and that during Aurangzeb's reign the number and proportion of non-Muslim in the nobility was higher than at any time before. The explanations which most textbooks give are not only simplistic and ill-informed but also reflect a sectarian and communalist distortion of history. The same is true for the description of the causes of the decline of the Mughal empire where all other causes – political, economic and social – are ignored and the sole cause of decline is seen in the religious policy of Aurangzeb. The Mughals' attempts to annex the Deccan States also is generally presented primarily, and often solely, in terms of Shia-Sunni conflict.

The communalist and sectarian interpretations are reflected not only in the description of political events but in the treatment of almost every other aspect. Little attention is paid to the processes of intermingling and the growth of new cultural elements, emergence of popular religious and social reform movements, rise and growth of a number of modern Indian languages and the first literatures in many Indian languages. On the contrary, the entire period is seen generally as one of hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims. One textbook puts it bluntly thus: "Hindu civilization and Muslim civilization were antagonistic to each other."

The textbooks dealing with modern Indian history were found unsuitable as teaching materials for the same reasons as those dealing with the ancient and medieval periods. Most of them showed little acquaintance with the modern findings and approaches to the study of modern India. The role of Muslims is generally ignored, except for brief references to a few individuals. In the treatment of communal trends, most textbooks give a tendentious presentation. While Muslim communalism generally receives some attention, Hindu communalism is almost completely ignored. In the description of Muslim communalism also, most books treat the entire Muslim community as a monolithic entity. Most books use the term 'Muslim' where the proper term to use should be 'some sections among Muslims' or 'Muslim League'.

The assessment of historical personalities is often coloured by religious prejudices. One textbook has the following about Tipu. "But he was a bigot. He forcibly converted thousands of Hindus to Islam, ill-treated the Brahmins, polluted their temples and violated the chastity of many women. It is only because of these atrocities that the Marathas turned against him."

The examples quoted above are taken from textbooks produced by private publishers. Similar examples can be quoted from a number textbooks produced by state textbook agencies. Nationalized textbooks, like these published by private publishers, are prepared by people who have little academic expertise in the subject. State textbook agencies have generally failed to involve secular professional historians in the task of preparing school-level history textbooks. (There are for that matter few good college level history textbooks which would reflect the state of the art).

With all that has been said above, it needs, however, to be recognized that educational authorities at the state and central levels have been, in principle, responsive to the demands for a non-communal approach to the writing of history textbooks. Educational agencies throughout the country have made extensive use of guidelines prepared by the NCERT in evaluating their textbooks. It can even be said that during the past few years there has been a definite trend of improving the quality of history textbooks, particularly in removing more blatant communal distortions. The programme of textbook evaluation which was initiated with a view to eliminating communal and other biased presentations from history textbooks has, however, not been a great success. The main reason for this appears to be that the evaluators were not adequately educated for the task. The programme has, however, been continuing and, having now become a part of the larger programme of transforming the content and process of education, is expected to be more successful than before.

The positive trend indicated above is, however, not irreversible. It was not many years ago that some textbooks were sought to be banned precisely on the ground that they presented a non-communal view of Indian history. One textbook dealing, interestingly, with ancient India was in fact withdrawn from list of recommended textbooks and, hence, from circulation though not banned. These books, it was alleged, "presented a completely different view of the image of the country far removed from traditional and cultural and scientific values." One of the grounds of objection to the book on ancient India – and for its deviation from 'traditional and cultural and scientific values' – was a statement that Ayodhya was not settled on any scale before the sixth century B.C. The upholders of 'traditional and cultural and scientific values' objected to a book on medieval India on the 'ground that it did not characterize every act of Muslim rulers as primarily an act of anti-Hindu religious intolerance. A textbook on modern Indian history was objected to because it criticized the view that Akbar and Aurangzeb were foreigners ('unless being a foreigner was made the ground for declaring one a foreigner') and Pratap and Shivaji were national heroes who fought against the foreigners. During the forty years of India's existence as an independent nation, this was the only period when the power of the State was sought to be used to impose on the educational system, deliberately and consciously, a communal view of India's past. This particular attempt did not succeed and even the ancient India history textbook again became a recommended text for some higher secondary school students. A number of 'cultural' and 'religious' organizations – some of which have emerged only in recent years – have, however, intensified their activities in disseminating communalism and obscurantism, its natural ally, and their view of India's past. Some of them run and control a large number of schools and prepare their own 'educational' materials to be used in their schools. The official educational agencies seem to exercise little control over the 'educational' activities of these organizations. Besides, with the growing activities of obscurantists and fundamentalists of various hues, and their claims of representing their respective communities, pressures are likely to be exerted on the educational agencies and the State to see that secular and objective histories are not prescribed and recommended for school children on the ground that they hurt the religious sentiments of the communities they claim to represent. These pressures have always been there but the will and the capacity of educational agencies to resist these pressures will depend very largely on developments outside the educational system.

USE OF HISTORY AND GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM

Bipan Chandra

Introduction

A communal view of India history has been a basic constituent of communal ideology, as well as a major instrument for the spread of communalism. In fact a communal view of Indian history has been the main ideology of communalism in India. This is particularly true of Hindu communalism. If you take away a communal interpretation of Indian history then hardly anything is left with Hindu communal ideology.

It was, therefore, not accidental that when the Janata Party came to power, with one of its constituents as the Jana Sangh, they tried to meddle with history. The Janata Party had already declared that it was fully secular. The Jana Sangh constituent of the Janata Party was extremely careful not to give any impression that it was deviating from the traditional secularism of the Indian political parties. It was very interesting that when L.K. Advani was the Minister for Information and Broadcasting very few changes were made in the media policy, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee was the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He continued to be as pro-Arab as the earlier government. The Jana Sangh component moved very carefully. But one area where they moved very quickly, within one month, was in the area of history writing.

Nanaji Deshmukh got a note written by some opportunist historians – who did not give their names probably because they were ashamed of it. This note was sent to Morarji Desai. Three textbooks written by Romila Thapar for the sixth class and seventh class, and by me for the twelfth class were being taught in Central Schools in Delhi and in some other schools. In the above mentioned note it was charged that these books were anti-national.

My book could be attacked for being anti-national, because I had made some critical remarks regarding some great leaders. There was another book called *Freedom Struggle* which three of us had written, in which there were some critical remarks about Motilal Nehru, Gandhi, Tilak and others. So both these books were declared to be anti-national. Morarji Desai was quite willing to believe it. But the interesting thing was that Romila Thapar's books were also attacked. She had written a sixth class book of one hundred pages on ancient India and a seventh class book on medieval India. The book on ancient India was declared anti-national, because its approach was scientific and had not glorified everything. It even had said that ancient Indians were fond of

drinking and gambling and enjoyed life and indulged in sports, etc. But the book on medieval India was attacked and branded as pro-Muslim and, therefore, anti-national. An all-India campaign was organized by teachers, journalists and others against proscribing these books. Every national newspaper wrote two or three editorials on it. In almost every university, every college, teachers and students organized signature campaigns. Though the order was withdrawn, the books were not reprinted.

It is interesting that the Jana Sangh showed its hand only on this question, history. In fact several of my economist friends at that time asked me, 'What have you written in your books on modern India and the freedom struggle? These are bourgeois interpretations'. Textbooks are not meant to give one's personal points of view but to give a consensus of interpretations. There was little 'Marxist' about any of these text books. So people asked me why then were they attacked? On the other hand, books on economics were quite radical. They asked, 'Why they were not attacking us?' Political scientists were not attacked. It was because these were not part of their ideological component and it was not a structural part of their ideology. But historical interpretation was. Romila Thapar opined that Mahmood Ghazni was as bad a character in history as can be, but his plundering of India was motivated more by gain and he used Islam only as a political weapon for plundering. This they could not tolerate, because the communal ideology says that Muslims were by nature plunderers. Why? Because they were Muslims. If one becomes a Muslim, one is bound to be a plunderer. Therefore, if a book does not offer criticism on these grounds by taking religion of the rulers as central, then the book is not authentic.

In other words, the communal ideology of the Hindu communalist is structured around, not economics, not politics, not around the question of two chambers or one chamber, or adult franchise or dictatorship or democracy, but basically around history. Later on they were sorry for having moved so quickly, because leaders like Madhu Limaye and a large number of Janata people became aware for the first time that something is very wrong. They had hook line and sinker swallowed the theory that now that they had merged with Janata everything is all right. The leopard had changed its spots. It was no longer a leopard now, it was now a cow.

Therefore, it is very important for us to understand how communalism has structured its ideology around a particular interpretation of Indian history.

This is not as true about Muslim communalism, though it too has relied very heavily and, in fact basically, upon a communal interpretation of Indian history. Since Sikh communalism developed as anti-Muslim communalism, its version of history was virtually the same as that of Hindu communalism, but

with one or two shades of differences, which are now coming home to roost. I shall bring that out also.

Along with the misuse of history, Muslim communalism has basically relied upon and even now relies upon, religion and the minority feeling, because it is very easy to arouse the minority feeling: you are in a minority, therefore, others are going to dominate you. Hindu communalism has found it very difficult to mobilize people around religion. Secondly, it is impossible to arouse the minority feelings among Hindus because they are in a majority. So how do you create a feeling of fear among Hindus? Arousal of a psychosis of fear is a crucial element of communal ideology. For example, in Punjab, from the most moderate to the most extreme communalists aroused a psychosis of fear, by reinforcing the notion that they are going to be wiped out. We have also seen, how communalism has gradually used the terrorist killings to arouse a fear psychosis in Punjab. But in India as a whole Hindu communalism always found, and even now finds it very difficult to convince people that Hindus are in danger. How can eighty-five per cent of the population be in danger? Therefore, Hindu communalism has primarily relied upon history, its teaching and interpretation, to create an atmosphere of fear, of oppression, of prejudice, of hatred.

Communal History at Popular Levels

First of all, school room teaching, has been used to create stereotypes, myths, symbols, legends. Usually the two communalism, i.e., Hindu and Muslim, run on parallel lines, most of the times accepting each other's point of view, only drawing different conclusions.

As I said, teaching of history in schools and colleges, from almost the beginning of the 19th century contributed, and contributes even now, in a major way, to the growth of communal ideology. For generations, almost from the beginning of the school system in India, communal interpretations have been promoted, first by imperialist writers and then by semi-communal and communal writers. As J.S. Grewal pointed out, with the books written by James Mill, published in the second decade of the 19th century, communal interpretations of history with varying degrees of virulence, sometimes extremely vicious and sometimes though milder in the hands of more decent people, but still a communal version, have been propagated to deep and widespread was and has been the communal interpretation of history that even sturdy nationalists have accepted, and continue to accept today, however unconsciously, some of its basic digits.

I was interviewing the late Mr. Y.B. Chavan. I told him that my book on communalism and just been published. So he laughed and said, 'So you are an expert on communalism? Do you think I also have some communalism in me?"

He expected me to say no. 1 said, 'Sir, you are very secular, but sometimes you have also expressed communal views.' Immediately a frown came on his face and he said, 'What do mean?' I said, 'Only the other day you gave a speech in which you said we became free after one thousand years of slavery.' He enquired, 'What is wrong with that?' I explained and then he said, 'I have not been using that phrase.' In fact, the only persons I know who have not used this phrase were Gandhi and Nehru. I have not read everything written by them and they might have used it, for all I know.

This is because elements of communal interpretation of history penetrated deep into nationalist historical writings and nationalist thinking. For instance, in Punjab, the story of Hakikat Rai, the nine-year old boy who was supposed to have refused to become a Muslim and who was then put between two walls alive has been very popular. I was brought up on it. I studied in an Arya Samaj school. I know what devastating effect it had. There was a play called Hakikat Rai in Urdu. When one read it, one's blood boiled. We felt how bad those Muslims could be. How could this be done to a small boy of nine? There are number of such stories which contributed in a big way to the spread of communalism.

'Communal harmony' Gandhiji wrote, 'could not be permanently established in our country so long as highly distorted versions of history were being taught in our schools and colleges through the history text books.' Unfortunately nothing was done about it even after independence. From 1947 to 1951 a Hindi play based on Hakikat Rai was a part of the language text book in Higher Secondary Board. When this was brought to the attention of Jawaharlal Nehru, the book was removed and the teacher concerned was barred from writing textbooks for the Delhi higher Secondary Schools. But it took the Prime Minister's intervention. Till then Hakikat Rai was in the Hindi course. It was not taught as part of the history course, but it was there in the Hindi course of Delhi schools. The NCERT has examined the history text books. There is hardly a single textbook which is not full of some direct or indirect communal interpretation, even books written by sturdy nationalists contain many of the communal interpretations.

Elements of communal view of history have pervaded and do pervade widely in the nationalist ranks also and people who are otherwise secular also unconsciously imbibe the communal interpretation of history. I will give you two examples. The perception of India having suffered under foreign rule for one thousand years is widely prevalent. Now the question arises, how have we suffered under foreign rule for one thousand years? This means, the day the rulers who were Muslim in religion landed in this country we came under foreign rule and Akbar, Jahangir, Allauddin, name them, they were all foreigners. But how could Aurangzeb or Shah Jehan or Jahangir or Akbar be

declared foreigners? Because their religion is Islam. I can understand if Babar is declared a foreigner. Some of these were descendants for three generations from Hindu mothers. If Muslim rule was foreign rule that could only be because they were Muslims, which is the height of communal ideology.

Take another myth that Indian society and culture had reached great heights in ancient India and declined in the Muslim period or, if you want to use the word medieval, in the medieval period. Call it whatever. But India came down gradually from great heights, there was decline in culture, social structure, philosophy, civilization as a whole, in the rule of the medieval rulers i.e., Muslim rulers, as they put it. How many secular people believe in this? In fact, a very large number of secular or nationalist minded believe this. In fact every secular Indian will recognize, as soon as he has had a serious introspection, how much his or her view of history has incorporated the communal interpretation of history and communal assumptions and communal ideology. In fact some of these are taken to be settled facts, and as Y.B. Chavan said, 'What is wrong with that'? If you question it they ask you what are you saying, you are saying something which is outlandish, these are of course, historical truths. How can anybody deny that there was a decline of Indian civilization in the medieval period?

I think the only communalists who will not subscribe to this view are Sikh communalists since their religion developed around the 16th century, but they also would say that the previous period was one of a decline of civilization and with the coming of Sikhs there was further development or a reversal of the trend of decline to once again an advance of human civilization.

More than the textbooks, the communal view of Indian history was and is being spread through poetry, dramas, historical novels. I mean, our historical novels, especially in Hindi, are nothing, but textbooks of communalism, short stories, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, more than textbooks, oral teaching by school teachers, who have themselves imbibed communalism. Even if Romila Thapar's textbook is prescribed, it is the imbibed communalism which is taught. Of course, in recent years it is being done through children's magazines. I used to read regularly a children magazine called *Chandamama* which sells probably more than any other in India. It is published in a number of Indian languages. Almost every issue would have one story in which there was a tyrannical Muslim *Nawab or Fauzadar or Subedar* who lusted after some property or woman or state of a Hindu Rajput or Thakur or Brahmin, whether in the South or in the North, and how heroically the hero or heroine fought and how the dirty fellow was defeated or killed. Children brought up on *Chandamama* cannot, but imbibe elements of communalism. There are many other children's magazines. The National Catholic Schools run by the RSS are the biggest chain of elementary schools in the country. They also publish a

large number of children's magazines and literature. Catholic textbooks and Catholic schools are another nursery of a communal interpretation of history, though at a different level.

Above all, such interpretation is spread through the public platform, i.e., the Sunday Arya Samaj, gatherings of Muslims or Christians or others, public meetings, *Shakhas* and so on. It is the oral interpretation which is more vicious because it is difficult to check it. Interestingly, an integrated and blatant communal view of history at the level of research of full-fledged scholarship was rarely found in India before 1947, except in the hands of the British historians of the 19th century. In the 20th century there was hardly any serious research which was fully communal in form. Even the writings of the great historian, Jadunath Sarkar, which have many communal elements, were not based upon a communal interpretation of history. A historian who was to burgeon forth as the major popularizer at the text-book level of communal interpretation was Ashirwadi Lal Srivastava. His Ph.D thesis and his post-Ph.D thesis, two books, were free of communalism, though he was a communalist. At the scholarly level if one put forward a communal interpretation then one was likely to be looked down upon. This was because, the intelligentsia was basically secular and nationalist and forward upon any communalism or communal interpretation. It was only after 1947 that a full-fledged communal interpretation of history has developed both in India and in Pakistan. Quite often, the same historians who wrote often in a secular fashion before 1947 came out in their true colours after 1947, when communalism became much more respectable in our society. Of course, as history spread the communal interpretation of history also spread. I think this is one of the most important reasons for a sudden spurt of communalism after 1960, and it is growing rapidly because education has been spreading very rapidly all over the country.

Assumptions of British Historians

Though often adopting dramatically opposite and hostile positions, the two communal interpretations of history had adopted basically the same historiographic framework, same premises, same assumptions. Often the only difference is that the other community is declared to be the villain. Moreover, as J.S. Grewal pointed out, quite often the two communal interpretations and generalizations were based upon earlier generalizations put forward by British historians. The British historians had four major considerations. Firstly, they assumed that wherever, there were two religions, there was bound to be conflict. When the British historians were writing on India, Britain had just gone through over two hundred years of Catholic-Protestant conflicts. Hence the generalization that if Catholics and Protestants could not settle with each other and killed each other for centuries, inspite of the fact that they were

products of the same religion, i.e., Christianity, then how could Hindus and Muslims, professing two religions, be at peace with each other. This was an inference drawn from their own history.

Secondly, the British were out to prove that India had always been ruled by foreigners, so that their own (foreign) rule may not impinge on the conscience of the Indians.

Thirdly, the British historians were keen to prove that British rule had liberated the Indians, and that meant liberated the Hindus from Muslim tyranny.

Fourthly, after 1858, especially once the national movement began, in the eighteen-eighties onwards, the most important justification that the British gave for the continuation of their rule in India was that there is Hindu-Muslim conflict and if they left India, there would be chaos, with one against the other. Therefore, the British historians inevitably emphasized Hindu-Muslim conflict in medieval India in order to show that Hindus and Muslims had never lived together and, therefore, as civilized rulers they were forced to stay in this country in order to prevent this conflict from re-emerging, as it had gone on for centuries.

I would like to give two quotations from the preface by the leading British historian of medieval India Charles Elliot to the history of India as told by Indian historians, which he discussed. He wrote in 1849 of the 'few glimpses we have, even among the extracts of this single volume, of Hindus slain for disputing with Mohammadans, of general prohibitions against processions, worship of other measures of this sort, of idols mutilated, of temples razed, of forcible conversions and marriages, of proscriptions and confiscations, of murders and massacres, of the sensuality'. You must have already come to know, or will come to know, that one of the basic communal stereotypes that developed was that a Muslim is sensually a rapist that a women should be afraid of him, that there is something intensely sensuous, as he puts it – which is a Victorian word for sexuality. You must also be knowing how Hindu communalism has gradually transferred the Muslim stereotypes to the Sikhs, 'and drunkenness of the tyrants who enjoined them'.

So all the themes of solid communal interpretation are present here – murder, rape, confiscation, destruction of temples, killings. He said, this is the chronicle of Muslim rule in India, in the very first volume. All the eight volumes do nothing but that. He also frankly confessed his motive which is not usually given even in his books on historiography. We are indebted to Prof. Mohammad Abbi who dug this up in London. It is the unpublished introduction which later he thought it wise not to put down in print. What was his motive in publishing this history? It was 'to make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages of British rule and to make the bombastic

babus' – by which he meant the nationalists who were emerging – 'to see the reality of free British India and thus stop their incipient critique of British rule'. The motive was clear that Hindus at least should not criticize British rule because they should know that the British were their liberators from this type of Muslim rule.

It was not the past which produced communalism, it is the communalism of today which produced the communal interpretation of history of the past. That is, to justify present day communalism the past was reinterpreted in communal terms. Therefore, communalists interpreted and adopted an interpretation of the past, by which feelings of fear, insecurity and separateness could be aroused among the Indian people.

Historical Memory of the People: A Cliche

One of the very popular clichés of the communal historian is 'the historical memory of the people'. People have to historical memory of Muslim oppression and tyranny. Quite often what is called historical memory is invented. If for 100 years a communal interpretation of history is taught, after four or five generations certainly people start believing it and they think it is their historical memory. Historical memory is a very tricky affair. A historian who did research in the history of Punjab in the twentieth century, found that the peasants did not know when what happened. They could at the most say 'this happened in the year in which Bhagat Singh was hanged', and so on. They had no memory of the 19th century. They did not even know when their land was lost, unless the land was lost by the father or the grandfather. But if the grandfather's father had lost land they did not even know that they were landowners once. They have no conception of what is hundred years. Therefore, this 'historical memory' is quite often invented.

Secondly, historical memory is very easy to co-literate as well as generate. It is not accidental that Hitler talked about history written in the blood of the Germans, the historical memory of twelve hundred years before when Germans used to rule. Highly educated Germans began to believe that they had a historical memory. I will give you a very good example of it.

When I was a small child my grandmother – she was born around 1860 or 1855 – used to tell us that her grandmother used to narrate stories about *Sikhashahi*, Sikh tyranny. In our house there was a false ceiling where children would love to go, but even children had to bend down to go there. She used to say that this style of housing came up, because when Sikh soldiers used to come and plunder, the children and women would be put in the ceiling and they would search and go away without knowing that there was a false ceiling in the house. So my grandmother's historical memory was of *Sikhashahi,* and

this was the memory of the people of that area, because after the defeat of Sansar Chand, *Sikhashahi* had taken place.

On the other hand, that area had never been conquered by Muslims. Akbar did not come. Jehangir came upto to Kangra area, but went back. Once Kangra rajas accepted his suzerainty by paying the minimum tribute, he did not think this Pahari area worth conquering. Therefore, there was no Muslim invasion of Kangra. But there was a Sikh invasion of Kangra. If you go to my generation there is no such historical memory of *Sikhashahi*. We had a solitary memory of Muslim tyranny. In Kangra which is now the base of the Jana Sangh, where the Arya Samaj system of schools came up very early, we were part of Muslim tyranny, not of Sikh tyranny. Today, if you go to Kangra and carry out a survey you will find that a large number of people who believe in Hindu communalism now revive the memory of my grandmother's grandmother.

So what are these historical memories? These are generated, these are obliterated and communal ideologues have been playing with historical memory as ideologues have done the world over. Of course, there can be historical memories, I am not denying that. But one has to be very careful in looking at what is called a historical memory.

Another example of this is Bengal, where the historical memory was that of the Maharattas, the Bargis, where mothers used to sing songs to the children or telling them, 'Drink your milk, otherwise the Bargi will come'. In my area it was put as 'Pathan will come', though a Pathan had never come to Kangra. But Bargis will come because Maharattas had invaded Bengal in the eighteen-forties and plundered it and there was this memory. The national movement went out of its way to preach the Shivaji cult in order to remove this memory and succeeded in doing so even within the living memory of one generation or two generations. Instead, the mythology of Muslim tyranny came up.

So much historical memories are quite often the creation of communal ideology and vice-versa.

Constituents of Communal History

What were the basic constituents of the communal view of Indian history? I will narrate what were the constituents of communal history, not at the scholarly level, but much more at the popular level. At the scholarly level there was not much of writing of communal history in the 20th century but there was semi-communal writing. Even R.C. Majumdar wrote scientific history and Ishtiaq Ahmed Qureshi wrote scientific history when he was in India before the partition.

(a) Antagonism between Hindus and Muslims: A Historical Fact?

First of all, medieval India history is seen and portrayed primarily as a long story of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Hindus and Muslims were declared to be permanently divided into separate camps whose mutual relations were bitter, distrustful and hostile. Let me read out to you two extracts from contemporary political leaders, one called Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the other from V.D. Savarkar.

In 1940, Jinnah said: 'The history of the last 1200 years has failed to achieve unity and has witnessed during the eighties India always divided into Hindu India and Muslim India.'

V.D. Savarkar in his famous book *Hindutva* asserted: "The day Mohammad of Gaznavi crossed the Indus, that day the conflict of life and death began which ended only with Abdalli and day after day, decade after decade, centuries after centuries, the ghastly conflict continued.'

In post-1947 Indian scholars took up this theme. R.C. Majumdar wrote in the introduction to his volume *Delhi Sultanate*, (which is in history courses all over the country) the fifth volume of the History and Culture of the *Indian People*, published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in 1957, 'Medieval India remained permanently divided into two powerful units which did not prove amenable to a fusion or even any close permanent coordination.'

Ishtiaq Ahmed Qureshi in Pakistan, in his famous work, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent*, says that 'At all times the Muslims of the subcontinent were resolutely refusing to be assimilated to the local population and made constant efforts to maintain their distinctive character.' How could they refuse to be assimilated to the local population when they were the local population? How many Muslims came from outside? The majority were local people and were local converts. The conclusion is, 'this medieval struggle which was a perpetual struggle of hostile communities was then carried over to the 19th and 20th centuries on a modern basis and served as the basis as well as the justification of the communal antagonism.'

Also then, modern politics could only be around this notion, as embedded deep in British writings and its politics from Dufferin till Mountbatten. Therefore, if the Congress claims that it is a national organization, British writers, as well as the communalists, must say that it is a hypocrisy, it is a Hindu organization. Therefore, if congress claims to be secular in Punjab, they do not attack it by saying that it is communal, because it has both Hindu and Sikh communalists. The Sikh communalists declare, and even some others, that the Congress is basically a Hindu body. Why? Because nobody can be either jointly communal or secular. This is inherent in Indian politics, in Indian history, that all politics has to be around a community or caste, and anybody

who says it is not, is either hypocritical or un-Indian, i.e., he is working with a foreign ideology of some sort of other.

This was the basis on which the RSS declared that Muslims were the 'old enemies' of the Hindus. In 1939 M.S. Golwalkar, popularly known as Guru Golwalkar, condemned the Indian nationalists, Gandhi and others, as enemies of Hindus, for de-nationalizing the Hindus because 'they have begun to class ourselves as Hindus with our old invaders and foes under the outlandish name Indian.' Then he went on to add, 'the result of this poison is too well-known. We have allowed ourselves to be duped into believing our foes to be our friends and with our own hands are undermining true nationality'.

The Muslim communalists readily accepted and propagated this notion. Even certain secular persons who worked for Hindu-Muslim unity otherwise, tended to accept this notion of political antagonism between Hindus and Muslims throughout the medieval period. Of course, one corollary for this was that Hindu communalists have tended completely to underplay other social tensions in India. The British did not forget that. The whole of the 18th century Maharashtra history was interpreted as, Brahmins versus Maharatta. Peshwa rule was seen as an effort to impose Brahmin rule over the Maharattas.

(b) Medieval Muslim Rule – A Foreign Rule?

The communalists described the rule by medieval Muslim rulers as foreign rule and therefore Muslims, as permanent foreigners, as an alien element in Indian society. As I said earlier, this was basically because of their religion. A Muslim was a foreigner because he was a Muslim. Hindu Indians, for example, Bengalis, Punjabis, Gujaratis, Malayalis, as soon as they changed their religion, became foreigners in the land. They might have lived here for centuries, but the day they get converted, their nationality also changes and they become foreigners. Because Islam was founded outside India, therefore, it was declared to be permanently a foreign religion. This is an ideology which is preached even today.

All this was very logically structured, Savarkar and Golwalkar were the two major ideologues of communalism. By the way it is not accidental, that no BJP worker will mention the quotations I am giving from Golwalkar today, though in the *shakhas* they continue to make such statements and even worse. But, ideologically, Savarkar and Golwalkar defined nationalism in such a fashion as to exclude Muslims, Christians, Parsees and Jews. The basic definition was, Indians are those whose holy places are inside India, which means only religions which originated in India can be Indian. This was done for two reasons – communal reasons – but Savarkar had another reasons also. He was an atheist and so he could not have a religious definition of nationhood. Secondly, there are so many sects among Hindus that it was impossible to give

any definition without excluding somebody or the other, especially Jains and Buddhists and may be Sikhs also. Therefore, the definition given is, you are a Hindu if your religion is born in India and if your holy places are in India. Therefore, Muslims are foreigners because their holy places are outside India. Christians are foreigners, because their holy places are outside India. This was the doctrine which Savarkar created in Hindutva and Golwalkar borrowed from him, called *punyabhoomi.* You are a nationalist if you regard India as a *punyabhoomi*, and it is a *punyabhoomi* if your holy places are inside this country.

In order to prove that Muslims were foreigners, it was argued that they refused to be absorbed in the national mainstream. I have heard many secular people say that all this nonsense should be stopped about attacking Muslims, but first they should get absorbed in India. What is the meaning of this? Are Muslims not absorbed? A communalist really means that Muslims, in order to be Indians, should give up Islam, or they should accept the notion of *punyabhoomi* – knowing fully well that no Muslim can ever accept the notion of *punyabhoomi*, because he would not call any part of the world *punyabhoomi.*

The communalists constantly bracket Muslim rule and British rule as foreign rule, and so the talk of a thousand years of slavery.

Let me give you two examples. In 1931 there was this infamous Kanpur communal riot in which the great nationalist Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi while trying to intervene was killed. The congress appointed a riots inquiry committee. Sunder Lal wrote the report, Bhagwan Das, Purshottamdas Tandon and others, contributed in it. They pointed out, that this propaganda that Muslim rule was foreign rule had succeeded in producing a hypnotic effect on the whole nation. Even in the thirties this was very widely believed, as I said, by nationalists. Of course, M.S. Golwalkar, in 1939, drew the appropriate conclusions: The non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and language. This is very interesting, Hindu language also. In March, 1984, 130 leading intellectuals of India, very fine people, people whom I think I admire most, issued an appeal to the government and people to solve the Punjab problem, and one of the points made was that the Sikhs' pride in their history and their language should be appreciated. We come across the notion of 'Sikh language' also. This was believed in by even most secular people.

Golwalker has written: "The non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea other than those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, that is, they must not only give up their attitude of

intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age long traditions, but must also cultivate the positive attitude of live and devotion instead – in one word, they must cease to be foreigners – or they may stay in this country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizens' rights.' He warned the non-Hindus: 'There are only two courses open to foreign elements, either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture or to live at the sweet will of the national race' (that is, Hindus).

This view that Muslims are foreigners in India was found quite acceptable to Muslim communalists, but in a different way. If the idea was to show that Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations, races, cultures, everything as Golwalkar said, was acceptable. Because that would mean that Muslim communal ideology was justified and therefore, they could not live together with the Hindus and must have separate homelands. Thus asserted Jinnah Sahib in 1941.

One of the basic aspects of communal ideology was and is the view that in medieval India Muslims constituted the ruling class, a dominant group, while Hindus were the ruled or the dominated or subject people. Both communalists accepted and propagated this notion. The Hindu communalists bemoaned this and Muslim communalists glorified it. Of course, this had no basis in reality, as J.S. Grewal, has shown that Hindus were a part of the ruling classes, from the Zamindar upwards, and the overwhelming majority of Muslims were poor peasants or artisans throughout the medieval period. In this bureaucracy there were more Muslims that there were Hindus. But an overwhelming majority, 98 or 99 per cent of Muslims and Hindus, belonged to the subject race, so called, that is they were dominated economically, politically, socially, culturally.

Another dimension of this is that the Hindu communalists assert that Hindus have a memory of being humiliated for eight centuries when they were ruled by foreigners, i.e., Muslims, and now Hindus was to get out of that humiliating situation. Muslims communalists assert 'We have the memory of the glorious past and we are being humiliated now'. Several corollaries follow from these views. First of all, is the notion that political power and distribution of political power in India has always been based on religion. There is no basis for that in medieval history at all. The state has been defined by the religion of the ruler; it was James Mill who divided the periods of Indian history by the religion of the rulers. The ancient period was called Hindu rule, medieval period was called Muslim rule. But what was the third period called? Christian rule? British rule? Suddenly the religion of the ruler ceased to be the defining criterion. In fact there is only one major book which used the phrase, 'Christian rule in India', and that was written by a Christian, Major B.D. Basu, who was a very superior nationalist, and he said 'You people are trying to

force Christianity on India' and so branded it as 'Christian rule', in order to abuse it. But the British were very careful in not calling it Christian rule.

The assumption was that in India the religion of the ruler defines history, but we are modern, so in our case it is defined by our nationality. Of course, there was political opportunism involved in this. Consequently, the notion of Hindu State, Muslim State, Sikh State; Muslim history, Hindu history, Sikh history was widely propagated. Today even in the most secular universities, there is a course called Sikh history. How can history be Sikh. It is not called the history of the Sikh religion, which one can understand. Ranjit Singh and Sikh State – Why because he happened to be a Sikh? Muslim State because the religion of Akbar and Aurangazeb was Islam. Similarly, Hindu State. The corollary is that in India political and economic power had always been around religion.

There is another corollary at the popular level, that the basic objective of the medieval state, whose ruler was Muslim, was the propagation of Islam by every possible means. This notion is repeated in text books without any authentic historical evidence and most often in the oral version of history. So the story is told of conversions on a fantastic scale – completely ignoring the simple fact that the only area where the so-called Muslim rule was prolonged was around Delhi. It is not interesting that Muslims form a very small minority in this area? Nobody asks this simple question. Muslims are a majority in East Bengal, where the so-called Muslim rule was only for ten or fifteen years. The Muslim population is sizeable in number in Malabar, where there has never been, even in Aurangazeb's period a centralized Muslim kingdom, or Muslim rule. On the other hand, in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, even in Punjab – it was not the areas adjoining Delhi where there were Muslims, but areas far away from Delhi to the west of Lahore, that Muslims were a Majority. But there is this notion that the basic mission of the Muslim rulers was to spread Islam somehow or the other. That is why Romila Thapar was criticized when she denied that Mohammad Ghazni's purpose was to spread Islam and said rather it was to plunder.

By the same reason the Hindu communal historians described all autonomous or semi-autonomous states ruled by Hindu rajas and chiefs as Hindu kingdoms, - the Maharatta Empire, the Rajput rajas, Jat zamindars. They were all declared to be defenders of the Hindu religion. Later, the Sikh State and Sikh movement was declared to be for the protection of Hinduism. The simple historical fact was forgotten that the Mughals moved into Punjab against Guru Gobind Singh, because he was engaged in wars with the hindu rajas in the Shimla and Kangra Hills, and they appealed to Aurangazeb, 'our grandfather took us under your protection and we have been paying tribute; now the time has come to protect us and defend us.' History shows–which probably it does, I am not a

historian of Punjab – that in this period Guru Gobind Singh took up the cause of the oppressed against the oppression of the Pahari Rajas, Hindu Rajas. But the Mughals did move in at that stage. Therefore, to talk about the struggle of the seventeenth century as a Sikh-Muslim struggle is only to see the religion of the rules of the struggle.

Similarly, with Banda Bahadur Singh's struggle, which is one of the most glorious popular struggles fought in northern India. The overwhelming majority of Banda Bahadur Singh's followers were people fighting against the zamindars and big money-lender merchants, who were backed by the might of the Mughal empire. But it was declared to be Sikh-Muslim struggle, because Bahadur Shah was Muslim and Banda Bahadur Singh was a Sikh. Every real or imaginary battle between a Hindu zamindar and a Muslim overlord or jagirdar was declared a battle of religious glory and patriotism. The rebellions of the 17th and 18th centuries were portrayed neither as peasants' struggles nor as the struggles of local rulers who spread their influence, like Maharattas for example, but were declared to be wars between Hindus and Muslims or struggles to protect Hinduism or Islam.

Another major element is – I will not discuss that, you are very familiar with it, - that the rule' of Muslim rulers was full of oppression, raping, temple destruction, forced conversions, etc.

The Muslim stereotype of a cruel person was structured in the process. The myth of Muslim tyranny was used to deny the positive aspects of medieval polity, economy and culture. Muslim communalists denied all this and said all this was a lie and in their history they emphasized superstition among Hindus, caste inequality, untouchability and what not. If Hindu communalists had one version, the Muslim communalists had another.

I must very briefly tell you, how the Sikh communalists gave a twist to this. This came in the novels of Bhai Vir Singh which were based upon the fundamental Hindu communal notion that Hindus were oppressed, their women used to be raped by Muslims. But it this was all, the one was only repeating Hindu communalism. So something was added, and that was 'Hindu cowardice'. In a novel, the Muslim is tyrannizing the Hindu, but the Hindu does not defend himself; he is a coward, he runs away, he gets converted. But the same Hindu when he becomes a Sikh and puts on a beard fights like a lion. Hence the myth of the 'sava lakh', a myth which may prove very costly to this country. A myth was created that the Sikh was the defender of the Hindu religion. Why did the Sikh have to be that? Because the Hindu was a coward. So the cowardly Hindu could not protect the Brahmin and the cow and the Brahmin and the cow had to be protected by the Sikh. In some of the novels

the Hindus come off quite badly. So you get another stereotype being created and spread.

Fortunately, Hindu communalism has not spread that much as yet to Himachal Pradesh. But if it does you may rest assured that historical research will be done and Sikh tyranny would be picked up and all sorts of history would be written about what happened in Kangra.

(c) Myth of the Golden Age

Above all, communalism used the myth of great heights of civilization and culture achieved in ancient India and their consistent decay from the day the Muslim rulers conquered this country. Even those who do not like notions of tyranny, rape and all that tend to accept this. All achievement is associated with the ancient period. Then progress of civilization stopped, decay and decadence began and now Hindu resurgence has to take place again. This was basic, if you had no rise, there could be no decline and, therefore, the communal version of ancient history became even more important, that the medieval version. We find that, not the secular historian of medieval India, but the secular historian of ancient India was attacked in a much stronger fashion. R.S. Sharma's books was banned during the Janata Period, because he had said that ancient Aryans coveted each other's wives, gambled, sported, drank and did the unholiest of things. They ate beef also. Romila Thapar had also written that Aryans ate beef. When the book was made a text book by Delhi Administration, a rumpus was raised in parliament by Jana Sanghis supported by the Congress that this passage must be punged. I must pay great tribute to Late Babu Jagjivan Ram who was Defence Minister. He got up and said, 'Why should it be expunged? You think that beef eating is bad?' 'Yes yes, it is an insult to Hindu civilization.' He said, 'Then my people are not Hindus, because harijans eat beef even today in large part of the country. You have kept them so poor; mutton is costly, beef is cheap. Harijans are Hindus and they eat beef. What is wrong about it? Do you think it is a matter of shame?' The discussion died down and the book was not withdrawn.

Therefore, the crucial role of ancient Indian history. There could be no critique of the ancient Indian period. You could even tolerate praise of Akbar or Jehangir or Shah Jehan, but not a critique of ancient Indian history.

First, no anthropologist or historian will tell you that no civilization can rise and then decay for a thousand years. Civilizations are not like that. More important, even if you look at culture and civilization what is that religion which is widespread in India as a whole, particularly in northern India? Ramayana's religion, Tulsi's religion. Who knows Valmiki's Ramayana? Who knows the Sastras and Upanishads and Vedas? People know the Hindu religion as the Ramayana religion. But the Ramayana is a product of the medieval

period. All the popular bhakti literature by which the Hindus from north to south live are the product of the medieval period; not only the Sikh religion and its literature, but all bhakti literature, in fact all popular religious literature of today. Except Tamil, all the major Indian languages for which we fight today, are products of this period. Hindi certainly is a product of this period. Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi are all products of this period.

Can it be a period of decline in which the great Indian languages were born and produced their literature? Then all this literature is the literature of decline. We have to go back to Tulsidas for good literature. All the rest is fraudulent literature, second-hand. Poetry, language, drama, music, nearly all that we call Indian music today is the product of this period; all that we call dance today is the product of this period. Most of our architecture, and painting in particular, are the products of this period. Do you know that tailoring is a product of this period? Do you know that there was no *charkha* before this? The most Indian of Indian things, the *charkha*, was a product of this period. People used to spin the yarn only with the *takli*. What a massive progress of civilization? I think the *charkha* was as great a progress as the motor car or atomic energy, in terms of human development.

Take food. What is the distinguishing mark of Indian food? Chillies? Chillies came to India in the medieval period. Can you imagine Indian food without *mirach*? Tomato, potato, and all the major fruits, apple, peaches, pears, chikkoo, grapes, all came in the medieval period. Our original fruits are the glorious mango and banana. That is why in South India and eastern India people still eat the jackfruit, which I think is a lovely fruit, but Punjabis when they travel to South and see people eating *kathal* fruit, say 'Ah, uncivilized people, how can they be eating this fruit?' This is our fruit. It is very tasty, by the way. But that apart, these are the three fruits of India. Can you imagine a civilization like this being declared to be on the decline? I have only touched upon some aspects. If I am speaking as a northern Indian, I cannot imagine living without the poetry that was born in the 18th century and 19th century and we call these the periods of decadence.

Muslim communalist also accepted this notion of a golden age. But since they were not a part of ancient India and there was no Islam at that time they went to the Calipha's age in Western Asia for their golden age. Since they could not accept that in the medieval period there was a decline of civilization, they went to the 19the century and a whole mythology was developed that Muslims and Islam had declined in the 19th century in India, the glorious rise and then a decline.

This glorification of the past has always been a hallmark of all modern national movements. When people are ruled by outsiders, the subjects people seek

strength in proving their superiority in the past to assert their superiority in relation to their foreign rulers. When the Greek movement for independence began after over three centuries of rule by Turks, the Greeks traced their ancient history and said, 'We were great once and therefore, we are great now'. Austria ruled over Italy. Italians of the 18th and 19th centuries produced a great myth, 'We were the builders of the great Roman Empire'. The Irish did the same. All national movements hark back to the past to look for periods of glory. You must recognize, that no people can fight, unless they have self-confidence, and feel that to be ruled is a bad thing.

The problem in India was that when one region of Karnataka believed that it had a great past, another region of Andhra believed it had a great past. Everybody began discovering great heroes of the past, making all sorts of claims. This was an extremely dangerous thing to do in India.

During colonial times, academic people, particularly those working in DAV schools and colleges or Islamic schools and colleges under strict control could not give expression to their nationalism by praising Rani Jhansi lest one lost one's job within no time. One could not praise Tipu Sultan either. But expression to nationalism could be given safely, by referring to tyranny in medieval India and the fight against it. The motive might have been to give expression to nationalism, but it gave birth to communalism. This what I described as vicarious nationalism.

I will illustrate this by giving a classic example of Bankim Chandra again. He was a very tall intellectual. He published his first version of Anandamath in a journal. The edge of the sanyasi struggle was against the British, because this was a historic rebellion that occurred in the seventeen-seventies and eighties. That was the historical basis of Anandamath. The author was politely told that when he published it in a book form, he might like to make some changes. The change which Bankim made in the second edition was to turn the edge against Muslim tyranny, instead of against the British, Bankim Chandra was a Deputy Collector and he wanted to safeguard his job. This was the fate of a large number of academic intellectuals. These intellectuals gave expression to their nationalism by glorifying the struggles of medieval India or by glorifying the culture of ancient or medieval India in this manner.

Nationalist Approach to History: A Critique

What is the difference between nationalist and scientific history? The nationalists did wonderful research work in Allahabad and Lucknow and other places in bringing out the facts of history. For example, one fact repeatedly reinforced was to brand one of the participants in a fight as nationalist and the other kafir. To illustrate this point it will not be out of place to give the following example. A struggle was waged between kafirs and mujahideen and

eighty thousand kafirs were despatched – and so the historian drew the conclusion that Muslim fighters were fighting a jehad and eighty thousand Hindus were killed, and they were killed because they were Hindus. This went on till later historians discovered something. When the fight was between two Muslim rulers, one Muslim ruler's soldiers were Rajputs and on the other side there were Muslim rulers and Muslim soldiers, but when the historian wrote on behalf of the Mughals, he said that eighty thousand kafirs were despatched. First, it was discovered that it had to be a multiple of eight, eight thousand or eighty thousand. The other point was, whoever was defeated was kafir.

So nationalists did wonderful service. But their problem was that they were out to prove that there was no social conflict in medieval India. I have myself heard Banarsi Prasad Saxena say that it was a total lie, there was never any Muslim tyranny, there was never any attack on temples, forced conversions, communal riots, nothing, that this was all lies by imperialist and communalist historians. But the fact was that there were social tensions and social conflicts. Rulers sometimes used religion also. *Jazia* was imposed and temples were razed. Scientific history says, do not see them as struggles between religious communities. Study their politics, socio-economic, cultural and administrative basis.

Concluding Remarks

Religion was only the vehicle of communal politics. It was neither the cause nor the conclusion, only a channel or instrument. Religion was used to disguise or mask or to promote social conflicts which arose in non-religious spheres. In other words, religion served politics which arose in spheres other than religion. Communalism, therefore, did not originate in religious differences, but religious differences were used by the communalists to define ideology and politics. Let me illustrate this with an analogy.

There were Christian Germans in Germany in the nineteen-twenties and also Jewish Germans. Some followed Christianity and some the Jewish religion. But did the Nazi ideology, i.e., Christian Germans were the true Germans and Jewish Germans were the enemies of Germany, had its basis in religious differences? No. The Nazi ideology used their perceived religious difference to create an ideology of anti-semetism leading to racialism. The religious differences were not seen by historians, political scientists or sociologists as a cause.

In the nineteen-thirties several secular people challenged the communalists to come out with any concrete demands which pertained only to their community, and they could not, except for the protection of religion and sometimes vaguely of culture. But what is this culture? If you are in and

around RSS, they talk about *Bharatiya Sanskriti*, but if you ask them to define it, they refuse, because as soon as they try to define it they get into trouble. Is the caste system part of *Bharatiya Sanskriti*? If it is not, then what is *Bharatiya Sanskriti*?

Similarly, Muslim communalism in the thirties could not find any concrete demands to make, except reservation of jobs and assembly seats or protection of religion. No other concrete demand was possible. Later young people joined the Muslim League and said they must have a programme and so they evolved a programme. It was no different from the Congress programme. Protection of religion was in the Congress programme too.

Communalists could not produce any list except of those rights which are already there in the British constitution, the American Constitution, or the constitution that the secular bodies were demanding, again, except for –and this was accepted by the nationalist also – defence of language and culture. The communalists by language meant Urdu or Hindi while the nationalists meant every mother tongue. Similarly cultures.

Religion did not cause extreme communalism or fascist communalism, but it was used as a massive ideological mobilizing factor. That is why communalism could become a mass movement only after 1939, and particularly after 1945, when religion was imported into the ideology. For example, the Muslim League became a mass movement only when they raised the slogan of Islam in danger and not Muslims in danger. From 1940 a man like Mohammad Ali Jinnah went around preaching that Islam is in danger and accused Gandhi of pursuing politics with the purpose of destroying Islam, from 1919 onwards.

Hindu communalism too tried to raise this slogan in the thirties and forties, especially, 'Hindu culture in danger', but also Hindu religion, 'Hindutva' in danger – not religion but something called Hinduness. But in a way I think this country has been saved by the fact that Hindu society is so caste ridden that the Hindu responds much more to brahminism in danger or jat in danger or bhoomihar in danger rather that Hinduism in danger. Also, because of their size and history, Hindus are too heterodox, too many religions, too many sects, and so the slogan of Hinduism in danger has been extremely difficult to raise. They respond to Hindus are in danger. They do not respond to the slogan Hinduism is in danger, the way Muslims respond to the slogan that Islam is in danger or Sikhs respond to the slogan Sikhism is in danger.

That is why we find that Hindu communalists, in the twenties and thirties and also in the last two years, have been trying to increase the Hindu consciousness of the Hindus. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad taking Ganga *jal* from one end of the country to the other, was an effort to increase the Hinduness of the Hindus. This has been one of dilemmas that Hindu communalism has

faced and why Hindu communalism has not been able to acquire the same force in the country as a whole, as Muslim communalism or Sikh communalism has been. The day Hindus also become more Hindu, then alone this appeal can penetrate into their psyche. That, for example, explains why, at least in the Hindi areas, the *Ram Janmabhoomi* issue has been very clearly taken up. For the first time they have been able to take up a religious issue which has a wide appeal to Hindus irrespective of their sect. They think they can use this issue to mobilize Hindus around the slogan that Hinduism is in danger.

How could religion be brought in so easily? Because Indian society and culture being backward. It is an aspect of social development that the more undeveloped and backward a people, the greater is the possibility of religion paying a crucial role in their lives. As societies develop religion plays a lesser role in it. But as modern society develops, as capitalism or socialism or whatever develops, as life becomes more complex, then the struggle begins. Should they now continue to bring religion into the new areas of life also? It is very interesting that the purely religious or theological content of communalism has been very meagre. There is hardly any religious or theological religious content in communal ideology. K.B. Krishna was to point out that in Punjab, Muslims went into moneylending though moneylending was forbidden by Islam. Obviously, they were not being good Muslims. Having gone into moneylending they would use communalism to compete with other moneylenders and condemn Hindu moneylenders as dishonest and ask their co-religionists not to go to them, but come to them – for a very un-Islamic activity.

Arya Samaj is against all idolatory and yet it took up in the biggest way in Punjab and western UP the cause of cow slaughter. Cow is holy. How is cow holy when all gods and goddesses were abused by Arya Samajist Swami Dayanand?

Arya Samaj has not published Hindi or Urdu translations of the vedas, but they have spent lakhs of rupees in protecting the cow, because communalism hardly has any religious content.

Take V.D. Savarkar. This is fascinating. V.D. Savarkar was publicly an atheist. Even when he was the Hindu Mahasabha leader he used to publicly announce and advertise lectures on atheism, on why god is not there and why all religions are false. That is why when defining *Hindutva*, he said, *Hindutva* is not defined by religion and tried to define it in a non-religious term: *Punyabhoomi*.

As we all know, W.C. Smith, in his book, has shown that most of the Muslim communal leaders were hardly religious. Mohammad Ali Jinnah was an agnostic and believed in no religion or god. But he was the main leader of

communalism since at least 1928, definitely after 1937. On the other hand, Gandhi, Maulana Azad, the maulvis and maulanas of Jamait-e-ul Ulema-i-Hind were profoundly religious people. But they were not at all communal.

In other words, the religious content of communalism was virtually nil.

That brings me to the second aspect. There is one aspect of religion which is related to communalism, though in a very complex way. Not religion, but religiosity is a major contributory factor a communalism. Religiosity means, as Nehru defined in the thirties, having too much of religion in your lives. More scientifically, religiosity means religion overflowing from a private spiritual belief system into the secular areas of life. That is, religion tends to engulf a personality and start affecting areas with which religion has nothing to do. A person who has too much religiosity is not a communalist, but too much religiosity enables the religious factor to come into politics, creates a certain receptivity to communalism.

A man who is too much engulfed by religion readily accepts that it should also intrude into politics, into culture, into society. In other words, religiosity makes a person an easy prey to communal ideology. It is not communalism, but it opens one to communalism. Religiosity tends to get out of hand. It has no limits. Without even wanting to one may cross the religious boundary into communalism.

Moreover, without religiosity, the religious fervor cannot be aroused and communalism cannot become a mass phenomenon without religious fervour. Religiosity also makes it difficult to oppose communalism ideologically because, ideologically, the basic element of secularism is that the secular field must be kept separate from religion. This is the strongest ideological weapon. It is very difficult to tell a person that this is the limit of religion. That is why communalists make every effort to promote religiosity and to promote the hold of religion over the popular mind. That is why fundamentalism is not yet communalism, but all communalists try to promote fundamentalism even when they personally do not believe in it. They try to promote the hold of religion over the popular mind. That is why the Vishwa Hindu Parishad with the Ganga *jal* taken on the head goes all over. That is why the *Ram Janmabhoomi* has come to last for three years. A rath was being taken in the villages of Avadh, with a 'Ram' in *hathkadi: '*I am a prisoner, I cannot enter my house.' Can you imagine what it does to an average religious person when he sees this? That was the time when others should have gone and said, "This is wrong, this is not true, Ram is not in *hathkadi'*. I must say that it was very late in the day, when the procession had already gone quite far, that some political leaders condemned it.

Similarly, communalism has been heightened by the fact that the *jagarans* have been going on for the last ten or twelve years. Consciously religiosity has been spread, as I said, by those who are anti-goddesses, who in schools and colleges teach 'do not worship idols' and yet preside over *bhagvati jagarans.* Suddenly, there has been an intense effort to spread religiosity. Communalism is not there, but to spread religiosity is to make people listen to religious preachings day in and day out. Gradually the personality gets softened up and communal ideology finds a ready reception.

One conclusion from this analysis is that it is not necessary to wage a struggle against religion or to fight against communalism. I am not a religious person. I oppose religion in thinking and all that. I may have my own reasons. Whoever comes in contact with me I may say to him that religion is unscientific. But as a secular person there is no need to attack religion as such. But there is every reason to go to the people and tell them, believe in any religion, any version of any religion, as your personal belief system, but, please, do not let it intrude into areas outside personal belief, and, therefore, do not have religiosity.

Secondly, all religions, belief systems and especially current belief systems, should be carefully examined and it is the duty of religious people to carry on a struggle against those elements of those religions which say religion must go beyond the bounds of personal thinking. Some people say that in some religions it is written that religion and politics cannot be separated. If this is so then it is the duty of people to say that this element or religion must go. For example, Catholicism says there can be no abortion, there can be no divorce. Catholics have struggled against this in the heartland of Catholicism, Italy, and got laws passed that you can have abortion and also divorce.

In other words, while one should not fight against religion for secularism, one may have to fight to cleanse the religion of certain elements of the religious ideology itself. To me the best approach was what Gandhi adopted in the twenties on the question of the scheduled castes, harijans. He did the same with women. He said caste oppression is not permitted in our *sastras* and he would quote the *sastras.* The other people said, you do not know *sastras*, here are *sastras* which prove that the caste system must be there, harijans must be there, oppose this theory but it is proved that the *sastras* sanction untouchability then I will oppose the *sastras* and amend them and change them.' Therefore, while there is no struggle against religion, it may become necessary to oppose certain elements of religion.

It is not accidental that those who were promoting communalism in modern India consciously encouraged religiosity. It is not accidental that from the very beginning, especially when British vice-chancellors and principals came to Aligarh University, religiosity was made a basic part of the curriculum of the

University. From the end of the 19th century onwards, religious instruction and spreading of certain religious notions was seen as a compulsory part of the university curriculum. The same was the case in Arya Samaj, Islamia and Sanatana Dharma institutions. In other words, those very forces which were also promoting communalism were sometimes independently and sometimes consciously, also encouraging religiosity at the same time.

MUSLIM DENOMINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNALISM

M.S. Agwani

The initial difficulty in investigating this subject is, of course, the problem of sources. Where do we look for data in regard to the origins and working of the Muslim denominational institutions? There are a few works which I have been able to lay my hands upon, and which I have consulted. I will give you a list of these at the outset, so that you can have an idea as to what I have not consulted. Those of you who have applied your minds to this problem may have come across many more sources, because much of the information on this subject lies scattered. One finds more information on this subject in the form of articles or pamphlets, some of which are very difficult to locate.

A Glance at sources

I have used sources which are relatively easily available. One of them is Maulvi Abul Hasanat Nadwi's books titled *Hindustan Ki Qadim Islami Dargahen* (Muslim Centres of Learning in Olden Times). Another is Maulana Syed Manazir Ahsan Gilani's *Hindustan Men Musalamanon Ka Nizam-i-Ta'lim-o-Tarbiat* (Muslim Educational System in India). This book was published in Delhi by Nadwat-u-Musannifin many years ago, and it is in two volumes. The third source that I have consulted is the special issue of a fortnightly journal published by Nadwat-ul-'Ulama of Lucknow. The name of the journal is *Ta'mir-i-Hayat*. In March-April 1984, it brought out a special issue which contains a number of papers presented at a seminar at the Nadwat-ul-'Ulama on *Madaris-i-'Arabia Ka Nisab-o-Nizam-i-ta'lim* (The syllabus and the System of education in the Arabic Madrasahs). The fourth source that I have consulted is Professor Mujib's book, *The Indian Muslims*. Mujib does not go into the details of Muslim education but he does offer a concise assessment of the Muslim educational system. Another interesting study is by an American scholar which was published recently. I refer to Barbara Daly Metcalf's *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900*. This, I think, is one of the best studies that I have come across on Deoband.

Definition of communalism

The second point I want to discuss at the very outset is: how do we define communalism? Karl Marx – who is better known for his definition of religion as the 'opium of the people' makes an indirect but perceptive observation on the

subject of communalism when he makes a distinction between the religious attitude to politics and the political attitude to religion. In a different context, the late President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt used this very argument in support of the case for separation of religion and politics. Nasser was not a Marxist. And he made the common sense observation that we should separate religion from politics for the simple reason that if we do not do so politics will dominate religion and destroy it. So, even for those who attach value and importance of religion, it is very important that they do not mix it up with politics.

I cannot say with any degree of confidence as to how, over the centuries, other religions have interacted with politics. But it you look at the history of Islam, you will find that after the death of Prophet Muhammad and, more particularly, after the first thirty years of Islam, it was politics that dominated religion in most of the Muslim societies, and not the other way round.

The Pre-British Pattern

I shall now come to the subject proper, namely the traditional system of Muslim education in India. I think it would be advisable to take a look at the Pre-British pattern of education among the Muslims. Broadly speaking, there were four ways in which one could learn. First, one could sit at the feet of an independent '*alim* (plural '*ulama*) – a person who had acquired knowledge of the religious sciences, of literature, of poetry. One who wanted to educate himself under his guidance could establish personal relationship with him. There was a rapport between the teacher and the student, and over the years, a student would learn from the 'alim. If a student was lucky and resourceful he would find an 'alim of fame as his teacher.

Secondly, one could go to a Sufi or a mystic for education. The mystic stayed at his *Khangah* and he had his circle disciples. Among the well-known mystics were Khwaja Nazamuddin, Khwaja Mo'inuddin Chishti, Khwaja Bakhtiar Kaki. There were many others who were not so well-known. Many of the Sufis were well-versed in religious sciences even though they did not share the attitude and the approach of the orthodox 'ulama. They gave greater importance to personal experience, to knowledge of God through meditation. Whereas orthodoxy emphasized outward observances of Islam – more particularly the rituals – the Sufi stressed the importance of inward experience. Some Sufis would even scoff at the external observances; others would not. But all of them paid greater attention to religion as a personal inward experience.

Thirdly, a prospective learner could go to (what one might call in modern terminology) the 'secular' system of education. This system, too, functioned more through individuals that institutions. Thus a master sculptor or a master builder, for example, would have a number of pupils working with him, and

while working with him, they would learn the art of building or sculpture. The same was true of other fields of studies such as astronomy, medicine, arts and crafts. This then was the secular system of education available to every one who wanted to acquire excellence in fields other than religion. This was also the system to which Hindus as well as Muslims turned for education. Those who taught were also drawn from different communities. The secular system of education was thus independent of religion.

Finally, there was the orthodox religious education of Muslims which consisted of *maktabs* (elementary schools) and *madrasahs* or centres of higher learning. There were two types of *maktabs* in pre-British India. *Maktabs* were commonly attached to some mosque or accommodated in a private house, where a Muslim '*alim*, reasonable conversant with the basics of religion, would hold the fort. These *maktabs* were meant only for boys. Girls were expected to learn at home, if at all. Pupils at the *maktabs* were taught to read the Quran. They were also taught how to offer prayers and were given some elementary information about fasting, *zakat* (poor tax) and pilgrimage. These *maktabs* mostly served the common people.

There were special *maktabs*, too. These were meant for the children of the wealthy and the influential. Here, in addition to reading of the Quran and instruction about prayers, they would also learn elementary Persian and Arabic.

If the pupils wished to go for higher studies they would move from the maktab to the *madrasah.* A *maktab* was generally supported by the neighbourhood community, a *madrasah* by a gift of land or other property made by the ruler or a private individual. The syllabus at the madrasah level comprised language, literature, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *hadith* (Prophet's Traditions) and tafsir (exegesis of the Quran).

Historically, the madrasah system originated during the reign of Mohammad Ghori (1192-1209), that is towards the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. The madrasah education prepared the pupils for a career in government, particularly in its judicial branch. The Qazis (judges) were drawn from the *madrasah* system. Likewise, the *muftis* or those qualified to give an opinion on points of law ere also *madrasah*-trained. Hence it was mostly those who looked forward to a career in the establishment, whether religious or governmental, that turned to the *madrasahs.*

The criterion of excellence in the *madrasahs* was the number of the standard books that one had studied. On completion of each book the teacher would give a certificate to that effect. When a student would complete the study of all the books that had been prescribed, the turban of scholarship would be tied on his head and he would then become an '*alim* in his own right.

Stages of Evolution

Professor M. Mujib, whose book I have mentioned at the beginning, has identified four stages in the evolution of the *madrasah* system. The first stage was from the advent of the Muslim Turks, that is from the beginning of the 13th century, to the end of the 15th century. During this period the syllabus of the *madrasahs* was very meagre and borrowed wholesale from Central Asia and Iran. In the second stage, which stretches from the 16th to the 17th century, the syllabus was expanded, and some books on philosophy and medicine, were introduced into the *madrasah* system. Then came a big breakthrough around the middle of the 18th century, when Mullah Nizamuddin of Firangi Mahal (Lucknow) introduced what came to be known as the Dars-i-Nizami.

In Dars-i-Nizami, several new books – some of them written or compiled by Indian scholars – were introduced. It also laid greater emphasis on literary and cultural aspects of education. There was also a component of history and Islamic culture. Moreover, it emphasised *fiqh* not only as jurisprudence but also as a body of knowledge necessary for performing various rituals. One might attribute this to the influence of Brahmanism. Performance of rituals correctly and on all occasions, such as religious festivals, births, deaths and so on came to be considered an important part of faith. Today, it is the graduates of the Dars-i-Nizami who man the *madrasah* system in a good part of the country.

In its current stage, the *madrasah* system can be divided into two broad categories. The first category is that which is controlled by what I call the activist-fundamentalist '*ulama*. And the second, which is more widespread, is controlled by what one might call the pacifist-permissive '*ulama.*

The Fundamentalist Tradition: Mixing Religion with Politics

It would be interesting to examine how these two categories evolved. The activist-fundamentalist tradition in Muslim education can be traced to the 18th century. The most important figure in 18th century Islam in India was Shah Waliullah of Delhi who lived from 1702 to 1763. Shah Waliullah was born during the last years of Aurangazeb's rule. As he grew up, he could see the Mughal empire disintegrating and losing control over the far-flung provinces and eventually, even on the capital of the Empire. Professor Athar Abbas Rizvi, a recent biographer of Shah Waliullah, tells us that by the 18th century the ruling Muslim elite in northern India was divided into two schools of thought. There was, on the one hand, a 'conciliatory', school which argued that to rule a multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-linguistic country, it was necessary for Muslim rulers to share power with non-Muslim groups such as the Rajputs, the Marathas and the Jats. Only a composite ruling class, they argued, could hold

this country together. If one goes back in time one can say that Akbar was the originator of this line of thought and that Dara Shikoh wanted to carry if further but failed; Dara lost the game and Aurangazeb came to power.

There was also a 'militant' school which believed in political power being monopolized by the Muslim ruling elite. It attributed the decline of Muslim power to the laxity of the Muslim rulers in regard to the strict enforcement of the Shari'at. Shah Waliullah belonged to this second group. At one time, he argued that the Muslims should use force to convert non-Muslims to Islam. But he soon abandoned this line, realizing that people converted under duress would not make good Muslims. He, however, advocated that in order to stabilise Muslim power in India it was necessary that significant numbers of upper-caste Hindus be converted to Islam.

While none of Shah Waliullah's plans for resurrecting Muslim power in India, really worked, he did make one important contribution to its future developments: he blazed the trail for the 'ulama to take a direct hand in politics. Until then, the 'ulama class was an instrument of political authority. Shah Waliullah contended that politics could not be left to the ruling class; the 'ulama must directly intervene in politics. As we shall see, this tradition grew in later years in a big way.

The 'Wahhabis': Resurrecting Islam

The second important figure in the activist-fundamentalist tradition was Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli, who is also described in history books as the leader of the so-called Wahhabi movement. The British branded him as a Wahhabi because he, like the Wahhabis of Arabia in the 18the century, was hostile to certain customs and practices that had become popular among Muslims all over the world. Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli indeed launched a crusade against those customs and practices. The British branded him as a Wahhabi presumably to turn Indian Muslims against him.

Sayyid Ahmad was a charismatic figure and he travelled extensively from Calcutta to Peshawar and raised a volunteer force of considerable size and gave it military training. His aim was to launch a *jihad* (holy war) against the British power in India. To that end, he led his followers to what is today known as the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. The other plank in Sayyid Ahmad's platform was spelt out in his books *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* (Straight Path) and *Taqwiyat-ul-Imam* (Strengthening of the Faith). His line was that Indian Islam must be purged of all the accretions that had defiled it over the centuries. He was in fact concerned about three sets of accretions arising respectively from local customs, Shi'i beliefs and practices, and Sufism.

It is not necessary here to go into all that Sayyid Ahmad said or did. Suffice it to say that he took a few thousands of his followers to the north-western region of India and from there launched a battle, not against the British but against the Sikh State. In the battle of Balakot in May 1831 Sayyid Ahmad and hundreds of his supporters were killed. After that nothing was heard about Sayyid Ahmad's followers for quite some time. But soon after the 1857 revolt against the British had been quelled, a group of '*ulama* from what is now western Uttar Pradesh claimed that they were followers of Sayyid Ahmad and that they had actively participated in the revolt. Among them were two prominent figures – Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotawi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi – who later became the founders of the famous Deoband *Madrasah*. They were among those who had concluded that British power in India having been well established and Muslims had no chance of restoring their political power. In the circumstances, the 'ulama must dedicate themselves to the task of saving Islam by giving instructions to Muslims in authentic Islamic practices. Muslims must internalise their endeavor concentrating on education. They must, of course, have nothing to do with the British.

The Deoband School: Motivating Muslims for National Freedom

The Deoband Madrasah was set up in 1867. By 1879 it grew into a Dar-ul-'Ulum (abode of learning) or a higher centre of Islamic education. The Dar-ul-'Ulum has thus been in existence for more than a hundred years. Over the years, Deoband type *madrasahs* have been established all over the country. Their number is placed around 8,000. It is not clear if this figure also includes *maktabs* or elementary schools.

At any rate, the products of Deoband have fanned out all over the country and they have established schools where the Deoband syllabus is taught. Deoband itself attracted the largest contingent of students from U.P., followed by pre-partition Punjab and Bengal and other provinces of India. It has always had a sprinkling of foreign students too. They came from Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Afghanistan and Nepal. In the early years, it attracted students from China and Central Asia as well.

A very curious paradox of Deoband was that it subscribed to Shah Waliullah's programme of regulating Muslim life in India strictly in accordance with the Shari'at, even as it adopted a pragmatic and accommodating position on the question of Indian nationalism. When the Indian National Congress was established in 1885, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his Aligarh College took the stand that the Muslims should have nothing to do with the Congress. The Congress, they argued, was asking for representative government for India and any representative government was bound to the Hindu government. In

contrast to this, the Rector of the Deoband Dar-ul-'Ulum, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, gave the *fatwa* that there was no harm in cooperating with the Hindus in worldly affairs. Subsequently, when the Khilafat movement came up, following Turkey's defeat in the First World War, the Deoband 'ulama joined hands with the Indian National Congress to launch a massive non-cooperation movement against the British. Deoband was thus instrumental in bringing large masses of Muslims into the movement for national freedom.

'Ulama and Nationalism

Around this time, the Deoband 'ulama also took the initiative to set up the Jami'at-ul-'*Ulama*-i-Hind or the Association of Indian 'Ulama. I said earlier that in the 18ht century Shah Waliullah had started the tradition of 'ulama taking a direct hand in politics. By 1920 you find a regular 'trade union' of the '*ulama.* One of the objects of the Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i-Hind was to guide Muslims in political affairs from a religious point of view. This was the major thrust of the Jami'at. Its president, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, came forward with a very bold political idea: he propounded the concept of *muttahida qaumiyat* or composite nationalism. Madani gave the famous phrase: "Qaum Watan se hai" (nation is based on homeland). Poet Iqbal took exception to this and wrote a verse in which he denigrated Maulana Madani. He decried it as an un-Islamic idea. In March 1940, the Pakistan Resolution was passed at Lahore and the two-nation theory was adopted as the main plank of the Muslim League platform. The Jami'at promptly held a conference of the non-League Muslim organisations in Delhi. The conference passed a resolution calling upon Muslims to join hands with non-Muslims in the struggle for freedom. It proclaimed that Muslims should work for a multi-religious state in which they should be able to live in accordance with the tenets of the Shari'at.

With the traditions they have inherited from the 18th century down to the eve of independence, the Deobandis today evince some progressive tendencies. At a conference held in Lucknow in 1948, the Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i-Hind decided that while it would not take part in politics as an organization, its members would be permitted to join any secular political party. This was a progressive idea as far as it went. Subsequently, the Jami'at hailed the principle of secularism as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of India. It saw no contradiction between the Constitution of the Republic of India and its own commitment to the Islamic Shari'at.

Of late, however, the Jmi'at is getting more and more involved in matters that were previously the concern of the Muslim League. In the past, there was a marked contrast between Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and Jinnah. Jinnah was a very secular person in his personal life. He was not known to be a practicing Muslim either. And yet his position in politics became increasingly

communal– particularly since late nineteen-thirties. He then turned Islam into a political weapon. Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, on the other hand, was a great 'alim and a devout Muslim in his personal life. But in politics he was not at all communal. This point is very important: you can be a man of religion without being communal.

At the same time, the growing involvement of the Jami'at with the political concerns of the Muslim community has produced some negative results. In other words, the Jami'at has now entered areas where religion and politics get mixed up and communal attitudes come to the surface.

Nadwah: The Activist Fundamentalist School

The other school with a fundamentalist outlook is the Nadwat-ul-'Ulama of Lucknow. The Nadwah – as the institution is commonly known – was established in 1892 at Kanpur. Towards the end of the 1890s it moved to Lucknow. The founders of the Nadwah had desired to make it a cross between Aligarh and Deoband. But it is far from being all that. During a visit to Nadwah in 1982 I was taken aback to see a quotation from Shibli Nu'mani splashed prominently in the main hall of its library. It read: 'Europe has no past. Hence it gropes aimlessly in the darkness of the future. But Islam's past is so splendid that progress for the Muslims lies in retreat into the past….' No wonder one finds a great deal of mythologizing of history at Nadwah. This may be happening in other religions as well. At Nadwah they approach the subject of history – particularly the early period of Islam – with reverence borne out of faith rather than scholarship. The element of mythology creeps in when one allows religious fervor to get the better of historical judgement. For instance the historians of Nadwah – as also of Deoband – speak of the Golden Age of Islam coinciding with the era of the first four Caliphs of Islam. But they would not pause to reflect on the fact that out of the four Caliphs, three were murdered. They also maintain that Islam does not recognize political parties. But the fact remains that political factions had emerged during the Golden Age itself.

The Nadwah did try to introduce some new components into its curriculum. But the effort did not go very far. For instance, the curriculum includes an element of geography; but on close scrutiny it turns out to be geography of Islam dealing with the places connected with the life of the Prophet. Similarly the course on history dwells upon the history of Islam. By contrast, early Muslim historians looked at history in its totality. The Nadwah education also offers a smattering of economics, physics and mathematics. But it falls short of the ideal Nadwah had set itself at the beginning. Perhaps its graduates have better grounding in the Arabic language and in religious disciplines; but the modernist component is totally missing from their intellectual baggage.

The mind that Nadwah builds should be evident from the profile literary output of Maulana Abul Hasan 'Ali Nadwi, its present Rector. Nadwi says that Muslim society in India is in a great crisis today, a result of the incursion of western ideas and thoughts into the Muslim mind. The problem today, he says, is that unlike in olden times when a Muslim, who digressed from the basis of Islam, would be declared an apostate *(murtid)* and punished by death, an apostate in our times goes unnoticed and unpunished. Hence there is a turning away from religion on a big scale without the community being able to do anything about it.

Maulana Nadwi also speaks of the crisis caused by the incursion of certain 'un-Islamic' idea, such a nationalism and secularism. He contends that nationalism is a remnant of the age of ignorance, i.e., the pre-Islamic period when man's loyalties were governed by his tribal affinities. Islam rejected all this, demanding allegiance only to God. Hence modern nationalism is antithetical to the principles of Islam. Likewise, secularism has no place in Islam.

I for one am inclined to think that Indian Muslims ought to have a greater stake in secularism than the Hindus, because the alternative to secularism might be a Hindu state. Maulana Nadwi, however, has been very vocal in altering Muslims about the perils of secularism.

The Bareilly Pacifist – Permissive School

I had earlier said that at present there are two streams of Muslim religious education in India: one supported by the activist-fundamentalist school of 'ulama and the other governed by the pacifist-permissive school. The second has its roots in Bareilly where Ahmad Razak Khan had started a crusade against the fundamentalists of Deoband and Nadwah at the beginning of this century. The Bareilly school represents popular Islam as it is actually practiced by millions of Indian Muslims. Popular Islam in India is the Islam of sufi saints and of saint-worship. Over the centuries there have been major saints and minor saints, and their dargahs (monasteries/tombs) are spread over the length and breadth of the country. These are centres of pilgrimage round the year. The pilgrims seek mediation of the saints with God for worldly success and for salvation hereafter.

A second aspect of popular Islam is the glorification of the person of Prophet Mohammad. It is a rather new phenomenon which dates back to the 19th century. Around this time the practice of celebrating *Milad-un-Nabi* or the birth anniversary of the Prophet was started. The 'ulama of Deoband and Nadwah frown upon this practice and attribute it to the influence of the Hindus, who celebrate the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna with much fervor. Popular Islam takes no note of such fundamentalist diatribes.

In 1904, Ahmad Raza Khan established a *madrasah* in Bareilly. Over the years, it has been producing *maulvis* (religious instructors) on a mass scale and its graduates have fanned out into the country. A good part of India is under the influence of the *maktabs* and *madrasahs* manned by *maulvis* from Bareilly. You find them everywhere – Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnataka. Tamil Nadu and Kerala have their own versions of popular Islam. The Bareilly school takes a somewhat tolerant and accommodating view of the popular customs and practices which have become a part and parcel of the life of Indian Muslims. Both in the countryside and in cities and town the Bareilly school finds easy acceptance. The educated Muslims also find it more acceptable that the fundamentalist creed because it is less demanding. Nor does it openly oppose modernization.

Another feature of the Bareilly school is that it is by and large apolitical, that is to say, it does not tell its followers to follow or oppose any particular political party. At the grassroots level, a *maulvi,* hailing from Bareilly, tends to side with those in authority. And they would cite in support of their political stance a verse from the Holy Quran which exhorts the believers to obey God, the Prophet and those in authority.

Education and Exclusiveness

The mind that the Deoband and the Nadwah system of education produces tends to be exclusivist. The idea is inculcated in the pupils that Muslims are a superior community because the Quran is the last and the most complete of all messages sent by God to mankind. And this creates a feeling not only of superiority but also of antipathy towards other religious communities. One can very well argue that this runs contrary to the spirit of the Quran. Does not the Quran say that God had sent his messengers to all people and that there is no compulsion in matters of religion?

A corollary of the question of exclusiveness is the issue of identity. These days everyone seems to be bitten by the identity bug. So the '*ulama* of Deoband and Nadwah are no exceptions. In this case, the question of identity is closely linked to the externals of Islam, not the spirit of Islam. It is indeed surprising that the same group of '*ulama* who speak of the wide horizons of Islam transcending national, racial and linguistic boundaries, should raise a hue and cry over the question of identity or *tashkhkhus*.

'Ulama and the State

From all accounts, the 'ulama had little to do with major political decisions, whether in the Sultanate or the Mughal period. On the contrary, they functioned as a tool of the political authority. They were servants rather than masters of those who created kingdoms and presided over them.

Education and Separatism

What is worth noting about Partition is that the demand for Pakistan was popular with the modern educated Muslims because of the overriding concern of this class about jobs and representation. Then there were the Muslim banias of Gujarat and Bombay who wanted to have unfettered opportunities for advancement in business. The Gujarat Muslims bankrolled Jinnah. Many of them migrated to Karachi to capture the business in Pakistan. In other words, the Muslim white collar and business classes joined hands to create a State in which they expected to enjoy unfettered opportunities. The 'ulama, by and large opposed the demand of Pakistan. So, one can say that the *madrasah* education was not responsible for the creation of Pakistan. At the same time, a significant number of Muslim boys and girls who take to modern education learn about religion through some form of *maktab* education. The latter, therefore, play an important role in the process of socialization.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the fundamentalists, who stand for strict adherence to the Islamic doctrines, operate on the periphery of the Muslim community in India. The majority of Indian Muslims subscribe to what one might call 'popular Islam'. One should not, however, underestimate the fundamentalists, because they are more vocal and more active than the votaries of popular Islam. They are also more productive in the sense that they produce a good deal more reading material than others. Hence once should not underestimate the potentialities of the fundamentalists.

DENOMINATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: RELIGIOSITY AND COMMUNALISM

Kuldip Kaur

The term "denominational institutions" is used by sociologists to distinguish a specific type of religious organisations run by different communities or religious groups. But for the purposes of this presentation, We take "denominational institutions" to mean those traditional educational institutions which impart religious as well as secular education according to the instructions of their own religion. The other term used is "Religiosity", is attributed to mean a system of faith and worship or human recognition of a personal God entitled to obedience. Every religion has its own history. The multiplicity of religions creates certain problems, for the adherents of every religion believe that their's is the most excellent and most perfect of all religions.

Religion is a boon if it caters to spiritual needs, but it becomes an instrument of violence when it is used to attain power. This is the crux of the matter and remains so till today. Another term used is "communalism", which has been defined by Bipan Chandra as"

> the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion, they have, as a result, common, social, political and economic interests. It is the belief that in India, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs form different and distinct communities which are independently and separately structured or consolidated; that all the followers of a religion share not only a community of religious interest but also common secular interest….[1]

This definition focuses on Religious Communalism, that is, communalism based on the identity of religion. The same type of collective psychology may be seen to operate through the denominational institutions.

The word communalism has acquired a special meaning in India. It stands for the feelings of antagonism and distrust prevailing between different religious communities in the country, particularly between the Hindus and the Muslims. The concise Oxford Dictionary defines "Communal", in relation to India, as a

[1] Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1984, p.1.

term descriptive "of the antagonistic religious and racial communities in an area or district or city".

If we take these three terms together then it reveals that there is a gap between each community due to the different religious ideologies and on the basis of these ideologies the denominational institutions are run.

In this presentation the focus will be primarily on the Denominational Institutions defined as autonomous religious or secular institutions hierarchically organized and served by a particular community and how these institutions gradually reinforce communalism.

India is inhabited by four major religious groups or communities, named Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs. Buddhists and Jains are included under the Hindu religion. All these communities had (or even have) their own Denominational Institutions which were (or are) imparting either only religious or religious as well as secular education. These institutions can be divided under two headings:

(1) Religious institutions aided by a particular community:

(a) Muslims: - having Maktabs and Madrasas/Dar-ul-ulum.

(b) Hindus: - having Gurukulas, Pathshalas and Sanskrit Schools etc.

(c) Sikhs: - having Gurmukhi Schools but now not existing and at present an eruption of Deras (that is, only in Punjab).

(d) Christians: - having Church Schools or Mission Schools etc.

All these given institutions had been imparting religious education according to their own ideology or mythology. In fact these institutions were attached to places of worship – Mosques, Gurdwaras, Temples and Churches – so that the teaching in these institutions could not be other than religious. Here we find that the Muslim Community is more concerned with religious education than the non-Muslims. Their ever-increasing interest in establishing denominational institutions – Maktabs and Madrasas – was (and is partially) financially and administratively independent of the Government as far as imparting traditional religious (Islamic) education and the unquestioned reliance on the Madrasa system of education is concerned. That is why, perhaps, the Muslim system of education has not been able to penetrate the depths of the life of the non-Muslim masses.

(2) Religious as well as secular institutions aided by Private or Government agencies:

(i) Schools and Colleges run by the Muslim community like Islamia schools and colleges, Government recognized Madrasas, etc.

(ii) Educational institutions run by the Hindu community like Dev Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Sanatan Dharam schools and colleges.

(iii) Educational institutions by the Sikh community like Khalsa schools and colleges.

(iv) Educational institutions run by Christian Missionaries like Public and Convent schools and colleges.

These denominational institutions generally follow the Government-prescribed curriculum. In addition, they included two or three periods and morning assemblies for religious instruction and religious thought in general.

During the Mughal period in Indian history, these denominational institutions ran smoothly because the moving force behind them was the patronage of rulers, nobles and rich persons of society. But with the advent of British rule in India, as a counter-measure to Christian Missionary activity, a large number of denominational institutions were established. Similarly, during the same period, several socio-religious movements were started by Muslim as well as Hindu intellectuals and religious reformers. The denominational institutions were opened primarily to impart basic religious education, to maintain a separate identity and to preserve religious tradition. These institutions are working at the state, district and village level till today.

In the 19the century secular type of educational institutions started emerging in India, supported by Christian Missions, although modern secular institutions were making a headway, the denominational institutions retained their importance with the support of their communities. Thus with the establishment of Western or Secular education, two kinds of education came to be pursued in two different types of institutions, i.e. (1) Religious and (2) Secular. The denominational institutions were based on narrow factors like caste, community and religion and sometimes this created a communal gap between the communities.

The curricula at these denominational institutions also played a vital role. The content of Islamic education is directed towards Islamic way of life, and towards achieving this goal. The content reflected the basic teachings of Islam as conveyed through the Koran. On the other hand the textbooks, specially the books on history and language in the secular schools and colleges, misrepresented the minorities. This created a gulf between the majority and minority communities and tended to crush all integration programmes set up on paper. Generally the Muslims claim that through such books the pupils are bound to get the following impression:

(a) That the minorities have no religious and cultural heritage;

(b) That the minorities should accept the religious dominance of the majority community in India.

In recent years there has been a growing tendency to change the entire pattern and complexion of the books prescribed in secular educational institutions to suit the religious beliefs, rituals and mythology of the majority community. The Muslims believe that the introduction of some of the lessons in textbooks of history and language are directly or indirectly in conflict with the fundamental principles of Islam and the faith of Muslim children in their own religion. For instance: Our *Kamdhenu* – the Cow – "She is our mother". By serving her we make ourselves purified, she deserve to be worshipped.[2]

This stanza reveals that on the one hand Hindus worship the cow and on the other Muslims eat it. How can a Muslim consider the cow as a mother? And how can be Hindu spare the Muslim for eating it? Moreover, pictorial illustrations attached to the lessons in textbooks make the position still worse. For example, "Mother India" is shown in the form of a goodess[3] and "Prayer with folded hands" entails facing the sun.[4] These types of pictorial depictions in textbooks hurt the sentiments of Muslims in an indirect manner and are offensive to the basic principles of Islam. In this way the Muslim community justifies the claim that a systematic attempt is being made to create hatred, against the minority communities, especially against the Muslims.

It may be said that initially the British created hatred and distrust between the Hindus and the Muslims by distorting historical facts in order to establish and preserve their imperialistic designs. Later, Indian historians assimilated this legacy in their own writings. For instance, "By despoiling the destroying Hindu temples" Mahmood Ghazni created hatred against Islam in the hearts of the common Hindu.[5] This statement leaves no room for national integration and, instead, promotes hatred and disintegration.

It is unfortunate that despite having a secular Constitution our country has not been able to free itself from communal conflicts. It has also become obvious that despite efforts at the national level, the basic principles of secularism have not been accepted by society.

One reason for our failure is that the denominational institutions have not been able to create a common cultural heritage from which members of every community may derive inspiration. Sharing of common values arises only from

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[2] *Sahitya Jotisna*, Part II, pp. 8-11, 1964, quoted in Brief Scrutiny of Prescribed Books in U.P. Islah-e-Nisab Committee, Deeni Talimi Council, Lucknow, 1966, p.5.

[3] *Basic Reader*, Urdu, Part IV, p.6, 1964, quoted in Ibid., p.6.

[4] Ibid., *Urdu and Hindi*, Part V, p.1.

[5] Ram Charan Vidyarthi, *Hamara Itihas*, Part II, 1966, p.5, Basic reader, op.cit.,p.17.

a common memory or a common anticipation or both. Unfortunately, different communities have different perceptions of their glorious past. In this context, the teaching of different subjects at a denominational institution became a very important tool in creating consciousness of a common past among its own religious group or community.

Unfortunately, the major ideology behind the writing of Indian history and language textbooks is full of sectarian and communal bias and is nothing more than historical prejudice. For instance a poem on “Haldighati” in the textbook Nav Bharti, part I, has been written in a manner identifying courage and valour with symbols of the Hindu religion, which is highly objectionable, specially for the Minority Communities. Can we expect Muslims to derive inspiration from this episode? Tis poem not only exposes the strong communal bias of the editor but also shows a total neglect of history.

Are those in Government or textbooks boards not committing a blunder by including such biased poems in the school curricula which are to be taught to the young? Whom should we blame if the Hindus grow up with the idea that their ancestors went through more than 1,000 years of Muslim and British tyranny and that the time has now come to avenge it? Should the Hindus be allowed to suffer from a feeling of past shame and disgrace?

Morning school assemblies, festivals and celebrations mostly highlight the culture of the Hindu religious group, and this indicates communal maneuvering.

The control of denominational institution by a society or management of particular community may not by itself represent a situation inimical to the socio-political ideal of equality of educational opportunity. But if it can be seen that a majority of the managements dictate a policy of discrimination, favouring their own community or caste in the appointment of teachers, admission of students and distribution of scholarships and other resources, then a serious problem does exist. The argument that equality of opportunity is guaranteed by the freedom which all communities enjoy to run their own educational institutions is fallacious. The activities of serval communities fostering particularistic values and communal attitudes and practicing discrimination within their institutions do not improve the situation but actually worsen it.

The conclusion that the recruitment of staff in these institutions takes place on a communal basis is borne but by the outstanding fact that, irrespective of the social structure of the population in some specific area, each community is better represented in its own institution that in those managed by other communities.

Other considerations, besides communal loyalty, like kinship ties linguistic affinities, economic motives (for example, donations) and political pressure, may be responsible for various appointments. But these other considerations generally operate within the framework of communal interests.

Appointments are made according to Government rules. But ways to circumvent the rules are found, whenever necessary. The usual justification offered is that people with common interests and aims contribute to harmony and that such a commonality of interests is natural among members of the same caste. Further, the managers argue, since private institutions are the fruit of the combined efforts of a particular community, so-called favouritism in appointments is justified so long as the eligibility conditions are fulfilled. Such arguments represent an excellent example of the traditional particularistic point of view. Discriminatory appointments lead to a vicious circle. Managements maintain that they make appointments from among the available applicants, and usually more applications are received from candidates belonging to the community running the institutions. The reason for this is the disinclination of persons belonging to other communities to apply since they discount their chances of being selected. Persons from numerically inferior or socially weak communities maintain that in a struggle with strong communities they are ignored. As a result, hardly any other community members send their children to other institutions, specially to Muslim institutions. The conclusion drawn is that the nature of denominational institutions somehow points to the existence of communal discrimination. In the course of inquiries during field survey allegations of favouritism on communal lines in examinations also came to the forefront but these could not be verified.

Denominational education institutions, however, clearly foster anti-democratic, anti-equalitarian, and non-secular values. The dilemma of the situation is obvious. Aided by the State policy of withdrawing from the direct responsibility of providing the educational requirements of the people, these educational institutions are bound to continue to exist and prosper as the demand for education from all sections of society gathers momentum. Hence the urgency for well-defined and strict State control of private enterprise in the field of education in India. We will have to admit that our teachers, who also get educated on such communal and biased history, literature or overall curricula, are not free from communal prejudices. How can they give secular ideas to the students? Therefore, it becomes all the more essential that textbooks are written properly in order to help children of all communities grow together with common ideals and a common memory. A new generation of Muslims emerging in India in modern or secular schools, has a feeling that the syllabus of these institutions attacks its sentiments.

The denominational institutions did much to advance Anglo-vernacular education, but they also contributed to the growth of a feeling of rivalry between the communities. Viewing educational questions in a communal spirit, the Government helped the establishment and expansion of "separate" and "special" institutions. In the former, the same course were taught as in ordinary schools, but there was a provision for religious instruction and the teaching of Urdu. In Madrasas, the curriculum was different, instruction was imparted in Urdu and special emphasis was placed on the study of the Koran, Hadis, Fiqh, Islamic history and Arabic language and literature. The Madrasas produced a large number of Ulema whose mission was to serve Islam and the Muslim community in all possible ways, but above all by imparting religious instruction to the young. Many of the Ulema of the great seminaries of Indian Islam, the Dar-ul-ulum at Deoband, the Dar-ul-ulum Nadwat Ulema and the Firangi Mahal at Lucknow were politically anti-British and made common cause with Indian nationalism during the first Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements. The Ulema held that Islam was the only solution for Muslims. By emphasizing such theories they made the denominational institutions of learning an important source of Muslim revivalism and communal politics. The teachers and pupils in Madrasas, Tibbian and Islamic colleges were easily influenced by religious passion and communal propaganda and provided willing recruits to political parties such as the Jamiat-i-Islami. The Ulema strongly resisted English education and tried to re-enforce Islamic education against new influences.

In contrast to these denominational institutions, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan encouraged English education. Universities and schools were one of the important channels through which Western influences penetrated Indian society. Many adopted a European style of living, but retained traditional ways of thinking, thus carrying the development of communal society.

The development of a communal society, it is usually suggested, has been accompanied by the replacement of the sacred religious value system of one community by another.

Fundamentally, therefore, the categories of historical analysis of these institutions remains communal. So long as the categories of one's analysis remain Hindu and Muslim, whether one argues on behalf of communal conflict or communal harmony, one's thinking still remains limited to the confines of those communal categories. The logic of communal historians was that the two communities had never been, and could never be reconciled to one another and one might as well recognize this reality.

Conceptually, communalism as displayed by the various religious groups in India has much in common and can be, in most cases, traced back to the

denominational institutions. To sum up, the rise of communalism during the colonial period should perhaps be seen in relation to the long-standing separatism inherent in the religious network and the social distance among the communities, or specifically, the high level of social antagonism between Muslims and Hindus. This social separatism, which became the basis for social organization, is symbolized by denominational institutions – somewhat detached from religious belief, yet rooted in religion. These "communal" identities gathered strength as wider social and political arenas came into being. The denominational institutions provide ready-made material for carrying on linguistic, regional and economic agitations and even communal riots. Mohammad Hassan, a participant in a seminar held at Bombay on February, 18-19, 1984, said the "Communal Virus" is injected much more effectively through a distortion of history, philosophy and culture. The sublet among these are the values or prejudices spread through the denominational institutions. Despite the declaration in the Constitution that education is one and for all, but the fact remains that the subjects taught in these denominational institutions have been distorted so as to emphasise communalism and to arouse communal hatred". Thus Denominational Institutions – either traditional or modern – and not only for Muslims but also of the Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, are all inclined to some degree or the other towards communalism and may be the contributory factors in the growth of communalism in India.

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SECTION 7

MEDIA AND COMMUNALISM

MEDIA AND COMMUNALISM

Ram Dhamija

Let me begin with an ancient parable. It is from the Dharamottara Purana. An ancient king of Banaras asked a sage, 'I want to learn to make ikons for worship, will you take me as a disciple"? The sage said, 'Well, you cannot start making ikons straightaway. You cannot do it unless you first learn how to paint'. The king asked, 'how do I learn painting.' The sage replied, 'For that you have first to learn dancing because mastering the sense of rhythm is essential to it'. The king asked the sage, 'How do I learn rhythm'? The sage said, 'For that you have to learn music, first instrumental music and then vocal music – and before you learn that you have to learn poetry. All this you have to learn before you master the sense of rhythm.

So the king had to learn all these disciplines before he was in a position to make ikons – if he was, serious about it. Similarly, in getting to know enough about communalism and the media and their interplay, you have to know the basics of sociology, psychology, anthropology, history, economics theology and the various scientific disciplines dealing with the evolution of man and man in society. All these disciplines together can give you insights into aspects of the theme and its ramifications through human conditions in various times and regions in India and elsewhere.

We cannot launch forth into that kind of an analysis, for obvious reasons. However, we could touch on some significant aspects and the general outline, to an extent.

Broadly, I think, it would be true to say that problems of communal tension and strife are inherent in man living in society – in groups, and in larger and larger organized social groups. And whenever and wherever the scope for growth and for creativity is hindered or human dignity violated – or it felt to be violated rightly or wrongly – the potential for confrontation and conflict – violent or otherwise – is created. How it gets resolved – in the short term or in the long-term – is a matter of that particular time and the social groups involved. The labels given to these conflicts in our history differ. One of the labels given in our country is communal strife.

As discussed in India today, communalism and communal violence has the connotation of strife and lack of good faith between religious communities living all over the country as groups, sub groups, in pockets and as isolated families among bigger and different social religious groups.

Before independence this issue was largely focused on Hindu-Muslim relations in India. Phase of Hindu-Muslim goodwill and social amicability as well as ill-will and situations of strife and bloody riots were a feature of our history right from the second half of the Mughal imperial times. The subsequent British colonial phase was not very different, except that the British imperial policy found it a readymade instrument to be played with skill in the classic game of 'divide and rule'. You add to this the basic problem of emotionalized, highly credulous socio-religious existence of our ordinary people-both rural and urban – and you can see how much potential for mischief existed and still exists.

In a lesser degree the same thing applies to other religious groups in different parts of the country – Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs and others. The potential for communal conflicts increases with different organized religious groups claiming total sway over the personal and social lives of their flocks.

The problem of communalism in India, however, has its seeds in even earlier times. It goes a very long way back in our history. Its ancestry can be traced back to post-Rig-Vedic Aryan times. It could be called inter-caste strife and state of disequilibrium then. The emergence of a 'chaturvarna' with superior and inferior castes ordained by birth and based on 'karma' in previous births – and immutable in their operation – set a pattern of society where injustice cruelty and even inhumanity towards the inferior castes became part of the accepted code of Hindu society for centuries right up to Gupta period and, with much more rigidity after it, for many centuries. The measure of its injustice and cruelty – trace elements of which still persist in our society – could be had from the dictates on 'Manusmriti', an assemblage and codification of Hindu social and ethical practices of the Gupta period. Manu says: 'No collection of wealth must be made by a Shudra even though he is able to do so, for a Shudra who has acquired wealth gives pain to the Brahmins' (Manu 10-129).

Again, 'one should not even speak with the heretics, the transgressors of caste discipline, the hypocrites, the free thinkers and the double-dealers' (Manu 4-30).

To this Gautama's commentary adds, 'The Shudra shall serve the higher castes… from them he shall seek to obtain his livelihood…. He shall use their cast-off shoes and garments… and cat remnants of their food' (Gautama 10-51-6).

In later times, of the great Shankaracharya and his philosophic etherial heights of 'advaita', it was the norm that the untouchables of Kerala could not cross the path of a Brahmin, lest his shadow pollute the Brahmin's piety. They were

required to live way out of the village in hutments and shanties unserved by any civic amenities at all.

Anger and bitterness and a sense of outrage of human dignity are a built-in feature of such a Hindu society even though the 'Karma' concept is there to preach acceptance of ones fate and bear it with stoicism in the hope of doing better in the next birth. Even today, with our constitution laying down statutes declaring equal rights and opportunities for all, in many social and religious communities the prejudice against the Shudras and non-Hindus as 'unclean' persists. And it cannot make for smooth and egalitarian social relationships of trust and friendliness. The simmering resentment finds time and occasions – at the regional, local and other levels – to flare up, often with the active connivance of manipulative elements (including international political forces) for their own devious purposes.

During the Islamic phase of our history there was another inflammatory element that got introduced in Indian community life. Islamic fundamentalism and orthodoxy had its own caste or class system. For them there are two kind of worlds. One is Dar-ul-islam where there is Islamic rule and where the Muslims live as citizens under Muslim kings, guided by the 'Quranic' injunctions and 'Hadistic' conventions. Non-Muslims could live there as second class citizens only.

The other is Dar-ul-Harab, i.e., an area which Islam hopes to conquer – which is still not Muslim and which is still under those who do not profess the only true religion of Islam; but which one day they will. It is not given up. This is a kind of ground where jehad is not only permissible but a necessary duty of Muslims. There could be truce with such states and their people for ten years and after that jehad would start again and ultimately, they believe, this Dar-ul-Harab would become Islamic. Now, those Muslims who have to live under this regime, even for a temporary period would be under a sort of contract – it is known as 'aman'. Under the 'aman' you can temporarily live in such a state and you do not harm the state, you do not indulge in violence, you do not fight them. You live peacefully, but this must remain a temporary phase. This is a concept dear to the Muslim orthodoxy and keeps making its appearance at the various pulpits of public mosques at various times. It is inflammable material lying about for mischief makers to play with.

It is true the Islamic invaders from Central Asia and beyond the Indus were primarily conquerors and interested in ruling the country and empire building and good life, and much less with the rigidity of the orthodox Islamic clergy. They knew statecraft and how to shape measures to carry their non-Muslim 'riyayya' and satellite rulers with them. But the point it that new potential elements of conflict and confrontation did get introduced in the body politics

of India and they did find play under less enlightened Muslim rulers and their rivals. There are other religious communities in India, among whom the clergy and organized religion claim total surveillance over the believers in terms of their personal and social life within the community as well as of their inter-community attitudes and relations. This too makes for situations of confusion and distemper, and readily available material for manipulation by unscrupulous political elements, be they national or supranational.

It is unfortunate that in our country in the name of freedom for all religions and sects and in the name of principles of secularism we have left the organized orthodox religions lay claim to rule those areas of a man's social and ethical life which in our multi-religious society, could only be placed under common civic and juridical law. The constitution does in fact say so but, of late, for reasons of political expediency – electoral and otherwise – the Central Government has bungled the issue. But this it has created a constitutional situation fraught with potentialities of the disintegration of the federal national structure. The Muslim Marriage and Inheritance Law is not a one-case concession. Soon, other religious communities could clamour for similar treatment and you would not know how to work the Constitution with any semblance of order and amity. Could you imagine a national-level football match where the players – Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and Christians – all claim that they are not going to play according to the commonly accepted rules of the game – rules as supervised by the common referee – and that they will choose to play the same according to rules as framed by their own religious priestdom. Living in a multi-religious state or community is a game of life which needs commonly-applicable and commonly-accepted rules if it is to be stable, enjoyable and peaceful. One could go a step further. Our public must be sufficiently insured against manipulations by religious orthodoxy.

In the hearts and minds of the people, there must be the feeling that you should do things reasonably, rationally and with goodwill and mutual respect, as a mark of common humanity and brotherhood. So, what is needed is a well-informed citizen, who is literate and able to ask for information, can coolly judge information supplied to him and take intelligent decisions, without getting on to emotionally inflamed high-horses – whether the issue are local or national.

If the nation should want to bend its energies towards such urgent needs the media could certainly play a role – in fact a crucial role.

At this stage it would be worthwhile to sort out what we mean when we use the word media.

To my mind, we could divide the media into three different parts of elements. Folk media constitute one category and include methods which have been

used for centuries: folk drama, folk music, folk poetry, ballads, short stories, children's studies and then processions. Processions include the religious and the ritualistic, processions are tied up with festivals of importance. So, festivals are also media of communication and part of the folk media, as large numbers of people gather on such occasion and messages can easily communicated. The people go back with new messages and experiences of new elements of communication.

The other is the print media. Print media have been in existence in manuscript form or something like that from ancient times, you write with a pen or pencil. Then you have the printing machine. From the 15th century onwards, the print media has existed. Now you have newspapers, journals, books, magazines, portfolios of various kinds and so on.

Then we have the electronic media. This includes radio, T.V., films and whatever else is coming along these lines in the next ten years, including the new technology from Japan for miniaturization of the electronic media for storage of information and for communication. The names have not been given yet, but it will come. This is the electronic media; it is the latest.

So broadly I would say there are three categories: the oral folk is number one; number two is the print media: and number three is the electronic media.

How do we distinguish between media and communication? Communication is a much wider term. If you send, let us say, a dozen letters to your brother studying in a school, you visit the post office and you post those letters, that is communication; you send a telegram, that is communication; but they are not media. Media are in relation to transfer from one mind to another. The transactions which are commercial come into communications but they do not come into media. Communication is much wider technology. Telephones are communication; telegraphs are communication; wireless of any kind is communication – these are technologies. But media perform the task of communication between one mind and another. It may be contemporary; it may be with a century's gap, whatever.

Communication includes not only the technology of communication. It includes areas which are not specifically included in media. It includes commercial messages – day-to-day and other messages; but media is limited to influence the other mind, and the channel is media. The actual usage may be of different kinds. It may be an image. It may be a word. It may be a printed word. It may be a manuscript – a written word. It may be a verbal word – it may be a dialogue. There are several ways of handling the media. Broadly I would say that you have three different divisions in the media.

The earliest media, in terms of the lowest technology available, were the spoken words – in terms of the folk theatre, dance-drama, stories for children – fiction, legend, and then festivals and what goes on during festivals – rituals, communication between different communities in terms of rituals. This was the folk area, the use of the spoken word.

The second one is the printed media; even the manuscript comes into it. Such media have been in use from some such periods as the 15th century onwards in various ways until today you can have multi-million copies of a newspaper in one hour. That is print technology as media. They you have the electronic media. That is the third state – much vaster in scale, much more instantaneous, in fact absolutely instantaneous and have tremendous power for good or evil – multi-million times more than the ordinary printed word as media.

The other interesting thing about the media is that not all these categories are exclusive. The earliest ones are still being followed in different societies of today. We have various segments of society, some living even today in the remote areas – the tribal society, some living in rural areas, the pastoral society and so on – and their communication and media range is very very different from what you have in a place like Bombay or Delhi. Take the State level capitals such as Chandigarh or Bombay. The range very much differs. Similarly, in electronic technology also, the situation is different among peoples and religions in various ways.

I will take one example. Take the *pada yatra* of Baba Amte. In terms of usage of the medium, it is a bit different. You have a gathering of people and you have a message to convey to them. This was exactly what Shankaracharya had done in the ninth century. He had moved all over the country for ten years, gathering people, talking to them, convincing them, converting them, debating ideas with them. The same *pada yatra* is being used by Amte and many others. So, you cannot ignore this medium also when you are discussing media.

There were also the town-criers, let us say, of the Moghul times or even our own times. The town-crier conveyed the new rules of conduct, the new edicts of the king or the emperor. With a drum he went round and announced to the people what these were. Today exactly the same thing is being done at election time. You have the rickshawala with a megaphone in his hand and he is trying to convince you who you should vote for. This medium is still followed in certain contexts even today. Not only is it a very important medium that is used to influence the rural society, but even in urban areas like Bombay, Delhi or elsewhere, it is still followed in a segmented way and is effective.

All these three categories that I have mentioned are followed in one way or the other in a single urban unit simultaneously, depending upon the various areas, and how they are situated technology wise.

Now coming to communalism as such, I will take first of all an important segment of the media, viz. the international media – media development, media structures and media control. In its own way it is a backdrop to our communal situation here or whatever divisions we have here. For instance, people keep on saying that the foreign hand is there somewhere in our communal violence or that it is creating this situation and so on. To a lay person, it is a vague idea. I do not think he really knows what this foreign hand means and in which way it operates. I will sketch very briefly what it can mean really – some of the time.

May be you think I am trying to oversimplify the matter, but that is how I can explain it in the short time available. Let us take a super power. It has about ten banking-industrial complexes which are major ones in a country. These complexes not only control industry, they diversify industries in various ways. They own banks, shipping concerns, they own defence installations, defence industries, space industries and so on. Then they tag on a few radio stations and other things as a sort of support to the other areas they have with them. Then they have newspapers. They also have advertising agencies, hooked up with the newspapers, radio stations and T.V. stations. T.V. production is a part of it. This becomes one conglomerate of the industrial-banking units. Once they have reached this stage, there is plenty of scope of them to control and influence the trend of the foreign policy of that particular country. This control they cleverly use to serve their own interest – economic, political, imperial in effect. This they do in various ways, by manipulation of the media, operating through their own multi—industrial, multi-purpose components.

For instance, look at the third world leadership of India – actually not ‘leadership’ but let us say our ‘posture’ – the problems which we face and the leadership that we assume with regard to African countries. All this is unpalatable, uncomfortable and inconvenient to the industrial-banking conglomerates, I have already described economically too, in terms of their selling surplus machines, their outdated machines which are condemned in their own countries, to the Third World. Supposing we display an attitude which is not agreeable to them, then they decide that we have to be kept down, we have to be destabilized, if not completely, at least up to a point, so that we would behave better, according to their larger interest. How do they do that, in media terms?

They have several ways of doing it. One is through advertising agencies. The major advertising agencies of these countries have branches in Bombay – if

not branches, subsidiaries. They have a very close link with their principals in terms of the technology guidance and sometimes even finances. These agencies buy time on T.V. and convey various kinds of consumerist messages, for example, of tooth pastes, soaps, textiles and so on. These messages and other trash can be combined as a formidable thrust. They buy time and put out and sponsor programme on T.V. With certain kinds of messages they promote certain political angles and value and belief patterns. The time available to them is not brief. The technique can be very clever. It is easy, through these programmes, to influence the images presented by the media and through these the minds of the viewers.

The advertising agencies today virtually control the T.V. in terms of its value-system and ethos. We want entertainment and we want more of it. We want so much of it that two hours are not enough. So it is increased to six hours and even that is not enough. We want 12 hours. We do not have the skills and resources to produce good programmes to fill three hours. So we buy foreign old stock which is lying in their cans ready for throwing away at a junk price. A whole heap of these programmes are now coming here and going to Africa and the rest of South countries. The world-powers have world-circulation magazines. Magazines like Reader's Digest or Life or time are tremendous image-makers. They create images by a certain consistent way of looking at things. They have a certain way of looking at economic and at political news. They organize their distribution in such a way that they have sales promotion here and bring out subsidiary editions. In Africa, for example, they have ten different editions of Reader's Digest. In Asia, they have twenty. Here, you see the power to influence minds, being used all over the world in various ways and what is interesting is that they make profits on it. Thus, ideology and profit go together.

Then take the newspapers. The important element that comes in play here are the social values for which various newspapers stand. Our newspapers in India have 12 pages; sometimes 16; sometimes even 20, with supplements and so on. Out of these pages, roughly half are filled with advertisements from leading advertising agencies who do influence crucial issues of editorial policy of the paper in some ways but not very obtrusive. For instance, all news is not from the own correspondents of the newspaper. It is bought from news agencies. The Indian news agencies are a very minor source – the P.T.I. and U.N.I. and one or two others, which are small. The worldwide news agencies, such as Reuter, the U.P.I. or the A.P.A. – these can be called news conglomerates. They produce 80 per cent of the world news with one particular ideological slant, with one general philosophical approach. Such news pour in like a regular avalanche. You select what you need, but the orientation is already built in. A good deal of stuff comes in which is

ideologically oriented in terms of content value and slant. It may not be always deliberate, but it is there. That apart sometimes they are even unscrupulous enough not to mention the source, and our papers go alongwith them. Last week, I noticed three stories without any bylines. I have seen some stories which were highly propagandist, condemning some political position taken by our own government here, but no source was mentioned. They are just there on the feature page with no credit line.

Similarly with the communal situation. If a newspaper wants to create communal disturbance in an area, there are several ways of doing it. One is to indicate that the government is failing; that government is weak; it is vacillating; it does not know its mind. If you go on pushing such a line, it does a great deal of damage to the government's credibility with a particular section of the population or in a particular region or even in the whole country.

The other way is to throw up suggestions through radio programmes or even through the T.V. You have the Pakistan radio station, Pakistan T.V. It can be from the Pacific Ocean where there is a station called 'Voice of Freedom', Berlin too has a 'Voice of Freedom'. There are other networks that way. Those messages converge creating an impression that the situation is getting out of hand; it is not something that the government can handle or there has been resort to shootings, which shows that the handling of the situation is inhuman and ruthless. All kinds of messages can be projected to create more bitterness, more suspicion, more lack of self-confidence in handling the situation. I will leave it to you whether you do discover in your reading of the newspapers, any such things happening in our context. I think the Americans at one stage had a definite policy – a Reaganite policy – that India must be taught a lesson. One way of teaching a lesson is to weaken and demoralize the fibre of the nation, of civil community.

Some counter-measures can be taken effectively by exposing the sources of the bogus news and mischief making. This requires resources and journalistic skill and a certain national spirit and ethos and elan. To a certain extent, it has been done, but not enough; more requires to be done.

This, in brief, is part of the international backdrop to the communal situation. It is not only on Punjab; suggestions have been thrown up on Assam, Sikkim, Nagaland, Manipur and a few other places. Inflaming the communal situation through suggestions can be sometimes very clever. For example, take the B.B.C. Their correspondent interviews somebody here. This interview is given to a newspaper here. Then the B.B.C. in its broadcast only quotes the Indian paper. Other countries pick it up from the B.B.C. and give it again a slightly modified form. So, it goes the full circle. The stories are cleverly twisted and used. They have skilled professionals doing it.

Coming to the national print media, first of all they are too dependent upon the foreign news agencies. A substantial proportion of India's national newspapers depend for their international news on foreign news agencies, and are subject to their orientation. The other factor is that the newspapers are a major economic unit with finances running into millions of rupees. These finances are provided by parties who control millions. A group which controls banking funds finances the newspapers, owns technology, operates a few thousands of staff on the printing side, editorial side and on the management side. It is a big operation. Newspapers like times of India or Indian Express have multiple editions. The organization is very big. My point is, that the people who own several newspapers, their ostensible reason might be to serve the public's information needs, there might even be some element of idealism, but by and large their main objective is profit and to keep their economic empires going. It is very necessary for them to ensure that the policies of the government are in line with their own interests. Their group interests dictate the editorial policy of that paper or that group of newspapers. So if Centre-State conflict is to be inflamed further, to suit their requirements let us say, with regard to a major industry like jute in Calcutta, the editorial policy would toe the line. This applies to other industries as part of their multiple operations – sugar, jute, heavy industries, iron and steel, whatever. These things have to be kept going in a profitable way and expanded to yield more profits. So the papers are brought in to give support, not in a very crude way, but with a subtlety that ensures credibility. If communal violence is to be inflamed, newspaper interests would not hesitate if it was necessary in their interest. On issues which involve no financial stake, these papers can take a patriotic line, to add to their credibility.

Let us take another aspect of communal situation and the media I am not talking of Punjab alone. I am talking about general situation including Assam and other areas. Here you see the role of the smaller papers and newspaper chain. The small newspapers are often sponsored by politicians or financed by them or by a local bigwig who is already in the State Government. So, the tie-ups become essentially regional, local, political and economic.

Such newspapers do not necessarily serve the larger national interest or the public interest of informing the reader so that he can form his own opinion on various issues, and use his vote or voice to promote the national interest. They serve particular political interests, or their own sectional interests. The saving grace is that they often cancel each other out through local rivalries in terms of sales. But that is only one aspect. Rivalry can also push them into sensation-mongering.

Next you come to the electronic media. In India they are state-owned and Central Government-controlled. Normally, it would seem that since it is

Government controlled, it would project the national outlook, but it is not so in practice.

In practice, the compulsions of making programmes, let us say, for six hours on T.V., with neither adequate technical personnel, equipment, nor resources forces it to seek advertising agency support as I explained earlier. The advertisers thus impose their orientations and the government not in total control.

On the news side the orientation has to be in terms of the needs of the political party in power at the Centre. Lacking sophistication in political propaganda the performance is very crude. There is heavy emphasis on the personal factor, the area being that the prime minister must be projected in a very big way and every day. This is the commercial advertising approach. It is like projection of a particular brand tooth-paste every day so that the message really sinks in. But as far as human nature is concerned, in terms of personality projections in the ultimate analysis this is counterproductive. The credibility can seriously go down if you are exposed too much on T.V. One of the unfortunate aspects of a T.V. image is that the more often you are there, the more are the chances that the negative side will also showup – in expression, in words, in sheer dullness or the banalty of what you say. Also T.V. might not remain totally-controlled by the Central Government. There is a growing demand that the second channel, or the third channel or the regional channel, should be available for the State Government. This is an issue under debate now.

On the communal situation, the impression is that our news bulletins and programmes are not well prepared, nor convincing and credible enough. They have a limited impact.

These apart, we have other media areas, such as books. Children's literature, for instance, is an important area. We do not use the right kind of messages regarding the dangers of communalism. They are usually exhortations about or moral duty or our religious duty.

Can something be done about the various areas which I have mentioned? We certainly have the intellectual resources to make the necessary changes. What is missing is a high enough motivation level. This situation too can be improved and there are many ways of doing it. I will give you one example. The government gives advertisements to various newspapers as a kind of subsidy as also to raise developmental-awareness. There is nothing to prevent the government, central or state, from producing intelligently edited supplements every fortnight or every week – four page material or two page material – and issuing them as inserts in newspapers. I do not see why the government cannot insist that the newspaper carry such supplements, say on the

communal situation, packed with facts, background material and sober, intelligent analyses, indicating the role of the citizen and the government and presented things worked out intelligently and entertainingly. The right type of professional skills can be engaged for this. There is no dearth of such skills in the country. Such a supplement would be read by millions of readers of the newspapers. The government could even pay for it.

One may say that too much money is involved. If the Central Government can spend Rs.30 crores on advertising for the Ganga clean-up in one year alone, just for three advertising agencies in the country to divide it up among themselves, to produce advertisement copy of the same kind as they do for tooth-paste, which hardly conveys any ideas about India's development, certainly advertisement supplements on other serious issues should also be bought out. If you can spend crores on the Festivals of India all over the world, money should not be a consideration for such a serious cause as fighting the communal ideology. Such counter-measures are necessary to counter the subtle propaganda of the foreign news agency in our papers as also the mischief of other commercial and political interests.

On the T.V. channels the time given to the advertising agencies for commercials and consumerist campaigns should drastically reduced in favour of programmes on other common cultural heritage which is a unifying factor; it brings communities together; it brings peach and goodwill among people.

At the state level the government can produce such supplements and give them to educational institutions; particularly at election time or festival times such supplements could be circulated even more widely and the response factor worked out. Circulation of the materials is not enough, the reactions must also be studied to shape public opinion. A dialogue or public debate must be initiated through such measures. Communalism and our media interact at various points for both good and evil. Such interaction, can sap the confidence of the people in the government and even the self-confidence of government itself. Then the citizenry and the government drift apart with dangerous consequences for both. We need a citizenry, ideally, not too much emotionally worked up about political and religious issues, but able intelligently to involve themselves in nation- building on the basis of information – solid information – provided, and to develop certain critical faculty to judge those issues and make the government respond to their opinions. At the moment they are virtually used merely as vote banks. The small, local leaders and agitators are the bank managers, who shepherd the flock. This is not the kind of citizenry which can sustain a democratic state today, often in disagreement with, if not conflicting reactions have to be faced. If we have a citizenry aware of its rights and obligations and we evolve a proper method of reaching it regularly with proper information, which is credible we can generate an attitude of mind and

an environment here which could probably being about the right response to communal ideology and violence. I have only mentioned two media, press supplements and T.V., there could be many more.

COMMUNALISM AS A COMMODITY IN MEDIA INDUSTRY

Subrata Banerjee

In any study of communalism the media have to be a major component. First, because of their role in mediating between society and the individual and between different sections of society, particularly in a pluralistic society such as ours. Secondly, the media constitutes an essential component of the total politico-economic and socio-cultural system.

I have been a media practitioner for over forty years now. I must confess that we, media practitioners, have an inflated perception of our place in society. We assume that we play a corrective role in relation to the polity and state structures.[1]

The reality is that the media are very much an integral part of the state structure. They cannot but represent, in essence, the interests of the dominant classes and ignore the real interest of the dominated classes. This does not mean that they are crude expressions of the ruling classes. One must also recognize that within the framework of the system and the state structure there are conflicts of interests, particularly in a pluralistic society. These are not necessarily caused by antagonistic contradictions. These conflicts certainly find expression in the media. Hence the phenomenon of the pro-government and opposition media, particularly in the case of the print media. At the same time one must also understand that no society or political structure or politico-economic system is static. Hence there are bound to be media which express a counter-culture and a counter-value system. This was the role that the Indian print media had, by and large, played during the days of our national movement. The Indian print media had, in those days, in the main, played the role of organizer, agitator and propagandist for the national struggle for freedom.

This experience shows that the media have an ideological role. They are not just purveyors of information, a claim that we media practitioner make all the time. Our self-perception is that of people standing outside the conflict and recording it objectively for the information of the present generation and for historical record. This is a false perception.

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[1] Most of our senior journalists are very much influenced by the International Press Institute, an organization dominated by the advanced capitalist countries and the transnational news agencies. Under the influence of this organization many of our senior journalists choose to delude themselves that they have an adversary role to play in relation to the government.

The subjective factor is very much there in the selection of facts, of news, their presentation, their structure and even the words used. It is not always necessarily deliberate. It is ideological also. But there are other compulsions as well, unwritten rules governing promotions and continued employment. This is so because journalism is today a profession, a job, and not vocation. The newspaper is an industry and an instrument of status-quo and not of social change. In a capitalist society the newspaper industry naturally represents the interests of the capitalist class. This, as I shall, later discuss is the reason for the dualism that we often see in the print media in relation to communalism. The print media necessarily reflect the ideology of the industrial or capitalist class. The general purpose daily is not merely a medium of information, but is increasingly becoming an instrument for creating political pressures.[2]

Hence, when we study the role of media in the context of communalism, we must do so within the framework of the existing politico-economic and socio-cultural system and the state structure. We must bear in mind the contradictions that have developed within the system. The structural changes that have taken place in the economy and the social relations arising therefrom, as also the problems of finding solutions, within the system and the existing state structure, of the contradictions that have emerged and the features that they have developed.

The analysis of the media, particularly the print and the visual media, will yield very little results, unless social scientists are able to relate the selection, presentation, structure and even the language of news and views within the framework of a profound overall understanding of the politico-economic and socio-cultural realities of India today. Just as the media are a product of and contribute to this reality, so also is communalism. Herein lies the primary relationship between the media and communalism. The social reality of India today and of India during the days of the national movement are different. So is the character of the media and also of communalism.

Therefore, I cannot avoid explaining my perception of the Indian reality, if I have to deal with my understanding of the behavior pattern of the print media in the context of communalism.

We are in the grip of a social crisis of an unprecedented magnitude and dimension. It seems to contradict and wipe out every achievement of our national struggle for freedom and accentuate every weakness. This is where communalism becomes a major issue. Every achievement of the last forty years of independent existence seems to have been turned into its opposite.

[2] To the general purpose daily has now been added the specialized dailies and periodicals, particularly the economic dailies and journals.

Economic development, democratic institutions and scientific growth, instead of being integrating factors seem to have brought to the fore all the national-ethnic and religious divisions and sub-divisions which had been subsumed by the massive anti-imperialist struggle for freedom.

At another level, however, integration has been achieved through the inherited colonial, political and administrative structure, modified to suit the requirements of the new classes which have come to power. Together with the development of technological, management and entrepreneurial skills a modern national bourgeois community has emerged, integrating politicians, the civil and military bureaucracy, senior professionals and Indian and even foreign capitalists.

Outside this integrated bourgeois community a plurality of structures continue to exist, based on a variety of modes of production within the overall modern capitalist mode of production and market economy. Uneven capitalist development and a multi-structured society, combined with democratic processes, has generated a consolidation of national-ethnic forces. This is most evident in the so-called green revolution areas, where the rich peasantry has now entered the process of capitalist industrialization. This new class is making a bid for political power. The explosive caste and communal situation is a related symptom of the fast developing social crisis. In the historical compulsion of bypassing several stages of socio-economic development and their ideological expression we have failed to complete certain profound structural changes, such as the reorganization of agriculture and ideological efforts to overcome caste prejudices and communal and religious divisions. Instead, these values have become integrated with the capitalist system that has emerged in India. As they subsume class antagonisms, there is a vested interest in the perpetuation of these anachronistic values, which are divisive in character. The time frame within which we have been trying to contain the emerging antagonism is too brief and demands a profound foresight and anticipation of the socio-cultural impact of the process of modernization and social transformation. As a result the contradictions inherent in any attempt to transform a pre-industrial society to an industrial society have been telescoped within a brief time frame and hence aggravated.

The lack of an ideological perspective and the failure to bring about changes necessary to build a nation state, have combined to make the different elements of the pluralistic social structure, threatened with inevitable extinction, emerge in all their fury in their struggle for self-preservation and domination. Every negotiated settlement founds on the rocks of such structures which have consolidated themselves within the system, and are prepared even to seek foreign assistance for their survival.

All this is taking place at a time when the world capitalist system is facing a major structural crisis. It is seeking a way out through the militarization of the economy and intensified neo-colonial exploitation, leading even to political subversion, backed by overt and covert military action. Every divisive force thus becomes a handy instrument for the fulfillment of imperialist designs. In this, ideology plays a very important role. And the media are the most effective carriers of the ideology of subversion.

I have mentioned earlier about the role played by the print media by and large, during the national movement, of integrating the anti-imperialist, nationalist forces. At the same time we must also admit that this role was somewhat limited. First, the reach of the print media was limited to the educated urban middle class, because of massive illiteracy. Secondly, the print media also fell victim, from time to time, to communalism. This is very clear from a statement of the eminent journalist of those times, Ramanand Chatterjee:

> Though Indian-owned and Indian edited journals cannot cause war, they can, nevertheless, foment inter-communal hatred and thus jeopardise the progress of the country.[3]

That the media as a whole failed to build national unity is also evident from the fact that partition was the price we had to pay for our freedom. This disruptive role of the Indian media, particularly the print media, has persisted and even increased in the post-independence years. This is also true of the government-owned media – radio and television. As far as the print media are concerned, one of the reasons for this state of affairs is that news has become a marketable commodity along with conversions of newspapers into an industry. In such a structure conflict is news not its resolution. The emphasis is not on the representative, but the exceptional, not on the significant but the sensational.

The First Press Commission, in 1954, noted:

> A great deal of the scurrilous writing that is noticeable in the press is often directed against communities and groups. Events preceding and following the partition of the country have left so many people with a sense of grievance against one community or the other that newspapers have found it a lucrative business to exploit these feelings. Such communal writings are not confined to the anti-Hindu or the anti-Muslim press. There has been unfortunately quite a great deal of attacks on different sections within the various communities.

[3] Ramanand Chatterjee (1928), 'Journalism in India', *Modern Review*, January.

> We have not been able to find many instances where the sober and responsible press have come forward to condemn such writings intended to vilify communities.

In the last 32 years with the expansion of the press this situation has become aggravated, but for a few notable exceptions.

At this stage it would probably be useful to discuss the structure of the print media in India in very broad terms. For our purpose, apart from the general periodicals and some of the specialized ones, which have a national readership, newspapers can be divided into four distinct groups: the so-called national press, the provincial press, the local newspapers and the sectarian or communal publications.

Taking the last category first, such papers as *Pratap or Vir Arjuna* of Delhi, for instance, have always taken an open communal stand. This is also true of the RSS paper, the *Organizer* and the Jamaat-i-Islami papers, such as Radiance.

We must also understand, when evaluating the impact of the press, the limitations of its reach. First, adult literacy is confined to only 36 per cent of the population. The majority belong to the urban areas. As far as newspaper readership is concerned, this figure of literacy is an over-estimate. Literacy, as defined for statistical purposes, is the ability to sign one's name. It does not necessarily mean ability to read and understand a newspaper.

Secondly, limitations of purchasing power prevent the purchase of a newspaper even by one who can read and understand. Even such purchasing power is greater in the urban than the rural areas.

Thirdly the circulation of the newspaper is concentrated in 2,600 odd towns and cities and to the small minority of the rural intelligentsia in more than 576,000 villages.

One must, however, point out that, generally speaking, there is still a great deal of confidence in the printed word, even among those who cannot read. What is more, each copy of a newspaper has about eight readers. Above all, the news published in a newspaper is also relayed by the reader to others who might be unable to read. Thus, what appears in a newspaper reaches a wider circle than the actual readership, through word of mouth, which still continues to be the most widespread and effective medium of mass communication.

In the circumstances, it should be obvious that the print media essentially reach out to and influence the educated sections of the population. It is a small minority but an influential minority. It is the section of the population which helps build public opinion at the lowest level. This is what gives such importance to the print media, the credibility of the printed word and of the educated. There are, of course, exceptions.

The local newspapers, because of the shortage of resources, rely a great deal on official handouts. They are also more directly influenced by local politics and try to increase sales through sensationalism. During communal violence, the government tends to avoid providing information. On the other hand because of the pervasive influence of communalism there is a tendency among local administrative personnel to provide information, which appear as leakages and hence are swallowed and spread with great gusto by the local press. The apart the lack of official information is replaced by rumours.

The provincial press, the news agencies and the so-called national press depend a little more on their own reports. Now a days they also attempt some sort of investigative reporting and in depth studies. The number of news and views magazines that have come up have also helped to encourage such features. Even so subjective attitudes of both the reporters concerned and of those who handle the news at the desk influence the selection, structure, presentation and even the language of the information and the analysis.

In this context the structure of the newspaper industry has to be understood. This is particularly necessary in order to understand the role of the so-called national newspapers. These include the *Indian Express* group, the *Times of India* group, the *Hindustan Times* group, *Hindu* and *The Statesman*. To those one might now add the *Anandbazar* group. Except the *Hindu* and the *Anandbazar* group, the rest are part of major industrial houses and represent their economic and political interest. A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Public Administration in 1980 revealed that in 1979, some 30 per cent of the total circulation of newspapers and periodicals in India was controlled by the group of newspapers owned by large industrial houses.

These houses own newspapers under different names in different states or produce multiple editions. The owners of these newspapers have different interests in the different states as also all India interests. These different interests and their involvement, both in the state and union politics, colour their attitude towards developments in the country. One has also to take note of their class interests in relation to the working class. It would be evident that the attitude of such newspapers towards communal disturbances would be more complex than that of provincial newspapers and local newspapers. In the final analysis, the big capitalists are concerned with the all-India market. They are concerned with the continuity of production and marketing. Hence, they would not like disturbed conditions to continue for long, although these might be useful at certain times in certain markets and also for creating and maintaining a division in the working class. Hence, a study of the so-called national newspapers might reflect contradictory trends. One might also find different papers of the same group following slightly different policies. This

would be particularly true of provincial papers belonging to big business groups.'

In this overall background, it might be useful to consider a few instances of press coverage of communal riots at different times and in different places. Some of the examples might point out the difficulties involved in any study of the press and communalism.

In 1964, the disappearance of the Prophet's hair from the Hazratbal mosque in Kashmir led to communal violence in India. This had repercussions in what was then East Pakistan. Refugees started pouring into West Bengal. On the railway station platform I met a reporter of a Bengali daily who claimed that he had already got a story. He had picked up a stock photograph from the newspaper's library, of a rather forlorn looking woman. The story that appeared next morning, woven round this photograph, gave a lurid picture of the murder of the menfolk of this woman before her eyes, and her being raped before she could flee.

No such woman had arrived that day. It was an entirely fictitious news. What was more irresponsible was that at that time the nationalist elements in East Pakistan had been fighting against communal riots and giving their lives to protest their Hind brethren. But that day's issue of the newspaper concerned recorded very high sales.

After the 1969-70 communal riots, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication conducted a series of round table discussions all over the country specifically on the responsibility of the radio and films at times of such social tensions. In course of discussions the role of newspapers also came up. The discussions revealed that newspapers gave importance to news of destruction of property or places of religious worship, but failed to give adequate coverage to the efforts at rehabilitation of the riot victims. The news of communal violence received far greater importance than the innumerable instances of members of one community helping members of the other community at great risks. Another revelation was that both in Gujarat and Maharashtra the local press was particularly partisan and the Indian language papers indulged in considerable irresponsible writing. The press gave excessive attention to lurid details and community-wise breakdown of casualties and loss of property.

The 1969 communal riots have to be seen in the context of the overall political situation in India. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was then fighting her battle for supremacy within her party. This had its repercussions in many states, particularly those states where there were strong elements opposed to Mr. Gandhi. At that time, as part of her struggle for supremacy, she was taking certain populist measures which affected the interest at least for the time

being, of the propertied classes, the vast majority of whom were Hindus. The communal riots became a political weapon in the hands of those opposed to Mrs. Gandhi. This had its reflection in the newspapers.

In 1980-81, the political situation was very different. The communal riots were related to overall economic changes that had taken place in the country. Hence, economic interests and allied political interests, apart from the purely business compulsion of higher sales through sensationalism, determined the role of the newspapers. Even some of the leading so-called national dailies failed to show adequate sense of responsibility. Reporting in many cases was tendentious. Local rumours were passed off as news. Even the all India Newspaper Editor's Conference was compelled to admit that some newspapers had magnified the tensions and violence and given credibility to unconfirmed figures of casualties. Analytical articles and editorials spread communal hatred, at times quite blatantly.

The items of false news were quite formidable: recovery of foreign weapons, overstay by a large number of Pakistanis engaged in 'mysterious activities', sudden emergence of Pakistani spies, ordinary crimes given communal colour, beating of Pakistanis in Lucknow, allegation of police arresting innocent BJP members to appease Muslim discontent against the arrest of Khaksars, brutal murder of administrator of Moradabad Municipality, 168 corpses of policemen in Moradabad handed over to the DSP in gunny bags by the district hospital, 400 Homeguard jawans missing in Aligarh, and so on.[4] These are some of the items I had collected at that time. All these were later contradicted. The contradictions were either not published or tucked away in some remote corner of an unimportant page.

An important national English daily, *The Time of India* carried an article by a retired IG of police maintaining that there were more arms in Moradabad alone than in the whole of the UK. Coming from a police officer it was expected to be more credible. From the very beginning *The Times* accepted the story that there had been firing from the Idgah on 13 August. In its editorial on 15 August it went all out against Muslims. Girilal Jain, the editor, next day wrote a signed article which appeared to be very objective and detached, but exonerated the administration and the Hindu communal parties and was full of insinuations, sometimes not very subtle, against the Muslims.

[4] As if this was not enough, distortions and tendentious conclusions were published against Muslims to exonerate Hindu communalists, especially the RSS and its various front organizations, as also the police and the PAC, notorious for their communal attitude. Inflow of petro-dollars from Arab countries to certain Muslim institutions was presented as source of finance of the riots. The majority of 9,000 holders of gun licenses in Moradabad were reported to be Muslims. Moradabad was described as a Muslim League stronghold in pre-partition days and hence obviously the Muslims were responsible for the riots. The vast number of licenses in UP were claimed to be in the hands of the Muslims.

This was then used for a discussion in the Reader's column as a free for all. It provided a good opportunity for Hindu communal elements to give expression to their vicious ideology. What was most interesting was that a senior journalist later visited Moradabad. His reports gave the lie to all the allegations that his own newspaper had splashed across the pages and his own editor had elaborated on with such great gusto. By this time the mischief had been done.

The times of India, when reporting and commenting on the riots in Godhra in Gujarat, found itself over-anxious to protect the administration. It virtually came to the conclusion that communal riots cannot be prevented. *The Hindu,* another prestigious national daily, edited by a young person with distinct CPI (M) leanings, editorially took a non-communal stand. At the same time it carried stories and articles which were not only tendentious, but unabashedly anti-Muslim. It carried an article blaming the Congress (I) for appeasing the Muslims and thus creating a communal atmosphere. The article also described Kashmir as 'virtually a Pakistani province'. After all this the author piously called for a ban on all communal parties and appealed to the two communities to sit across a table and sort out their problems.

Most of the newspapers either ignored or played down instances of communal harmony in the midst of all the bloody deeds in UP and elsewhere. The news of Id prayers in a Puja pandal in Calcutta was not news. Neither was a memorandum of the Jamaat-Ulemi-i-Hind. The only exceptions among the papers I studied were *Patriot, Indian Express* and *The Statesman.* Their special correspondents were quick to respond to the situation with their investigative reports. Each one of them squarely blamed police provocation for the Moradabad riots and the aftermath. The *Tribune* editorials commented on examples of communal harmony and called for their widest publicity. The *Hindustan Times* remained colourless in its coverage.

You must have gone through the Index of Abstract of news on communal tensions in Punjab, prepared and published by CRRID. In May 1982, the *Indian Express* carried at least six items of such world shattering news as headlines of bodies of calves, cows's ears being found near villages or temples and so. In some cases the source of the news was reportedly which is an euphemism for a rumour. Similarly, another report 'according to informed sources' maintained that Dal Khalsa would place several heads of cows outside a Hindu temple. Demands for a ban on cow slaughter by organizations never heard of became news. The Congress (I) was by implication accused of appeasing Sikhs when it was discovered by the investigative journalist that the organization was losing Hindu support. It is significant that it was in this period that the editor of a local Punjabi weekly in Patiala was arrested for communal propaganda. The *Times of India, Hindustan Times* and even *Patriot* published similar stories.

After this period of provocations to create communal tension, the anti-social gangs started selective killings. This was the occasion even for *The Statesman,* for instance, to indicate through implication, the community to which the killed belonged. In October 83, when seven passengers were pulled out from a bus and brutally murdered, the incident was not only described in all its gory detail, but it was pointed out that Muslims and Christians were spared but 'seven belonging to one community' were killed. A Hindi daily carried the news under a colourful headline: 'That Night When Extremists Killed Passengers One by One'.

The Ludhiana massacres of March this year were covered by *Tribune* with the photograph of blood at the place where unarmed persons had been gunned down. That an RSS man had been killed was emphasized. The *Patriot* carried the same story together with a statement from the RSS Punjab unit condemning the action as an attempt to create tension between Hindu and Sikhs. The *Indian Express* emphasised the role of Hindu organizations as an aftermath.

As far as the earlier period is concerned, the Lok Sabha Speaker, Balram Jakhar has rightly pointed out that it was the media that made a hero of Bhindranwale. His popularity and militancy grew in proportion to the publicity his blood-thirsty statements got in the press.

In recent months, even the Press Trust of India, which in the past had generally been cautious, have been describing the activities of the criminal elements in Punjab in such terms as: 'nine gunned down of one particular community', 'forced three passengers of a particular community and pumped bullets in them', and so on.

The latest subject of concern in the newspapers with regard to Punjab is the migration of Hindus. The *Times of India,* in its issue of 20 July 1986, covered the news on its front page as the middle story on top of page with a fairly provocative headline, 'Fear Haunts Migrants'. The story described in colourful words how afraid the migrants were, even hundreds of kilometers away from their troubled homes, that they refused to give their names or allow their photographs to be taken. There was a dramatic narration of how a 25 year old youth escaped when terrorists came looking for him.

I was reminded of the stories that I used to read in the Bengali papers during communal riots in the fifties and sixties.

The *Times of India* even quoted the Hindu communal organization Rashtriya Suraksha Samity, as declaring that there was no government in Punjab and Hindus were being killed daily.

Such coverage could be defended in terms of concept of the role of the press as propounded by the International Press Institute. It claims that the obligation of the press is to report faithfully, accurately, fearlessly, without any concern about the impact on society, the government or anybody. One wonders if this concept covers such reports as presented as reportedly or 'according to informed sources' and so on.

This story of migration has also been covered in a very sober fashion by such newspapers as *Blitz* and by such responsible journalists as Harji Malik. The June 21 issue of Blitz carried the report under the headline: 'Migration Will Play into Khali Hands'. The narrative described the co-existence of increased activities of criminal elements and peaceful commercial and agricultural activities in those very areas from which migration had taken place.

While not underestimating the seriousness of the situation the report also pointed out that many had moved outside the disturbed districts to places within Punjab and relatively few had gone out of the state altogether. It recognized the fear that had gripped even the Sikhs who no longer dared to give protection to the Hindus and pointed out that those who had fled were either the rich or the very poor. It thus recognized the reality that those who had a stake in the soil of a place and limited resources could hardly enjoy the luxury of seeking refuge elsewhere. The report also pointed out that the Punjab newspapers had been looking up lists of people who were reported to have migrated, while the government had been underestimating the figures. It also accused the Shiv Sena and the BJP of raising the bogey of 'communal rioting' the like of which was not witnessed 'even during Bhindranwale days or after Operation Blue Star'.

Harji Malik in the *Forum Gazette,* reprinted in Mainstream of 21 June also emphasized the 'contradiction of realities' in which one came across 'Sikhs and Hindus chat together, Sikh dhabas do a thriving trade with Hindu customers and vice versa' in busy mandis and crowded bazars. She wrote of migration of Sikhs from Hindu majority areas and of Hindus from Sikhs majority areas and the killing of Sikhs as well as Hindus by the criminal elements.

Harji Malik wrote:

> One got the feeling of ordinary people of both communities struggling desperately for sanity, for normalcy, struggling to cling to the life they have known against forces which are trying to tear Punjab apart through insensate killing, through fear and suspicion, deliberately incited hatred.

She gave examples of Sikhs refusing to boycott Hindus on the call of the AISSF, but afraid to give them protection. She also pointed out that the situation was

under control in the rest of the Punjab outside the border districts, but this 'does not make the headlines.

The *Times of India,* however, has been making use of the situation to foment Hindu communalism. On June 26 it carried an editorial: 'If Akalis Unite', in which it is categorically stated that the 'litmus test' for the Akalis to remain in power legitimately is the use of that power 'to do their duty to the Hindus'. This has been the tone of lead articles and editorials for some time whipping up in anticipation the so-called Hindu backlash.

Even news items which seem innocuously interesting have such a bias. Recently the *Times of India* carried a story on advertisements of properties for sale in Punjab appearing in the newspapers. It went on to show how the Sikhs, who were in a better position in Delhi, were offering their properties for sale and extorting fancy prices from Hindus fleeing from Punjab and selling off their properties at throw away prices. This is a very legitimate news story and yet it has major communal overtones with an anti-Sikh bias.

One of the biggest communal campaigns has been mounted round the Shah Bano case and the Muslim Women's Rights Bill. There have been two distinct responses in the press – the liberal and secular and the frankly communal. The most insidious of course are those which project a communal point of view under cover of an apparently liberal approach. The communal response, whether Hindu or Muslim, has been more or less predictable and mutually reinforcing. The Urdu press in the main has fallen victim to Islamic obscurantism. The regional language press has in the main reflected varied shades of Hindu communalism.

The Urdu press has more or less refused to even consider the liberal and rational attitude in the Muslim community. It has been generally hostile to the reformer, such as Asghar Ali Engineer. The basic thrust of the other newspapers, which have taken up a hypocritical position, that the Muslim Women's Protection Bill is discriminating against them, it has violated the principles of the Constitution and there is a need for a universal civil code. On the face of it these are unexceptionable from a secular and liberal point of view.

The problem is that, given the social pluralism, in the present context which I have discussed earlier, the solution is not as easy as it is made out to be. Here there is a deliberate and conscious refusal to recognize the objective social conditions which have created and are continuing to create a sense of insecurity among Indian Muslims, making them, easy victims of obscurantist religious propaganda.

The real character of this approach is clearly evident from a study of the articles of Arun Shourie in *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and of Prem Shankar Jha in the *Times of India.* The *Times* articles referred to Urdu newspapers which have welcomed the Bill as a victory for the Muslims. It then argued that the battle front would now shift to the Babri Masjid. After expressing great sympathy for the Muslims and criticizing the appeasement of religious obscurantism. Jha turned to the subject of the inevitable Hindu backlash. What followed amounted to a virtual justification for a Hindu backlash.

Jha maintained that 'such a backlash has been at least fifteen years in the making'. In support he pointed not only to the 'politics of caste' but alleged that Muslim fundamentalism was an 'echo of the fundamentalism sweeping West Asia' and referred to 'wanton killing of innocent Hindus by machine-gun-toting Sikh terrorists in Punjab'. As if this was not enough, he went on to build up a case for the allegedly Hindu perception of the democratic system as a major threat to Hindus because of caste reservation of jobs, the UP communal riots for which by implication the Muslims are blamed and the 'sudden influx of money into religious and educational institutions and the attempts at mass conversion', and the Muslim Women's Protection Bill seen as a concession to the two nations theory.

Jha claimed that 'Hindus of all shades and castes' felt that they were a 'beleaguered majority in their homeland'. In this context he commended Mrs. Gandhi's visits to Hindu temples and religious leaders as 'little gestures' that kept 'Hindu fundamentalists and notably the RSS out of balance'. At a time when the BJP was getting back to its old RSS mornings openly, Jha gave it the certificate of becoming 'increasingly secular'.

It would be useful find out when suddenly the press made so much of the Shah Bano case. In reality this case was only a reaffirmation of two other similar Supreme Court decisions in the Tahira Bai case in 1979 and the Fazlunnabi case in 1980. In both cases alimony was awarded but there was no stir. In both these case the issue was social oppression against women and the question of Muslim Personal Law had not been raised at all. Unfortunately, in the Shah Bano case reference was made to Muslim Personal Law, ignoring the reality of similar oppression of women in other communities, particularly, amongst Hindus as well.

Shah Bano had been fighting for ten long years without the press or Hindu chauvinists showing any interest whatsoever. A women's right has been converted into a Muslim and hence a communal issue, by talking about a great victory for Muslim women. The call for common civil code, however correct in this context, has got communalized as if there are no flaws in the Hindu Code or Laws for other communities. This attitude has meant a virtually massive

campaign against Muslim Personal Law. This has only helped strengthen Muslim conservative, obscurantist and communal elements as well as Hindu communalism.

There is enough material today to conduct a serious and detailed study of the print media in terms of their contribution to social cohesion or otherwise. The Punjab situation and the Muslim Women's Protection Bill have provided enough material about the reaction of the print media and their impact on public opinion. As Seema Mustafa, writing in *Telegraph,* quoted in *Mainstream,* has rightly pointed out the media had failed to draw attention to the fact that the Bill, together with the Ram Janmabhoomi issue, have helped undermine democratic unity. They have helped accentuate communal division.

This approach gives new dimensions to the suggest study, beyond the limited framework of communalism. It would be considered as part of the role of the media in the entire process of social transformation. It would also help a more profound understanding of the likely motivations and results of the social policies of the present government. One cannot help wonder whether communal and other divisions are not a weapon to keep the people divided so that the ruling elite at the centre can ensure their political security at the expense of the destabilization of the country, which, in the ultimate analysis, can only serve imperialism. Before concluding this rather sketchy study of the print media in relation to communalism, I would like to refer to one or two other recent issues. Take the Karnataka-Maharashtra border and language issue. The local press, both Marathi and Kannada have been biased and vicious. The Marathi press described the Kannadigas as 'goondas' and the Kannada press described the Mahrathis as 'pundas' or rowdies.

An article in the Kannada paper *Lok Darshan* discovered imperialist ambitions of Maharashtra which extended to Goa, where there was a Konkani versus Marathi agitation going on.

On the other hand *Tarun Bharat,* the Marathi daily described the Marathi speaking people of the border regions in Karnataka as 'living in an occupied territory'. The situation has been likened to Palestine. It is ironic that this pro-RSS paper has never supported the struggle of the Palestinian people.

One has also to be concerned when reporting incidents across our borders. *Patriot,* for instance, in its issue of 23 May headlined a news item about Bangladesh thus: 'BDR Massacre 160 Hindu Tribals at Border'. The news item refers to the killed as Hindu Tripuris and the participation of Muslims in the massacre. Such reporting can obviously provoke communal reaction across the border in Tripura and even in other border states.

Such newspaper reporting is taking place together with efforts to build up an environment which attacks the very concept of secularism. The *Times of India* carried an article, "Towards a New Secularism" by Karan Singh, in its issue of 24 May. Karan Singh, who has been closely associated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, argues that the separation of the Church and state concept does not arise in India, because no church has ever existed. Hence what is valid is Sarva Dharma Sambhava. The emergence of the Muslims, Sikhs and Christians at certain period of our history with 'churches' of their own is conveniently ignored from the Hindu point of view.

Karan Singh naively confuses the law and order responsibility of the state with state cognizance of religion as a social force, by referring to the state's involvement when mass attendance at place of worship take place. With other similar false arguments he goes on to call for the incorporation or our multi-religious heritage in the 'new education' system being proposed. All this, however, adds up to an appeal to understand the depth of Hindu feeling about Rama's birthplace as also the emotional trauma of Muslims witnessing idol worship in a mosque.

The role of the print media is very directly connected with the role of government and the administration at times of communal conflicts. During the recent incidents in Barabanki over the Babri mosque and Ram Janmabhoomi clashes, Lucknow newspapers put out news item inspired by the district authorities which laid all the blame at the door of the Muslims. This is very normal. After every communal riot the police and the local administration mount a massive cover up effort with the help of the local press. This has been my personal experience too, though in different way. During the Ahmedabad riots in 1969, while some of the local press took up a Hindu communal attitude, *Times of India* reporters were harassed by the Gujarat government for trying to expose its partisan attitude. My personal investigations revealed many such instances and I wrote about them in *The Illustrated Weekly of India.*

This had a significant fall out. When the Bhiwandi riots broke out in the same year, the Maharashtra Government refused to give me a curfew pass to visit the area and even threatened to put me under arrest if I went anywhere near the place.

In UP in 1980, journalists who relied solely on police briefings became party to spreading false news and thereby contributing to communal violence. The police and the administration gave false figures about the number of Pakistanis overstaying in Moradabad, concocted story of 500 Muslims advancing towards Sambhal on 17 August and attacks on police stations by Muslims on 13 August, also reports about firing from the Idgah and the presence of armed gangs at the prayer meeting, explosion in a Delhi mosque

linked with an alleged Muslim conspiracy to start riots all over Delhi and UP, mini-bombs in a Lucknow mosque which turned out to be fireworks in a neighbouring house of a professional manufacturer of crackers, discovery of cannon and hazookas which turned out to be steel tubes, and so on.

The self-perception of the journalists themselves and their professionalism are also factors to be considered. The IIMC had conducted a study of perceptions of the communicators of social tensions, in a number of cities in 1979. The study revealed that the journalists were very smug. At least 50 per cent felt that their reporting had helped prevent further aggravation of violence. They claimed to have given a balanced account. They were all for 'objective' reporting of facts. Their perception of the causes of violence did not go beyond caste tensions and communal conflicts arising out of different incidents and failure of the administration to take precautionary measures.

The journalists interviewed trotted out the usual arguments of lack of education, socio-economic disparities, fear psychosis, political manoeuvers, activities of anti-social elements, rumours and slackness of law and order.

The study came to the conclusion that there was a general feeling that the press had contributed substantially to aggravating and even building up communal tension and violence.

A study of the print media and communalism cannot be confined merely to the coverage of and comments on communal incidents. Communalism is an expression of the incomplete social transformation and the distorted development of capitalism in our country and the ideology born of such a situation. Hence communalism cannot be studied in isolation. As I have mentioned earlier it has to be part of a study of the role of media in social transformation.

Hence, such a study has to be a continuous process of monitoring the coverage of a whole range of news items and comments. One has to take note not merely of the reporting of events or their placing on the page, their presentation, the language used and so on, but also how a value system is built up over a period of time. It is in this context that one has to identify news and comments that have some bearing on the spread or otherwise of communal ideology.

It would be necessary also to understand the relationship between the proprietors and the government, local or central, their specific economic and political interests, both in the long term and the short term. It is also necessary to have some idea of the character of the readership, the type of people the newspaper concerned reaches and possibly influences and their potential influence over the formation of public opinion.

The task of studying the print media as a continuous process has assumed major importance. New technology has made it possible to publish a single newspaper simultaneously in different parts of the country. This process has already started. This means that the big newspapers, those controlled by big business, are beginning to reach all over the country. They are as yet seeking a news pattern which can affectively combine regional interests with national and international interests. The net result will be a certain amount of standardisation of news and comments. This will have a marked impact on the formation of a national ideology. Imposition of the ideology of the big industrialists, without taking note of regional variations, could cause greater disintegration and conflicts. One would also have to take note of conflicts of interests amount the big industrialists in the struggle for market. It could also lead to an aggravation of conflicts between the rising regional industrialist class and the rich peasantry on the one hand and what might be described as the national bourgeoisie with nation-wide interests. In such conflicts the role of the newspapers can differ from issue to issue, from one type of conflict situation to another.

A study of the print media and communalism would call for a multi-dimensional approach within a much broader framework than the subject would seem to indicate. It is impossible to study the media or any single aspect of ideology in isolation. Communalism as an ideology has to be understood in the context of the present system and its operation. The media are instruments for projecting the ideology of the ruling classes and for the consolidation of the system. Hence the media cannot be studied in isolation from the system and its operation. Ideology cannot be studied like a science. Hence the need to seek for the significant expression rather than to deal statistically with the general. More subtle the presentation or expression of an ideology, the stronger the impact. These are some of the diverse components that should to my mind, go into the evolution of a methodology for the study of the media, particularly the print media and communalism. The basic issue is the social relevance and the character of the print media in India today.

PRINT MEDIA AND COMMUNAISM

Iqbal Masud

I am not a trained sociologist not indeed trained in any kind of discipline which may have a direct bearing on communalism. On the other hand, I have lived through the forties and the partition as a concerned and involved young man. What I am submitting before you is the record of empirical impressions, not a sustained conceptual analysis.

The definitions of communalism are legion. I shall take, for working purposes one given by Wilfred Smith as far back as 1946 in his Modern Islam in India. He writes: 'Communalism in India may be dealt with as that ideology which has emphasized, as the social, political and economic unit, the groups of adherents of each religion and has emphasized the distinction, even the antagonism, between such groups.' The words 'adherents' and 'religion' have been taken in the most nominal sense, meaning in the most literal sense. Smith's book was written in the fire of the battle of partition in 1946. I read it a t that time. It is out-dated today in some respects, but what is more remarkable is the large number of respects in which it is relevant.

I think we should apply our minds a little to the connection between religion and communalism. It is very easy to say 'Religion is as private as your tooth-brush'. This was a common saying at the time of partition among leftist circles, and it was considered elevating and progressive to articulate this. All of us believed it in those days. Communalism is bad: this is what the leftists used to say. Religion you can have; it is your private affair; but when religion becomes communalism it is bad, because it affects other groups. That was the orthodox and stick thinking of leftists in the forties. I think we should more precisely analyse the ways in which religion strays into communalism. This is very important. People say, 'Religion and politics should be kept apart'. It is very easy to say that, but are they apart in India? Are they apart in Poland? Forget India. Forget even the Middle East. What about the Republic of Ireland, which has recently by a 85 per cent majority defeated a referendum on divorcee? What about Poland, where a nationalist uprising is taking place through the Catholic Church? Indeed, in the forties you could never imagine that religion would ever come back and play the role that it is playing in the world today.

The most misleading writing has been on the Khoemeni revolution in Iran. There is a book by Dilip Hero, on Iran under the Ayotullahs. Dilip Hero is an Indian. He is a Sindhi. He has migrated to England but he was born in the

Muslim area of undivided India. He was brought up amongst Muslims. So, he has an access to the Muslim mind. I think his is one of the best books on Khoemeni's Iran. It is also one of the books which brings out why there should be a realistic approach to the connection between religion and politics. We cannot simply consider religion as an out-of-date concept. Hero describes the improvement in the living conditions of the people which Khoemeni has brought about in Iran.

I have sensed this straying from religion to communalism in my own mind in moments of analysis. Not only in my own mind, but in the minds of my friends. I will give you one example. Recently, I was talking to a young lady who happens to be employed in a newspaper. The majority of employees in that particular establishment are Muslims. I said, 'Possibly it is so because the standard of that particular paper may not be very exacting; and there people have to find a home, a place to earn their daily bread, and so this man has given them jobs'. She pointed out, 'This is exploitation by the Muslim proprietor of these people'. He pays them low wages because he knows that they have nowhere else to go. It is this kind of a dispute that arose between us. Even after so many years, these things happen. Finally we understood each other, but what I am saying is that if I were she and she were I – she was a non-Muslim – we would think differently: we would look at the things differently. Therefore, it would be hypocritical to think that if you consider co-religionists with a degree of sympathy, or understanding, that straightaway becomes communalism. This is what they used to think in the forties, but things have changed.

Unless we study this problem from a multi-dimensional point of view, our efforts towards mitigating communalism will remain academic. The problem lies deep in our minds and in our consciousness, it is not primarily religious; it is social; it is economic. Basically centuries of memory of history, especially as it has been written, have shaped the thinking of the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in certain ways.

In this presentation I will concentrate mainly on the Hindu-Muslim problem because I am familiar with both personally and as a student of communalism. India has been faced with a communal situation right through the centuries, right from the start of what is called the 'Muslim conquest'. They were Arabs or Turks conquests. They happened to be Muslims and honestly that made a difference. Will it be true to say that the invaders of India – I am taking about a certain school of historiography – in the middle period were Turks or Afghans first and Muslims secondarily? This theory has been advanced by very respectable historians whom I admire and whose point of view I generally share.

In a way, we contribute to communalism by the wrong teaching of history. Certainly, this factor has contributed to communalism. Historically, the race memory is not always a lie. Some people say that it was a Muslim race. Is it true to say that? Although the foreigners came as Afghans, as Moghuls, as Turks, why are we saying that it was a Muslim race? Now, the fact is that they came to India and they fertilized it. In North India they spread richness. In this respect North India is different from South India. You know the Kazis. Every Kazi used to regard himself as a propagator of the Muslim faith. The Kazis were there among the Turko-Moghuls or Turko-Mongols. The Turko-Mongols were very conscious that they were s superior race – that they were superior to the Muslims in India when they first came. At the same time, they were also conscious of their Muslimhood. On the other side, the Rajputs did feel that they were fighting for their gods, for their deities, for their women, for saving them from outrage. That is also a fact.

The other day some gentleman brought to me, since I am a T.V. critic, the script of a film – a T.V. serial that he is making on the forts, where the Rajput commander had to surrender the princess – his daughter – to the conqueror in order to save himself. I regard it as a compliment that that gentleman brought it to me, a Muslim. That showed that he had enough faith in my objectivity. He asked for my opinion on that scene.

Both myself and my wife say it, and anybody who sees that film will be struck by it. I could not dismiss it as being communal. I doubt that the script will be approved, but if it is approved, it will be seen by millions in India, and the millions are bound to respond. They will feel a sense of humiliation; they will feel the tragedy involved. This has nothing to do with the way history is taught. This is an incident that happened, and it is something that will affect everyone who sees it. Of course, it can be presented differently. If I were to do it, I would present it differently, but this does not mean twisting of history. This gentleman himself felt the humiliation, that hurt; he looked at it with the eyes of today; and now he is trying to project it through the media.

When you talk about the media and communalism, I feel that you should go deeper into it; you have to have a sense to climate of that particular period, which after 1,200 years, is still prevalent. This gentleman, a friend of mine for a long time, is showing something perfectly secular. This scene is something unpalatable, and such unpalatable facts have to be faced, dealt with, and presented in their historical context. It is a most uncivilized thing to happen according to the norms of today, but it happened in the past. The ‘injustice’ has to be understood in that context; it has very little relevance today. What happened then and what happens now have to be shown. How you do that? It is very subtle. I may not be able to do it, because I am not a film-maker, but his is a challenge for people who are in the media.

History has not merely to be taught in the schools, but taught accurately. It cannot be taught in such a way that Aurangzeb and Tippu Sultan will always remain a hero to Muslims and Ranjit Singh to Sikhs. Let me give you some examples. I read an article on Amir Khusro. Dr Ansari has prepared two cassettes. The producer is somebody else, a non-Muslim. It is a marvelous production on Amir Khusro's life, the various events, the music, the compositions sung by famous qawwals all over India, Afghanistan, Persia and elsewhere. Dr Ansari, being a Marxist, has not idolized Khusro. The other day there was a gathering at Amir Khusro's tomb and the President of India came.

When you see that kind of official presentation, and you read what the life of Amir Khusro was like you realize that this official function is a mockery. Amir Khusro was an artist and a mystic, but unlike his Pir, his Guru, Saint Nizamuddin, he was also a career man. He was found in the courts of the Sultans. He had to go along, because the pre-Moghul period was much more barbarous than the Moghul period. He had to go along with the invasion; in fact, it is on record how these Sultans invaded Bengal; the fight put up by the rulers of Bengal in those days and the massacres that took place. Amir Khusro suffered these things; he wrote of these events in his diary, but did not publish them. He did not protest to the Sultan.

I wrote an article about Khusro. A reader wrote to the Editor giving quotations from the writings of Amir Khusro to show he was communal and accusing me of covering up this fact. For a moment, I thought I would reply, but then felt it would prove counter-productive. Somebody else, non-Muslim replied to that letter. He said, 'We have to take the thing as a whole'. He pointed out that Amir Khusro had to be given credit for his contribution to Indian music. One may not like a particular aspect of a person but there might be something else in him that is likeable.

I shall mention one more incident. This pertains to Shri. G.V. Iyer, a film-maker and a very good friend. He made a film on Shankaracharya in Sanskrit. Before that, he had made a film in Kannada 'Aamsa Geethee'. My wife comes from the same area; so, both of us went to see that film. It is a very beautiful musical: it is about a great musician of the 18th century. At the end of the film, there is a scheme of Tippu Sultan, admiring the singing of this musician, says, 'You must come and sing in my court'. The musician refuses. Not because Tippu Sultan is a Muslin but because the musician does not want to become a court musician. Tippu sends for a soldier and puts put the musician's eyes. After the film my wife asked me, 'Did this really happen?' My wife happens to be a descendent of Tippu Sultan. I tried to find out the historical source of this incident. May be it is recorded somewhere, but my efforts did not reveal it. Yet, the film depicts it, and it is a very outstanding musical film. It does convey the music of that day. It won National award.

These are the dilemmas that people face when they deal with Indian history. Even if history books are written correctly, as urged by leftists, the position would not change. I do not have a cut and dried answer to this problem. What has to be done is not merely to change the text-books, but to change the context of teaching, so that these events are really understood as happenings of the past, with no bearing on the present.

What I have said just now may be considered prejudiced or even communal. I can assure you it is not so. R.S.S., B.J.P. and Jamiat-ul-Ulema are not alone responsible for the present crisis. This feeling has grown over the last hundred years. It is a product of history. Unless we recognize this, and take it as a historically established reality, no advance on the secular front can be made.

To this we must add two more facts. The pauperization of the Muslims has taken place in the last few decades after independence. Gulf money has of course come recently. Everybody knows about its effect on Muslims; it has made some Muslims prosperous; even materialistic. The prosperity of some Muslims is visible. It has created hostility not only among the less prosperous local Hindus but among the Muslims too.

However, the prosperity is set off by the larger drop-out rate of Muslims from schools. Gulf money has not changed the relatively fantastic drop-out rate of Muslim boys from schools. The drop-out rate of Muslim girls is even more. This is a reflection of the past economic position of the Muslims. Because of their poorer qualifications their performance in examinations is poor. This year in the I.A.S examination not a single Muslim has qualified. In the year in which I was selected – 1950 – there were more than 15 in the first hundred, and that was soon after the partition. Communal feelings were high. Some of the Muslims are saying today that there is discrimination against us. Actually that discrimination should have been much more at that time. The Muslim population in India, immediately after partition, must have been about 10 per cent but here was 15 per cent representation in the I.A.S. and the Central services. This has to be noted by the media.

The popular conception is that the media manipulates, that it smudges social reality. This is a good word used by our friend Pramod Kumar – that the media 'smudges' – which means that it does not totally obliterate, but it somehow colors the situation, the truth of the situation. But is it always so? Is it not equally true that the media reflects, albeit distortedly, some bit of objective reality? Consider the following passage from a recent editorial in a national daily. I am talking about the *Times of India.* In a recent editorial about Rajiv Gandhi's acceptance of the Muslim Bill Mr. Girilal Jain wrote:

> Rajiv Gandhi has delivered a body blow to the cause of secularism, nationalism and modernism in the country.

> Indeed, it would be an exaggeration to say that on no issue since the imposition of internal emergency in 1975 has there been a greater measure of agreement among educated Indians than on this.

What is to be noted is the technique in which a certain proposition is set out; the way it is set out; the symbolism employed; the images employed; the rhetoric employed. Particularly, I would like you to note this in regard to two top journalists – top in terms of clout, in terms of power. The two top journalists today are Mr. Girilal Jain and Mr. Arun Shourie. I want you to study their writings over a period of time. You will realize that there is a certain technique being employed packaged in a lot of learning. I do not discount the learning. But the learning is used simply to overwhelm the mind of the reader. The standard of education in the last fifteen years in India has been so poor and mediocre that if something is quoted in the *Times of India* or the *Indian Express* or any other leading paper, it is unquestioningly accepted. Nobody disputes it. I think the Gandhi has given a body blow' and he has delivered it to the 'educated Indians'; he has said that the educated Indians are unanimously against the bill. From the vast body of Indians, he takes out a certain section; he picks out the 'educated Indians'. There are one or two more paragraphs that follow. He says,

> Even before Rajiv Gandhi took over as Prime Minister he is known to have made casual remarks which suggested that his Muslim countrymen baffle him.

We do not know when Rajiv Gandhi said this. In fact, if he had said this about Hindus or Sikhs or the generality of Indians, it will also have been correct, because in the morning, when I take up the newspaper, I read that there was a riot here there was a riot there; so many people were killed here; so many people were killed there; and so on.' This baffles me too. The point is that Mr. Girilal Jain is putting this remark in the mouth of Rajiv Gandhi. He says,

This was not particularly surprising. This is the cleverness of the intellectual. He goes on,

> Progressive non-Muslim Indians, especially in North Western India… who have grown up in the post-independence India have not had Muslims as friends or opponents because upper-class Muslims have migrated to Pakistan. Apparently, it is true of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi as of most others of his class and young generation.

I would like to write the whole article, but I do not want to take up your time unnecessarily. You see, two propositions are made. First, the Muslim Bill is a

blow against secularism. I am not quarreling with that; it is a matter that you might look into. But the other point that he makes, that educated Indians are against this bill – how does Mr. Girilal Jain come to this conclusion? What is his circle of friends among educated Indians which enables him to say that educated Indians are against that action of Rajiv Gandhi? Who are the people he excludes form the class of educated Indians? Because the upper-class Muslims have gone away from India, therefore, there are no Muslims worth the name with whom Rajiv Gandhi or any other educated non-Muslims can consort. Of course, this is a false statement. The people who are there in the Cabinet – I am not talking about qualifications or anything – just look at them. There is Mohsina Kidwai; there are so many others I am sure Rajiv Gandhi must have known them ever since he was a boy. These facts are all forgotten. The man who reads Mr. Girilal Jain's writing will not remember that there is lady called Mohsina Kidwai which is a family friend of the Nehrus. Then comes the conclusion.

> …different Union Ministers have spoken of the feelings of the Muslim community as if it is a self-contained monolithic entity in the affairs of which non-Muslims are not entitled to intervene in any way.

This is the important conclusion and in this involved writing you are likely to miss what Mr. Girilal Jain is saying. If you take the article of Mr. Girilal Jain as a whole, what he is saying is that good Muslims have gone away to Pakistan. Now I am not disputing that Muslims have gone away. Muslims have suffered the most because of partition, because they have lost their pre-independence leadership I India. In Pakistan the whole of the old leadership which went from India has been side-tracked because it could not survive in the atmosphere of militarism. That is another matter. The point I am making is that since they have gone, can Mr. Jain say that Muslims in India are no longer capable of looking after themselves? That is what he implies. So non-Muslims should look after them. One cannot accept an argument of this type. I am also for non-Muslims entering into the affairs of the Muslims and becoming leaders. I have said so in print. But my reasoning is not the same as Mr. Jain's.

To my mind, the article of Mr. Girilal Jain is offensive, and yet – and this is important – it will be accepted as pre-eminently reasonable, rational and secular by millions of readers. Such articles are precisely dangerous because they do not appear in papers like *Organiser*. It is the recent phenomenon of consolidating communalism by the secular press that needs more careful examination than the blatant communalism of the rabid press.

Before I come to a test-sampling of the secular press, let me make a few general points. Capitalist society is favourable to the growth of communalism.

Indian capitalist society is especially favorable to the growth of both Hindu and Muslim communalism for a variety of reasons. The commanding heights of the economy of this country have come to be occupied by people who happen to be Hindus. I will give one or two examples. The uprising of 1857 was perhaps the last time, apart from the Non-Cooperation Movement, when the Hindus and the Muslims fought the Britishers side by side, retaining their separate identities. When we say the British followed the policy of 'divide and rule', we have to be careful about what we mean. It was not 'divide and rule' at one point; it was 'divide and rule' at various historical points. After 1857, the Muslims, because they were nominally the leader heads of the uprising – there was the doddering tale of oppression. The result was that many of the openings in trade and things like that (it is a historical accent; there was no conspiracy) came to be occupied by the mercantile classes of Hindus. Not by all classes of Hindus, but by certain Hindus who, even during the Moghul period has been involved in the business of finance. By the time the British changed their attitude, somewhere in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, these mercantile classes of Hindus, who were hard-working, had already consolidated their position and they have not been displaced ever since.

One more historical fact is that the centres where industry has grown – Madras, Bombay and Calcutta – as the main bases of Indian capitalism, were far from the centres of Muslim power and Muslim culture. This also helped the Hindus consolidate their economic power.

This has nothing to do with the communal problem. It is the caste system that operated. Certain classes or sects among the Hindus were powerful. As a result of their strength the rest of the population, both Hindus and Muslims, have suffered. That point nobody remembers. The Muslim bourgeoisie were trapped in this process. As they were less advanced the Muslim middle class began substituting communalism for religion. They said they were defeated in the economic competition not because they were less clever but because the Hindus had conspired against us. So they said, we must get out of their trap by asking for partition. The Hindu middle class reacted.

The whole matter came to a head in 1906, when you had the partition of Bengal. After that, the Muslim League was formed. How did the Hindu middle classes react to the type of reasoning? The reaction was not expressed openly, but it was there, and it is there even today. The Hindu middle classes became nationalist which gave their communalism a very acceptable face. A Hindu nationalist liberal, who has what I will call a separatist, feels he is not a separatist because he is in the majority. So what he says passes for nationalism; whether it is real nationalism, nobody will question.

Who, for instance, will question this article of Mr. Girilal Jain? In fact, I saw a dozen letters praising that article, saying that it is the most rational and the most national article they have read for years. Since the Hindu middle class is far wealthier and more developed, the secular demand for equal treatment means, in practice less share of the cake for the minorities. The other day, Mr. B.R. Chopra, a film-maker, wrote an article in the Sunday Observer. He said, everybody wants reservation of seats: the Muslims, the Scheduled Castes, the Harijans, but what about Indians? It was very amusing to read it, because 'Indians' in Mr. Chopra's thinking actually means Hindus, because the majority of Indians are Hindus.

What I am trying to say is that in a situation which is basically unequal, the demand for equality leads to inequality. That has been recognized by the Americans. They have coined the phrase, they call it 'affirmative action'. You say that the Scheduled Castes and the backward classes – the intermediate class; this is another hoax. I am not going into that. In a democratic country like America the principle of reservation is accepted; it is not called reservation, but 'affirmative action', affirmative action means, that for weaker classes like the Blacks, the Spaniards and so on a quota of jobs has to provided. This has been upheld by the Supreme Court of America.

It is no paradox to say that the anti-national, aggressive attitude of the dominant community itself constitutes communalism in a very sophisticated fashion. Being bourgeois, the Hindu middle class must crush any upstart and rival bourgeois that seeks to develop. They must treat the other bourgeoisie in the same manner as they themselves were treated by the British. We have forgotten how in the 19th century the British monopoly capital treated the Indians.

This attitude is still existing. This is one of the most potent reasons for the recent rise in communalism. This is behind the Ahmedabad riots; before that, in Moradabad and again in Panvel and other places like Thane and so on. I could see this because I was there myself, next door. This is what upholds the new hegemonising ideology.

Now, what is the real meaning of these recent catch-phrases that we are hearing again and again from Mr. Arun Shourie? Politics and religion must be separated. Secondly, separateness of religious groups leads to suppression. Basically, analyzing this attitude as an ideology, is what you call the hegemonising ideology of the dominant class. Now, the dominant class does not want any disturbance. This is a very critical period in the history of Indian capitalism.

The capitalists say they were kept down by the so-called 'Nehru syndrome'. I say 'so called' because I was part of the administration of the Income Tax

Department and there was no Nehru syndrome anywhere. But sometimes even hypocrisy has some advantage, because you cannot do certain things shamelessly. Now that inhibition has collapsed. It has collapsed after the 1985 budget of Mr. V.P. Singh. The doors are thrown open. We have an open-door economic policy. Now, the capitalist economy must take off. At this moment, it is imperative that the 'nation works well'. For whom the nation works well, that is a question that is best not asked.

These people are not called communalists. They are not the R.S.S. types; they are not he Jan Sangh types. I agree. But they are expressing the vision of a capitalist class which, by accident of history, happens to be the dominant class. It does not represent the majority; the monopolist houses do not represent the Hindus, but still they happen to be Hindus. This is another point. A very careful distinction has to be made. We should not ourselves become communal. That is why I am making this distinction.

Now, before I close, let me give an illustration. There are three recent articles by Mr. Arun Shourie – long articles, which deserve notice. They began appearing in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* from 5 January 1986, and continued in three subsequent issues. They are supposed to be a detailed examination of the Quran or the Hadith.

I will give you a personal recollection. There is an R.S.S. cultural front organization called Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute in Delhi. They had invited me and one or two other Muslims – I think the only other Muslim was Badruddin Tayabji, an old I.C.S. man- for a conference with other intellectuals including their own people like Nanaji Deshmukh, etc. First, there was an official meeting, and on the second day, they invited me for an informal discussion. They were very nice and very courteous. They had so many points about the fears in the Hindu psyche regarding Muslims. A significant exchange took place when I met Mr. Arun Shourie. His articles on religion and politics have since been published in a volume. He said, 'India is a very strange country; if a man says something critical about religion, he is dubbed a communalist. I want to write something about the Quran and the Haldith. I will not be surprised if I am dubbed a communalist.

I intervened at this point, because I could see the danger in the direction the gentleman was going. I told him, Mr. Shourie, before you launch on your enterprise let me tell you, thousands of words have been written about the Quran and Hadith by learned scholars. I have a simple question to ask you, without knowing Arabic or Persian, how can anyone master their intricacies? And this is what you are trying to do. As a man who has been brought up as a Muslim, who started learning the Quran even before he was ten, I can say so. Many apparent contradictions have struck me. For example, drinking is

prohibited to Muslims. Now, that injunction comes in two or three places. I will not go into details, but in each place, the nuance is different. In some places, the injunction is not total. It is said, "Don't pray in the state of drunkenness." Finally, of course, the injunction comes that you should not drink alcohol. It is easy for me to sit down and write: The book does not seem to be able to make up its mind. The point here is that there is a place for all this scholastic argument. A sacred book like the Bible was stripped apart in the 18th century – some three hundred years ago – by European scholars. Still the majority of people continue to be Christians even today in Europe and America. Do you, think that today the hold of religion is lost in Europe and America? Their churches are not filled, particularly these days, but it is nevertheless a fact that religion is not dead over there. Whether it is good or bad is not my point, but my point is: Why do you want to create this problem?

Mr. Shourie replied, 'Then should I say that the fatherhood of God has become the brotherhood of man?' I said, 'That is a very good thing. You say it. It is not wrong. Every religion says that the fatherhood of God is the brotherhood of man.' Afterwards, during lunch time, he told me, 'I am going to write a book emphasizing mainly the unity preached by the Muslim sufis.' I said, 'That is a very good thing.' But on the other hand what we get are these articles in *The Illustrated Weekly,* which are full of totally selective quotations. I do not say everything is wrong; it will be foolish on my part to say that.

There are two points. One is that this is a selective onslaught. In 1986 when we are facing the Punjab problem, when Ahmedabad, Moradabad, and indeed the whole of India, seem to be aflame, is it the right time for any analytical discussion of holy books, which are held by certainly 99 per cent if not 100 per cent of that concerned groups in great reverence? Is this the time to do this, and that too, in a popular weekly? I will not refer to the articles, but I will tell you one thing: how unfortunate it is that not merely the writers, but even the editorial approaches, are wrong. Editors are not supposed to comment on what is there in the article. But there is not only a comment by the Weekly editor, it is a one-page comment. One particular paragraph I shall read out to you. The Editor says, '…in what is inescapably the most important series of articles he has written in the last few years, Arun Shourie urges us to get down to the specifics before this becomes another Muslims vs. the rest issue. Before the knives and guns take over…

This is extremely objectionable, because in January 86 there was no riot at all on the issue of Muslim personal law between Hindus and Muslims. In fact, there has been no riot even after that on this point. There have been demonstrations by Muslims. I saw one of the biggest demonstration in the country – totally peaceful – two lakhs people. Slogans – very objectionable

slogans in my opinion – were shouted against Chief Justice Shri Chandrachud. I will come to that later in the discussion about the Supreme Court judgement.

In Patna people were killed in police firing, not in a riot. It is after that, that riots took place about the Babri Masjid, the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, at Panvel, on the rath yatra and so on. You may say that this is a contributory factor, and you are entitled to have an objective opinion, but can you say, 'Before the knives and guns take over…'?

No Hindu is interested in the Muslim personal law. It is the intellectuals who are making this a national issue. I do not approve of these demonstrations by Muslims. I approve of the ratio in the decision taken on the narrow issue before the Supreme Court – whether a Muslim divorce woman should get maintenance allowance or not. I do not approve of the reasoning of Chandrachud. That is another matter. The decision is placed before the public. Once this kind of kick-off is given to the matter, what do you expect? People who are not interested – the Hindus who are not interested in this – will think, these Muslims are totally unreasonable.

In fact, one of my former college-mates in Christian College, a good friend of mine did say jokingly, "What is it that these Muslims are doing? Why?" This is what will happen if you read these articles. In a passage in the Quran quoted in the Shourie article, which makes it appears as if there is a primitive attitude towards women. It says, 'Women are you pastures; go and enjoy them'. In the same passage, there is another point a little later which says 'Women and men have equal rights in the matter of marriage'. A Muslim apologist would take the last lines and will ignore the first.

What is today's permissive literature? What are the great novels like Decameron and so many other similar writings? They are all a celebration of sex. It is rare to find it in Islam because Islam is said to be a puritanical religion. Why cannot Islam be considered a puritanical religion? Why cannot you see those lines as a exposition of the lawful joys of sex? If you say it should not be there in any religious book, that is another matter, but the translation of that particular portion gives the impression that somehow man is considered the superior being. But if we know the Arab culture, if we know the Arabs then we would know that this 'superiority' which we read in the translation is there in life. You can read some kind of a anti-women posture in that line and say that because of this attitude Muslim women are kept down, but is this kind of interpretation objective?

CINEMA, T.V. AND COMMUNALISM

Iqbal Masud

In this presentation, I am going to discuss communalism, and cinema and T.V., but not necessarily that cinema and T.V. which is either directly influenced by communalism or which preaches integration. I am referring to the culture of popular cinema and T.V., which has some bearing on the question of communalism, with particular reference to my subject of study, namely, the relationship between Hindus and Muslims.

A few nights ago the prime minister was addressing a ladies' Study Club at Delhi. Talking of culture he said, 'There are two kinds of culture: the one you see at the Festivals' – and here the T.V. inserted a clip from the Paris Festivals of India – and then he added, with a condescending smile, 'The other is the culture of the Hindi movie.' I do not know whether our prime minister watches popular Hindi cinema: I do not think he has the time, but if he had, I do not think he would be so condescending. Some time ago, Sridhar Kshirsagar, the man who made the T.V. serial Khandan made a documentary about Hindi films, which he called The Great Film Bazar. In it, he said, 'Hindi film is not about Indian culture; it is the Indian culture'. I think this is an exaggeration as was the prime minister's condescension.

The sociology or the psychology of Hindi cinema is a vast subject. From the point of view of communalism, I shall try to highlight a few of the salient aspects. I shall make one general remark. On the positive side, Hindi cinema is a powerful integrating element, but it is also a carrier of reactionary ideas. These are the two faces of Hindi cinema. On the one hand, it does integrate; on the other it also carries elements in our culture which are reactionary.

There is a lot of literature about the way the Hindus and the Muslims perceive each other. In the media, the most important channel of such perception is the cinema, particularly in Hindi popular cinema. At this stage, some reference to the history of films is necessary.

The first Indian silent film, which was made by Dadasaheb Phalke, was Raja Harischandra. This film was ostensibly based on Hindu characters from mythology, but it also had a great impact of Muslims, because the suffering in the cause of truth, that this film embodied, is also a recurring theme in Muslim literature. In fact, the martyrdom of Iman Hussain was an image of this concept. So, films like these strengthen communal understanding though that may not be their function.

There were not many distinguished or landmark films immediately after Harischandra, but it is interesting to examine the various elements that went into the gradual evolution of Hindi cinema. Basically, it is folklore: the tradition of song, dance and music that has been there in our theatre of centuries. There is the *Nautanki* of M.P. and U.P.; the *Jatra* prevalent in Bengal; *Yakshagana* in the South; and, most important, the commercial theatre which grew in the twenties and the thirties in Bombay, Calcutta and other places. It was called in Bombay the 'Parsi theatre' simply because the Parsis were the managers or the producers. A notable element was the rhymed dialogue of Agha Hashar Kashmiri. All this is a real storehouse of direct or indirect reference to Hindu and Muslim mythology and history – stories of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, of Laila Majnu, of Imam Hussain's martyrdom.

Recently there have not been very many good films, when we look at them from the point of view of sociology or psychology. There was a film recently, *Greaftaar* with Amitabh Bachhan and the South Indian actor Rajni Kant. Rajni Kant played the role of a Muslim Sub-Inspector. He was killed in an encounter with dacoits, and Amitabh Bachhan who is a Hindu avenged him. The whole point is that the theme in this film – how this killing of the Muslim Sub-Inspector was portrayed, even the set, the scene, the big plain and all that – was reminiscent of the martyrdom at Karbala of Imam Hussain, so much so that the Shias of Jammu and Kashmir objected to it. This film was made by a South Indian producer; so, you see how many elements are involved in this.

Now, let us take an early film of the thirties, *Vidyapati*. I doubt whether any of you have seen it. That was a great film, which I saw in 1936. To many like me – Muslims – that film was a great revelation. In fact, I learnt more about Hindu culture from that film at the age of 13 than from any book or personal contact subsequently. This shows how wrong it is to dismiss mythological or religious films as communal. It is a rather important point which I would like you to take note of, because this is not fashionable thinking, at least it is not fashionable thinking in Bombay. 'Some of such films are communal but many of them are part of our spiritual (not religious) world. In fact, it used to be a tradition not to review mythological films. I broke that tradition in 1979. Our thinking about films has got into such a groove that I feel that it is time we stopped and re-assessed it.

For example, I reviewed *Kalyug*, and for doing that I read Irawati Karve's book on the *Mahabharata. Kalyug* made by Shyam Benegal was based on the *Mahabharata* story of Karna. Karve's book is a more anthropological study of the story. I found in the treatment an exact parallel of *Kalyug*. If you study the *Mahabharata* deeply and read the modern studies on *Mahabharata*, you see how shallow the film is.

I will give you one example. Karna is killed by Arjuna's arrow while he is changing the wheel of his chariot. Arjuna is reluctant to shoot the arrow, because among the Kshatriyas it is a tradition not to shoot when the enemy is not fighting, but Krishna tells Arjuna that Karna is not of his clan, even though Krishna knows the secret of Karna's birth and that he is a Kshatriya. Krishna conceals this fact and Karna is killed.

I personally think that it is perhaps the most important scene in world literature. There are so many nuances involved in this situation about the caste system; about morality; about one's duty. I am not talking about it, but about the file. In this film, Shashi Kapoor is changing the tyre of his care and some lorry runs over him and kills him. Where is the richness of the story. This is the kind of thing one has to see wen one watches films which are supposed to be based on our ancient culture.

I come back to film history. In the nineteen-forties we began to get what are called 'socially aware' films. The subjects taken up included, besides untouchability, labour-capital relations and communalism, etc. One of the most famous films of course was Shantaram's *Padosi*. I do not know if that film has been seen by many of you. It is about a Hindu and a Muslim. They are very good friends. They play chess. On some occasions, they quarrel and then become enemies – bitter enemies. Then there is a big flood where one saves the life of the other and they become friends again. This was made in the forties round about the time of partition. The relationship between Hindu and Muslims was deteriorating, and Shantaram deliberately made this film with good intention of doing something to restore harmony between Hindus and Muslims – communal harmony. I am in two minds about films like *Padosi* which deal directly with the Hindu-Muslim problem. The film-makers' heart is in the right place, but in a medium like film, that is not enough. You put up stereotypes- of course, good stereotypes – and you blur the dimension of the problem. You establish an unnatural friendship; build up an unnatural hostility; and then bring about an unnatural reconciliation; whereas the truth of the matter is, as I have myself experienced, both subtler and sharper. There is a love-hate relationship; there is wariness; there is a touch of contempt on either side; there is a feeling of exclusion and distrust; and of course an element of fear.

E.M. Forster refers to it in *A Passage* to India. When Dr. Aziz wins his case, the Magistrate, Das comes and embraces him. At that time one feels a sort of kindness towards the other; but at the same time, one feels a bit of distrust; they do not really embrace with warmth. Foster remarks that the Hindus and the Muslims in India know too much about each other to be friendly! Whether it is correct or not, it is a perception.

Now, let us come to the Poet Iqbal. He wrote two famous poems – in 1910 and 1916 – *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i-Shikwa*. Those who are interested should read them, because they show one very interesting aspect of the Muslim mind. *Shikwa* is, of course, a complaint to God. Why are the Muslims being beaten down? He is not talking so much about the Muslims in India; he is talking of the defeat of the Turks in Europe by the various Balkan powers. Of course, Turks were imperialists and they were rightly pushed out. But Turks were Muslims, so Iqbal regarded their defeat as a defeat for Muslims. In 1916, he wrote *Jawab-i-Shikwa* and God gives a reply to the Muslims explaining why they were defeated, why they failed. One of the reasons he gives is that the Muslims in India have fallen too much in love with Hindu culture. Of course, he puts it in a very poetic fashion- *Bute Hindi ki mohabbat me Brahmin bhu huwe*. This is the kind of love-hate relationship. Iqbal if he had not been an Indian, could have not been able to divine that there is an element of Hindu culture which attracts Muslims. An Arab or a Turk could never have written such a line; for the Arabs and the Turks, Hinduism is a closed book.

The failure of the Indian cinema is that it has never attempted to convey this complex strain of feelings. I sometimes feel that films which take up national integration as a direct theme do not serve their purpose. On the other hand, the Hindi cinema of the fifties, which I regard as the golden period of Indian cinema, tended to promote national integration, not in a direct fashion, but in an indirect fashion. Films like *Do Bihgha Zamin, Awara, Mother India* and *Jagte Raho* will always appeal to the Indian masses regardless of caste or community. These films do not bear on the communal problem, but it you analyse them carefully, there is an element of what one may call 'positive Indian-ness'. It is this element which, if allowed to grow to full bloom in the widest cultural sense, will be the most powerful solvent of communal separatism and not development or progress, because development and progress, as we have seen in the seventies and the eighties, can promote communalism.

Let us take *Pyaasa.* There is not a single obvious Muslim character in that film, except perhaps a jokey, played by Johnny Walker. On the other hand, if you take the cultural ethos of Pyaasa, it owes its success to five great artistes: Guru Dutt, Sahir Ludhianavi, S.D.Burman, Waheeda Rahman and Geeta Dutt. All these people came from widely differing backgrounds. Guru Dutt was a Brahmin from Karnataka, brought up in Calcutta; S.D.Burman and Geeta Dutt were Bengalis; Waheeda Rahman was brought up in – for those days – a progressive South Indian Muslim family; Sahir Ludhianavi was from Punjab – a Muslim by birth, but a communist, or ather an anarchist by conviction. Yet, between them they produced not only the greatest Hindi film of popular cinema but the most Indian of Indian films.

Let us see how this was achieved. The film begins with a very heavy, ornate Persian verse. You see the poet Vijay, played by Guru Dutt, lying in a park. There are bees all around. It is a very sensuous kind of camera work, and the lines, if I remember correctly, are: *Ye haste huwe phool; ye mahakta huwa gulshan; ye rang aur roop me doobi hui raahen.* This is totally stylized verse; the camera work is appropriate to the mood. The tale then goes on to that style of old-fashioned heart-break romance, i.e., between the poet and the girl played by Mala Sinha who marries a rich man – a rich publisher – later.

Then something else happens, unlike in the usual Hindi film. An element, which is similar to *Devdas* with a twist, enters in the person of a prostitute, Gulabo, played by Waheeda Rahman. The poet Vijay goes downhill; the husband of his former love is a rich man, who tortures him psychologically and emotionally. The love of Gulabo is sublimated in the famous bhakti fashion in that very famous song, *Aaj Sajan, mujhe ang laga do*. Of course, then comes the radical, revolt element, which is sort of expressed in the final song; *Ye mehalon, ye takhton, ye tajon ke duniya.*

So, you have three elements in *Pyassa*: one, perhaps what we call 'traditional Muslim culture'; the second, there is bhakti, and then the third, the modern protest trend – all these are found in this one film. A film like Pyaasa, without obviously trying for Hindu-Muslim or any other integration, due to all these various elements, gives a complete sense of belonging to this country. The new wave films became models – I would not say 'copies' because some of them were very good artists, e.g., Mani Kaul – in Indian conditions of what was being done in Europe. These young people who could have brought something new to Indian Cinema, something that is aware of what is happening around the country, failed to deliver the goods. Take the last film made by one of these groups, *Damul*. It won all the awards; in fact, when I met Mrinal Sen he told me, long before the film was given an award, "it is a fantastic film; you must come and see it." So, I went and saw the film, and I asked him, "For whom is this film made? If this film is made for the Bihari peasants, they are not going to understand why the camera is going round and round like this. They know that this thing is going on." Now, *Damul* is a good effort; I will not condemn it on that point; but where *Damul* fails is in communicating emotion, intensity, beyond a certain circle of people who know about cinema. If you make a film like Damul about the struggle between the landlords and the peasants and corruption going right to the grassroots, then my submission is that you are taking the fire away out of that situation.

On the whole, I think the leftists make the mistake of overemphasizing economic factors as determinants of communalism. Today, how many people will see *Damul*? It was shown on T.V., which has a captive audience. I have got two Bihari boys working in my house. I asked them to stay, and see the film. I

said, "It is your story." But, they walked away within half an hour. Later on, they said, "We know all this. We have been through all this. We do not want to see it on the screen." They have to be educated out of that, but how?

The good popular cinema settled down to safe themes, as in *Sujata*, or *Anupama* – i.e., untouchability and marriage of girls against their will. These are safe themes. In the sixties you could make a film on these themes, but if you go to the fifties, Hindi popular cinema was not like that. *Mother India* is an adventurous film; so were *Awara and Jagte Raho.* Even people who made some of those films in the fifties came back to all these safe themes in the sixties. Of course, those were good films; decent films, but what was new that they were saying? The so-called Muslim socials like *Mere Mehboob, Pakeeza* or even *Chaudvin Ka Chand* by Guru Dutt did little to bring down the nawabi culture to the sixties or the seventies. They put men and women in those situations – beautiful dresses, beautiful houses to live in, tragedy of heart-break – and they helped segregate the culture of Muslims.

I remember, when I was an income-tax official in Bombay, a big Marwari gentleman who was my friend had come to my office to discuss his case. Suddenly, after seeing *Mere Mehboob,* he changed his whole dress. He came dressed like a nawab. I asked him, "What is wrong with you?" He said, "These are beautiful dresses; Muslim culture is very good; I would like to dress like a Muslim." This is the kind of thing which, in the long run, is not going to help integration at all. In fact, it will lead to communalism in a very subtle fashion, in the sense that it will say that 'Muslim' culture is like this; it is not changeable.

In fact, films such as these did a disservice to integration by identifying 'Muslim' culture with a particular life style. They picked upon the Muslim educated classes at a time when Muslim society was actually undergoing change, when the lower middle-class Muslims were rising up in the scale, relatively as a result of the various five year plans, not all of them, but some of them had come up. Before 1947, the lower middle-class Muslims were looked down upon. Nobody would give his daughter in marriage to one such. In the last thirty-forty years, thanks to India's independence, due to whatever limited development that is taking place, these lower Muslim middle-classes have also taken advantage of it. Since they have been insulted from the Hindus – apart from the business dealings, unlike the middle-class Muslims who before 1947 had had a lot of social dealings with Hindus – they are not aware of the Hindu culture – I mean the Hindu way of living in the real sense. So, even today when these Muslims are coming up, they are coming up in a cloistered way, and they do not feel very comfortable in their mind.

In the seventies, we had, of course, *Garam Hawa.* It brought out the pauperization of the Muslims in India, while others went to Pakistan. I think it rather over-emphasised the Muslim-ness, but again it dwelt on Muslim culture too much. It glamorized it too much and so it falsified the real situation. There was glamorization with the presence of beautiful women – all Muslim women are not beautiful. You had this kind of thing – huge havelis and all that. Still I would give positive marks to *Garam Hawa* which was the first film that attempted to show the after-effects of partition.

Some interesting developments took place in popular cinema which people do not seem to have noticed. I once wrote an article on the presentation of the Muslims in Indian cinema. This was called *Shah-en-Shah Se Mian Bhai Tak* – (From Shah-en-Shah to Mian Bhai). 'Mian Bhai' is a term used in Bombay for the poorer class of Muslims; it is a kind of patronizing word. What I meant to say was that late in the thirties the Muslims were presented in an affluent image. Take films like *Pukar:* zamindars and kings. Gradually, over the period from the thirties onwards up to the eighties, the image of the Muslims began to correspond to the decline of Muslims in real life, in economic life. For example, there is a film called *Palki.* It is a very orthodox film, where you find the havoc played by dowry. To get hold of a dowry for his daughter the Nawab has to auction his big place-like Haveli. It shows the economic decline of the aristocratic class. This was one stage.

Finally today, we have in almost every other Bombay dacoit-goonda type film a Muslim character. He is not the main actor, but he is the lieutenant of the goonda or dakoo – not in a bad sense. The Bombay commercial people are careful and fair. He will be loyal to the daku or goonda who is fighting against social injustice. Before he dies he will say the *kalma.* This presentation also is in accordance with the decline. So, the economic decline is reflected in the same way in the popular cinema as in the new cinema. If you see the new cinema, you will feel that India has not changed; that India is only divided between landlords and peasants; between them some fighting is going and there is no other division in India.

I would like to refer to two films of the eighties: both were made by Manmohan Desai: *Coolie and Mard. Collie* is a total exploitation of Muslim sentiment. Amitabh plays the part of a coolie who is a Muslim, very devoted and orthodox, and there is a very delicate touch. This is not surprising because many literate people are employed to write these scripts and poems – people like Javed, Kadar Khan, Masoom Rahi Raza and Hasan Kamal. Suddenly in these bad films you get poems, statements and concepts which are very sophisticated.

I will give an example. In *Coolie,* the Muslim railway coolie has always a hawk on this wrist. The hawk, according to Iqbal, represents the aspiring spirit of a Muslim. It has been put there in a religious sense – of the coolie trying to make himself rise above his situation.

That is one aspect. Then you have a very emotional scene – in fact, one the best scenes of Amitabh. As a Muslim, he has a desire to go to Haj, but he has no money. What a Muslim does when he has no money to go to Haj is to visit a would be Haji and catch hold of his hand and tell him, "You please do the Haj for me." It has to be done in a formalistic way. All this is done by Amitabh. This is also a very, very cruel attempt to exploit Muslim sentiment.

Then we come to *Mard,* which is, if I may say so, literally a celebration of Hinduism. I say so because in between these two films a debate ensued between me and Manmohan Desai – it has been published in *Filmfare.* It was a debate between me as a film critic and Manmohan Desai as the producer. You have Mahesh Bhatt also in the debate. I asked Desai, 'Why have you exploited the superstitions of Muslims in *Coolie*?' Manmohan Desai understood my point. He said, 'Muslims liked my film; they are attracted to it; you know, Iqbalbhai, I had given one song sequence in *Mard* which made Hindus jump out of their seats.' Mard has a powerful appeal to the Hindu sentiment.

There are a few signs of hope in the new cinema. Recently I saw a film called *Mirch Masala.* It is made by Ketan Mehta who had made *Bhavni Bhavai* and *Holi*. These are good films. In *Mirch Masala* the themes of the thirties has been taken up. Nasiruddin Shah plays the part of a tax-collector sent by the British in the thirties to collect tax dues from the villagers. There are many things involved, including music – beautiful music of the thirties. But the interesting point is that Ketan Mehta uses the stereotypes of commercial cinema – he uses the stereotypes even of *Coolie* and *Mard.* But he has used them in a very fresh way that creates really a kind of integration, and an integrationist mood, arising out of that. For example, Om Puri plays the part of a Muslim watchman of a chilli factory where all workers are women. The tax-collector wants one woman out of them (Smita Patil). The way Om Puri fights to protect the women is like a scene out of an American Western. But it is played with a certain style and with a certain 'Muslim-ness' which is very touching. All other characters are, of course, Hindus. This kind of a conscious sophisticated use of traditions in cinema, can certainly pave the way to the mitigation of the feeling of separateness.

Now, I shall refer very briefly to the T.V. – T.V. before the Asian Games and T.V. after the Asian Games. Many people do not realise it, but the Asian Games marked a break in the way T.V. presented images to the Indian public. Before that – they used to show some mushairas, some qawwalis and so on

for the Muslim; and for the Hindu side, some religious functions, processions, bhajans, etc. Suddenly, after the Asian Games, when colour T.V. came, all kinds of modest portrayals of Indian life were abandoned. What we began to get were elaborate qawwalis, elaborate rath yatras, elaborate bhajans, etc.

I will give two specific examples. The tenth day of Moharram is regarded as a very holy day. It was on that day the martyrdom of Imam Hussain took place. It is mourned with great intensity by Shias in their houses or in their assembly halls. I have been to one or two of these assemblies. The question I wish to raise is, objectively, whether it is appropriate to put that on T.V. – not one or two flashes, but the whole process, including the lecture by the Maulvi – of this mourning for half-an-hour or so. You should know why I say this. In 1984, for nine days of Moharram I was in Karachi, and every day two hours where being devoted to this. It was extremely sophisticated, a very skillful, a very devotional presentation by the Shia lecturers who are trained theologians. On the 10th day, I flew to Bombay, and that night, Majus was also being shown on our T.V. I found the portrayal in no way less intense than what I had seen in Karachi.

You may defend this by saying that India is a secular State, but to my mind this is an extremely difficult question. I am against detailed religious programmes.

Similarly, we saw a function under the banner of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Then of course there are the rath yatras. The point that one desires to make is: once you do this, the problem becomes acute. Would you approve of the noticeable diminution of the infant secular culture in this country This problem I shall leave to you to discuss. At the same time, we cannot keep out religious aspects. Indian culture is religious, but on the other hand, why do you have this powerful presentation? Why show these things on those occasions so elaborately? You see, the audience is terribly moved. Similarly, at the time of the bhajans you can see the audience going into an ecstasy. There is a considerable effect. So, you have to make a policy choice. You want to show that this is a reflection of Indian religion. But it should not overwhelm viewers.

Secularism is a modern concept. Secularism as a conscious culture is modern, and I do not see anything wrong in that. But what are the roots of secularism. They go as far back as the Roman law. They came from the West. If you say that the world is one and we cannot keep out anything, I can see nothing wrong in that. But how do you convert it, so to say, into Indian terms? This is too big a topic for this presentation, but this is the central point which our T.V. has to take into account.

One more brief point. I objected very strongly to the detailed reports on terrorist killings in Punjab – giving details of where the man was killed, how he was killed, where he was hiding, etc., making no mention of the other killings

in other parts of India. On the other hand, what the T.V. did two weeks ago was to show two items of news. One news item which took by my watch, three minutes, dealt with a Jain Muni saying at length that the Hindus do not feel safe in Punjab – he did not use the word 'Hindus' but meant it – and so long as they do not feel safe, Chandigarh should not be transferred. Next day, Mr. Chandrasekhar of the Janata Party made a statement that Chandigarh should go to Punjab. The very same evening, the T.V. news said that the local Chandigarh unit of the Janata Party had said that Chandigarh should not be transferred till the terrorists' activities stop. I do not object to this as a point of debate, but why should the T.V. telecast these things when they have not been decided at the appropriate level?

One last point I wish to make about T.V. It is concerned with the serials. I will take two serials. One is *Buniyad*. I have been a regular viewer of this serial. The other serial is *Nukkad.* When I wrote reviews about these two serials in a Bombay paper, I called *Buniyad* the soap opera of the right and *Nukkad* the soap opera of the left. The reason is this *Buniyad* is supposed to be about an Arya Samaj family. Their serial starts with the expulsion of Hindus from Lahore. After that, it goes back to 1917 and 1918, and we are shown the fortunes of one Arya Samajist family, whose main characters revolt against the orthodox Hindu structure. Still, the concentration is on one segment of our society. Of course, I will not call it communal, because Muslim characters are brought in: a Muslim is shown as saving the lives of a Hindu couple in 1947. But *Buniyad* is going in a certain direction where the preservation of tradition, implicitly and indirectly, seems to become the main value.

When you come to *Nukkad*, you find that you are in a situation where these things have become meaningless. In *Nukkad,* you are at a level where homeless people, the petty traders and sweepers – are all forced to live together. There is no question of Hindu, Muslim, Christian or anything of that kind. In my opinion, this is one of the starting points of a new trend. I do not think *Nukkad* is perfect – as a T.V. critic I have my criticism also – but *Nukkad* is, in my opinion, one of the starting-points of a new trend. *Buniyad* and *Nukkad* are popular. *Nukkad* is popular even though there are no religious values in it; it does not preach secularism directly. But this kind of a dialectic that is going on T.V. at the moment is, according to me, a very hopeful sign.

We talk of secularism. Secularism is something where you should feel comfortable, but today it does not give a comfortable feeling, a warm feeling. Iqbal studied this subject, he found that in Islam there was a good refuge. I wish some of you study the similarity between Iqbal and a poet like T.S.Eliot. Eliot also passed through all these stages of doubt, and finally he ended up an Anglo-Catholic.

I submit that a kind of a change came over Iqbal. He wanted to express himself as a human being; he wanted to recognize himself as a human being, safe from the destructive influence of the West, and he found refuge in Islam.

PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA AND COMMUNALISM

R.K.Mishra

There is considerable concern in political as well as academic circles about the rise of communalism and its expression in the form of communal violence among different groups. In this context, the role of the media or the 'communication channels' has been the subject of widespread comment, particularly in the context of Punjab. Those of us, who live and work outside Punjab, have heard quite a great deal about the Press in Punjab, particularly in Jullunder, and also what is described as the 'National Press' – how it has contributed to the rise of the communal phenomenon.

As a preamble to the discussion on communalism, I would like to submit as a hypothesis for examination by scholars, that the phenomenon of communalism is a product of that period of the freedom movement when it began to acquire a mass character.

Present day communalism in India was not in existence before the British arrived here. Nor was it in existence during the Moghul period. It was not there in the princely States where the Hindu *Rajahs* ruled; it was not there in the States where the Muslim *Nawabs* ruled. Communalism, as a manifested in violent clashed between adherents of different religions, can be traced only after the freedom movement began to acquire a mass character.

Gandhiji arrived on the active political scene in India in 1919, took the freedom movement out of cosy chambers and well anointed conference rooms, and made it the strength of the masses. Is it merely a coincidence that it was in the early twenties that a large number of communal riots took place in different parts of the country?

The question, therefore, one should ask is: was the rise of communalism a response of imperialism against the attempts to widen the anti-imperialist struggle in India from a narrow, small coterie of upper middle-class people to the common people of this country? My hypothesis is that it was so and if you examine it carefully it is possible, perhaps, to have enough empirical evidence to substantiate this statement.

Another question which I would suggest for examination could be formulated as follows: how is it that the rise of communalism can also be traced back to the period when some of the so-called 'reform movements' and movements to provide 'modern' education begun to spread in India? It was, again, in this

period when one witnessed a rapid spread of the Arya Samaj movement; the Akali movement; the Singh Sabha movement, etc. and similar movements in some parts of the country. I am not passing a value judgment on the nature of these movements. I am aware that progressive opinion in India has praised all these reform movements; including the establishment of the Aligarh Muslim University to impart modern education to the Muslims; the setting up of the Benaras Hindu University to impart modern education to the Hindus – the two institutions of modernizing the 'ignorant and backward'. How is it that during this period the illiterate masses of India had started to become involved in the anti-imperialist struggle without giving up their orthodoxy, their backwardness, their superstition and all that which a modern and educated Indian did not like? The term 'modern and educated' in those days generally meant people who had their education in Oxford and Cambridge and on their return tried to bring about enlightenment among the ignorant Indian masses. Although some very find Oxbridge products participated in leading the freedom movement, the 'class' included those who tried to bring into being what is now commonly called the 'concept of identity'.

Anti-imperialist Struggle: Dual Effect

The anti-imperialist struggle began to rise to the identity of an Indian. An Indian who no longer thought of himself or herself as 'Gujarati' or 'Bengali' or some such other groups. The anti-imperialist struggle recognized language as an important factor, but it encompassed within its ambit variations of language, religion, etc. But the search for an 'identity' – different from the identity of an Indian – gave rise to a new trend; we found people trying to give a new identity – not a secular identity based on language, but an identity based on religion. It was during this period that we came across people who began to assert I want to reform, not Indian society, but Hindu society; I was to reform, not Indian society but Muslim society; I want to reform not Indian society but Sikh society. Perhaps a reform movement of that kind was necessary to combat obscurantism, backwardness, bigotry, etc., in those communities. But this fight instead of acquiring a secular character, somehow gave rise to the emergence of a communal ethos. It needs to be examined whether there was any linkage between this process of 'communalization' and the reform movements. In this context, it is also necessary to examine the role of 'modern education', lest we forget that this education was one of the powerful tools of British Imperialism to rule this country and to maintain it.

One of the first major communal riots in Calcutta took place in the twenties soon after one of the unique strikes or unique actions in the city by thousands of 'self-employed' working people. The main mode of transport – though trucks had come in – was 'thela gadi', a hand driven or bullock driven card, and there were thousands of these *thela gadiwalas* in Calcutta. The Government

imposed a tax on these *thela gadiwalas* in Calcutta. A large number of them were from Bihar or from eastern Uttar Pradesh and some of them from Orissa. Against the imposition of the levy, thousands of *thela gadiwalas* in Calcutta resorted to a simple, but extremely effective form of protest; they took out their *thelas;* left them on the road and went away. Some of these were driven by bullocks and these animals were left to roam on the roads. The entire transport system in Calcutta was paralysed. Serious difficulties arose in moving forces from one part of Calcutta to another. The authorities had just no alternative, but to succumb to this action within 24 hours. This victory of people's action was followed within six months by communal riots in Calcutta and the *thela gadiwalas,* who were both Hindus and Muslims, began to kill each other and started fighting on various issues.

Communalism in India: Not Inevitable

I would like to submit that communalism is not inherent in the Indian situation. The Indian people believe in religion. There is a tendency amongst a large number of analysts to see the seeds of communalism inherent in the situation, because a large number of Indians believe in religion as an article of personal faith. These analysts assume that the seeds of distrust between followers of one faith and another are inherent in this situation. This is not borne out by facts. I am not talking of Hindus and Sikhs who are quite close to each other socially; Hindu-Sikhs marriages being a common phenomenon. But I am talking of Hindus and Muslims. If mutual distrust were inherent in religions, how can you explain a Hindu being the Commander-in-Chief of emperor Akbar? How do you explain that even in the army of Aurangzeb there were commanders who were Hindus; there were Muslim commanders in the army of Rana Pratap who is extolled as the great hero of the Hindus? Communal mistrust is not inherent in a multi-religious society; it is not that because people belong to different faiths, therefore, communalism must arise.

Communalism is an ingenious device and, in our case, it was thrust ingeniously by the British in order to ensure that the rapid expansion of the freedom movement among the common masses could be thwarted. Later on, having learnt from the British the usefulness of the communal divide, other vested interest, political and economic, both before and after independence, took advantage of it. Unfortunately, the Indian intelligentsia, including the avowedly secular and progressive intelligentsia, by and large failed to see this aspect of communalism. That is why when the ideology of Pakistan came to the surface, the masses in India, not that they were communal, were unable to see that the whole Pakistani ideology, which was basically a communal ideology, arose from other causes that what they believed. They tried to interpret it, or understand it, in terms of economic relationships between the affluent Hindus and the exploited Muslims, just as in Punjab an attempt was

made at various points of time to explain the rise of communalism one way or the other in economic terminology. These are at best contributory factors.

There is another aspect, that is, when feudal societies modernize themselves, they not only modernize the economy and the polity, but the minds of the people as well and each individual operates and expresses himself or herself at various levels. For example, I express myself and think myself, may be as a Brahmin. This is one level. Then in response to certain other situations, I see myself as a Hindu; then I see myself as a Punjabi or a Rajasthani or a Gujrati; then I see myself as a journalist; I also see myself as an Indian. Now, these are the various levels at which the same individual or group responds. A genuinely democratic and progressive mass movement sublimates the primordial tendencies, which are inherent in every human being. In any interpersonal relationship the same person acts as a god and as a beast in different sets of circumstances and in different environments. Therefore, to describe that person either as a god or as a beast would be indulging only in a half-truth. It is the combination of several factors – of civilization, culture, environment, social norms, whatever we have inherited, our value system – which enables us to contain the best and let the more enlightened, more cultured, more civilized part of the self to express, articulate and regulate our behavior. The freedom movement had a cleansing effect on the masses, in the sense that it annihilated, eradicated, eliminated all the beastly instincts that were there in the minds of the masses of India and brought to the surface what became dominant, the Indianness of all Indians with various particularities which were also there. This was a great contribution.

Communalism: Mystification of Reality

In a situation of economic stagnation, when society fails to deal with the problems which impinge on the existence and the consciousness of human beings on a large scale, two types of responses are possible. One is that you direct the consciousness of the people towards the identification of the real causes of their unhappiness and encourage them to strive for a solution – the correct and the real solution. On the other hand, it is also possible to use those difficulties, caused by economic, cultural and social stagnation, disparities and oppression, to generate a totally negative impulse – a primordial beastly impulse.

Let me illustrate the point by an example from every day life. ‘A’ is a graduate. He is unemployed and is not getting a job. Simultaneously, two or three processes may start operation. When ‘A’ was unemployed, he thought: ‘I do not know typing; let me learn typing, if I learn typing, I will get a job’. This is a process where he was taking on the challenge in a forward-looking manner and trying to overcome it. But then his uncle came and told him ‘You are

unemployed; why don't you come with me; let us go to an astrologer and then to a temple and then go to a godman and get his blessings; you will get a job'. This is the second direction. And the third, a very clever friend of his came and said 'Let us go and try to pick someone's pocket'. This is another way of getting over the same problem that 'A' was facing.

In every society which faces social, economic or other form of stagnation, there are forces which would propel that society to solve those problems in a forward-looking manner, building on the level of consciousness already achieve and move forward. There would also be forces in the same society that would pull it backwards or sidewards and take it into a dark pit. Communalism is an aggravated form of that dark response which in its elementary form took 'A' to a godman when he was unemployed, instead of trying to face that problem of existence in a serious and practical manner.

Manifestations of Retreating Imperialism

Moving to another plane, imperialism, forced to retreat after the Second World War, left behind points of tension in all areas from where it had to withdraw. Those points of tension are, by and large, known. Even after imperialism retreated, a number of academics were engaged in identifying how it (the British) sought to perpetuate the points of tensions. The most obvious method adopted by retreating imperialism was to divide countries. Korea was divided. So were China and Vietnam. India was also divided. This is one way of perpetuating the points of tension.

While retreating from Asia, imperialism left points of tension which could be activated later, so that the newly independent countries would remain so much engrossed and embroiled in resolving those tensions that neo-colonialism would get an opportunity to manipulate them.

The other manifestation of unresolved tension points is seen in the form of local conflicts and local wars. The third manifestation is in terms of encouraging ethnic particularities, linguistic particularities and other divisive tendencies, with the sole objective of ensuring that strong, viable nation-states do not emerge in newly freed countries and if strong viable nation-states do not emerge, they would not be able to assert their independence.

The battle between communalism and nationalism is an extension of the battle against imperialism. In that battle against imperialism, nationalism suffered a major set-back in 1947, when India was partitioned. If one looks deep into it, most of India's problems can be traced to that one single act of partition. Communalism, economic problems, security problems, military expenditure – you name any problem if you look a little deep into the history of these problems and their origin, you can trace them back to that one single

act of the partition of India. Retreating imperialism inflicted a very severe blow to the process of the emergence of Indian nation-state and the evolution of our consciousness as Indians. The process which was getting consolidated in the course of the freedom struggle got weakened.

The only part of the world where imperialist machination has been reversed decisively and, therefore, imperialism has suffered a decisive defeat is Vietnam. Vietnam was divided and partitioned. There was an agreement, and even the Chinese at that time thought it was a good idea to have two Vietnams. But only in Vietnam a decisive reversal of this process has taken place.

Can the problems of India, whether in Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, or in Bangladesh or problems of communalism, could really be solved unless we have formulated an effective response to undo the consequences of this one single act of the partition of India? This does not mean that Indian armies should march into Pakistan and undo it. At the conceptual level, the first battle against communalism was lost when Indian nationalism accepted the partition of India and surrendered to the ideology of Pakistan. Once you have done that, to get a coherent strategy to fight communalism becomes difficult.

I was talking to an important political functionary concerned with preserving India's unity and when I put forward this thesis, he said 'We are facing the problem of regionalism these days. Is communalism the main problem?' I had to point out, what in my view was essentially the raison d'etre of Pakistan: that a group of Indians were not sure that they could live and solve their problems and realize their aspirations in conditions of equality in the entity called India. Whether this was true or not, or whether the British engineered it, or that Muslim League engineered it, is a different matter. But the fact is that at that particular point of time a large number of Muslims felt that their aspirations could not be realized in conditions of equality in the entity called India which was then emerging, and, therefore, they wanted to live separately.

What is regionalism today? What is the whole controversy about the Centre-State relations that is taking place today? Without passing a value judgment, it is essentially a reflection of doubt and uncertainty amongst a group of Indians about whether they can realize their aspirations in conditions of equality in the polity that is called India – whether they be cultural aspirations, linguistic aspirations or aspirations in terms of a wider share in finance. At one time Indian nationalism was not able to evolve a framework of social, economic, cultural equality or if it can provide this guarantee and create this environment, then we would be able to deal with the new set of problems of regionalism, etc.

It is not enough to say that these are unsubstantiated emotions or expressions of selfishness. At a conceptual level, we have to evolve a credible framework which will ensure to every Indian, every group of Indians, equality of opportunity to realize their aspirations. Indians will continue to see themselves in groups whether they see themselves as the working class or capitalists, as Hindus or Muslims, as Punjabi-speaking or Hindi-speaking – these types of groups will be there. These are expressions of aspirations at different levels, and we have to find a viable framework in which there may be a credible guarantee, acceptable to them, not acceptable to a small group of intellectuals.

It is possible to deal at great length why this crisis of confidence has arisen; why did it arise in the case of Muslims; and also why it has arisen later on. But that would be a long story and I would rather skip it. There is enough material available on the subject.

It needs to be mentioned that the greatest threat to Indian unity is not terrorism; it is communalism. Mere presence of guerillas or terrorists does not threaten Indian unity. There were guerillas, armed bands, 'armies' in Nagaland, Mizoram, etc. They never threatened the unity of India ad it could never threaten the unity of India. In Nagaland they could not jeopardize unity and integrity. Why? For two reasons. First, when such violent groups organize themselves for secession (when people organized themselves for demanding Dravidistan, or for independent States in Nagaland or Mizoram) the Indian State, powerful as it was, could deal with them, without having to look over its own shoulders. It does not fear a popular backlash. Except for those with whom it has to deal, the rest of the country is behind it because of the belief that the State is acting in a manner which will strengthen its efforts to safeguard India's Unity. But this is not the case when the situation gets communalized. In a communalized environment those who claim to defend Indian unity, act precisely in the manner that will undermine it.

I am not worried about terrorists or the problem of terrorism; they can kill 100, 200, 500 or a 1,000 people, but we are 700 million. Supposing they kill 100 persons a day, there would be no occasion that our population would be significantly affected. It is the communalization of the situation that is alarming. The Hindu who claims and who declares 'I am the defender, I am really concerned with the unity of India' acts precisely in the manner which will break India's unity, because he starts looking at things communally. People in Punjab know this better than the people outside.

Media Colour Facts

And this brings me to the media. Anyone analyses the news related to Punjab would find that no crimes are reported in newspaper. If you read the

newspapers, including the local newspapers, you will feel as if in Punjab no crimes are taking place: there are no murders except when a terrorist commits a murder; there is no bank robbery except when a terrorist commits a bank robbery; there are no mutual quarrels except when a terrorist tries to set up one person against another. There are no crimes; there are no smugglers; there are no professional dacoits or robbers. What has happened to them? Every single act of crime has now got respectability, because you make the criminal a hero by describing him as a terrorist. In fact, in the first instance a community is stereotyped or identified with a crime – for example by describing Indira Gandhi's assassins as Sikhs – and the problem then goes on.

Now this brings us to the concrete question of how the media create, generate, reinforce communalism. Generally, most of the people believe in a number of myths which we journalists create, and there is a whole set of vested interests who use journalism in order to spread those myths and sustain them. One of those myths is that newspapers are objective. This is one of the biggest falsehoods of all times since the incarnation of Lord Rama. There is nothing like objectivity. Take an illustration. In front of Jawaharlal Nehru University there was a scuffle among students. The police came and lathi-charged them and they threw stones. In six daily newspapers this news was published with sex different headlines. One was: 'Police Lathi-Charges Unruly Mob'. The Second was 'Students Throw Stones at Police: This Leads to Lathi-Charge'. Another headline, said: 'Police Attacks Students'. Another newspaper gave another headline.

I put to you all these six and ask you which one is objective? Every newspaper report is an attempt, is an exercise, to influence the reader. Just as every advertisement is an attempt to make you but something, to pick your pocket and make you buy either Dalda or some other oil or Pond's cream or some other cream, similarly every newspaper report is an attempt to sell to you a certain idea and influence your mind. It is inherent in it, and it is also done deliberately. It is mainly inherent in it, because unless one can really present facts as truth, one cannot function as a newspaper; but facts are not necessarily true. When Indira Gandhi was killed, it could be said 'Two young men or youths kill Indira Gandhi'. It could also be said 'Two security guards kill Indira Gandhi'. It could also be said 'Two Indians kill their Prime Minister'. It could also be said – and it was said by one of the leading newspapers – 'Two Sikhs kill Indira Gandhi'.

Now one has selected a fact; this is so ingrained. First, it is done because the newspapers are 'commerce' and the law of profit operates, one wants to maximize one's profit, one wants to sell wares. Even godmen have to be a little crooked in order to sell themselves. If one is only a saint sitting in one's home and is not doing any promotional activities, perhaps no one will come.

Where profit is involved facts are molded to serve it; it is a refined form, a subtle form of crime or communalism. Secondly, there is an imperialist onslaught on India as a part of the destabilization process. India can be destabilized and broken up and balcanized only by the use of communalism. In Nagaland so many were killed and no one even talked to a Naga and asked him "Why are you people killing Indians – soldiers, policemen and civilian officers?" Gandhiji was killed by Nathuram Godse. Except for some demonstrations here and there, no one said, "We will catch hold of all the Brahmins; we will catch hold of all the Hindus; we will catch hold of the Chitpavan Brahmins. No newspaper said 'Nathuram Godse, a Brahmin, killed Gandhiji'. No one said 'A Maharashtrian killed Mahatma Gandhi'. No one said anything of that sort.

There have been 200 years of investment in the ideology of communalism. From more than a hundred years ago, and particularly from 1919, attempts have been made to perfect this instrument of communalism and see how to trigger it off - whether it is a procession, a cow protection agitation, a rath yatra; whether it is Allah's hair; whether it is the Guru Granth Sahab, whatever it is. A large number of academicians have been engaged in finding out, in diagnosing, how this instrument of communalism has been perfected and used over such a long period of time with a view to break this country. Therefore, this task is very very important; it is critical to the survival of India as a free nation.

SECTION 8

COMMUNAL RIOTS IN POST-INDEPENDENT INDIA

COMMUNAL RIOTS IN MAU NATH BHANJAN

Pramod Kumar

During the past 42 years of independence India has been rocked by more than ten thousand incidents of communal riots. According to the official estimates, these incidents have taken toll of more than nine thousand lives and caused injury to around fifty thousand. There are number of research studies which conclude that the official estimates underplay the intensity of these riots. According to these studies more than nine thousand lives fell to communal frenzy in only four major recent riots, i.e. Meerut, Bhiwandi, Delhi, Bhagalpur.

An analysis of data reveals that between the mid-fifties and the beginning of the sixties the incidence of communal rioting were moderate. The increase was particularly sharp during the mid-sixties. Communal rioting increased one and a half times between the periods 1954-69 and 1969-82 in India. In the same period the incidents of communal rioting in Uttar Pradesh increased two and a half times. Thereafter number of communal incidents started declining until the mid-seventies, although the number was still higher than that recorded during the fifties. In the late seventies the number of communal incidents began rising again. These riots were longer in duration and their intensity increase during and after late sixties (Table 1). For example, after early seventies, the number of persons injured and killed have been substantial. In certain years, such as 1978, even though number of communal incidents have been less, but the number of persons injured has been on the higher side. The increase in the intensity and duration of communal violence is alarming as it signifies:

(a) the increasing 'fascization' of Indian society; the fascist gangs have been used to engineer communal riots;

(b) the legitimacy which has come to be attached to the perception which projects social divisions in the form of communal cleavages i.e. the belief that the jobs, representations in public bodies, legislatures should be based on the numerical strength of religious groups;

(c) the isolation and decline of secular institutions and organizations;

(d) the passivity of the state and partisan involvement of the police personnels and other functionaries which impart ferocity to rioting and

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* This study has its basis in an unpublished research report submitted to Uttar Pradesh government authored by Pramod Kumar, Bhupendra Yadav, Atul Sood and Ms.Vishalini Vimal.

Table 1
Number of Communal Incidents in State of Uttar Pradesh and India
From 1954 & 1955 to 1984 & 1985

Year	Uttar Pradesh	India
1954 & 1955	9	159
1956 & 1957	35	140
1958 & 1959	23	82
1960 & 1961	20	118
1962 & 1963	19	121
1964 & 1965	19	1243
1966 & 1967	31	342
1968 & 1969	111	865
1970 & 1971	91	842
1972 & 1973	92	482
1974 & 1975	77	453
1976 & 1977	76	357
1978 & 1979	91	534
1980 & 1981	105	740
1982 & 1983	100	970
1984 & 1985	327	1001

Source: 1. Bulletin of National Integration Council (16th May, 1960)
2. Home Ministry Reports
3. Communal Violence in India, P.R. Rajgopal (1987)
4. Bureau of Police Research & Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi (circular dated 8th April, 1986)

Note: Figures for Uttar Pradesh State have been derived from source 1, 2 and 4 while those for India have been derived from source 3.

(B)
Percentage Change in the Number of communal Incidents during the period 1969-82 over the Period 1965-68 (India and Uttar Pradesh)

INDIA	UTTAR PRADESH
+ 48.68%	+ 153.14%

Source: Bulletin of National Integration Council (16th May, 1969) and Home Ministry Reports.

> accentuates its intensity and duration. This can be discerned from the fact that the government had actively or tacitly given support to efforts to foment or engineer communal violence on different occasions, the Delhi, Kanpur, Rourkela riots of November 1984, can be cited as examples. Not only this, electoral politics heavily relies on communal configuration and caste arithmetic. The widespread discrimination in employing persons and distributing subsidies on religious lines and the use of religious symbols in public celebrations at different government functions are symptomatic of the institutionalization of communalism.

It is important to point out that increase in frequency of communal rioting is symptomatic of pervasiveness and increasing extremity of communalism. Therefore, communal rioting cannot be understood in isolation from a comprehension of the level of operation of communal ideology. The notion that communal riots have their own dynamism and can be tackled independent of the complex of process unleashed by the changing socio-economic formations is conceptually fallacious and practically counter productive.

Most of the commissions appointed by the government to go into the causes of the eruption of communal riots suffered from this conceptual error. These reports treated communal riots to be equivalent to ordinary crime committed by individuals and largely dwelled upon them as a law and order problem.

A critical evaluation of the reports of commissions appointed by the Government of India to look into the causes and course of riots reveal that communal riots have been erupting due to the intolerance of people towards other religions, non-alertness of intelligence/police officials and slackness of administrative machinery. The causes for riots are traced to the incidents immediately prior to the conflagration and analysis of riots is lost in the details of the course of events. Hence, the whole genesis of riots is seen to lie in religious practices, festivals and processions. The solutions are offered in the formation of Peace Committees and tightening up of police/administrative apparatus. However, the task of these commissions was limited. Their terms of reference were so narrow as to exclude the role of communal ideology and crisis caused by socio-economic and political factors.

To analyse communal rioting, at the level of immediate provocation and thereafter to suggest measure to combat it, is tantamount to becoming a victim of appearances. Often it is thought that strict enforcement of law and order can tackle the problem of communal rioting. Strict enforcement of law can avert rioting temporarily but it cannot be a solution to the problem of communal violence. This is so because events immediately preceding a

communal riot cannot be taken as a determining factor responsible for communal rioting. Changing the routes of religious processions or banning the public celebration of religious festivals are the outcome of such an understanding.

The present study is an effort to analyse the issues relating to communalism and communal violence. This study proposes:

(a) to investigate the relationship between communal ideology, communal politics and communal rioting;
(b) to ascertain sufficient and necessary conditions causing communal rioting;
(c) to ascertain the extent of pervasiveness of communal ideology as to identify the possible participants and instigators in communal riots.

These issues have been investigated with reference to two situations, i.e. riot free and riot-prone. The approach adopted is to make a comparative analysis of these two situations. The two principle towns which are covered by this study are Azamgarh (riot free) and Mau Nath Bhanjan (riot-prone) (to be called Mau hereafter) in Azamgarh district.

Demographic Features

Azamgarh district have the total population of 3544130 or 3.20 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's population in 1981, which cover 1.9 per cent of UP's total area among urban areas. In this district Mau town has the highest population of 86326. Azamgarh town has 66523 (Table 2).

The annual compound growth rate of population for the state of Uttar Pradesh was 2.30 per cent during the decade 1971-81 which was much higher than the decade 1961-71 when it was 1.82 per cent only. In the decade 1971-81 the annual compound growth rate in Azamgarh (MB) was 4.97 per cent, while in Mau it was 3.03 per cent (Table 2).

According to the census of 1981, out of the total population of India, 82.64 per cent were Hindus, 11.35 per cent were Muslims and 6.01 per cent of it belonged to other religious groups. In Uttar Pradesh 83.32 per cent of the total population belonged to the Hindu religious group, 15.93 per cent were Muslims and 0.75 per cent of it belonged to other religious groups. Hindus formed 85.56 per cent of the total population of Azamgarh district; whereas Muslims formed 13.97 per cent. Members of other religious groups formed a negligible proportion of a population of the district under study (Table 3a).

In 1971, 72.27 per cent of the total population of Azamgarh (MB) were Hindus, whereas Muslims constituted 26.88 per cent of the total population. However, in Mau (MB) 67.47 per cent of the total population consisted of Muslims and 32.33 per cent of Hindus. The proportion of members belonging to other religious groups in the two town was negligible (Table 3b).

Table 2

Area, Population and Density of Population of Azamgarh (at M.B. & District Level), Uttar Pradesh and India during 1981

Particulars

S.No.	M.B./Distt./State/India	Area: 1981 (sq. km.)	Population 1981	Population Density: 1981 (per sq. km)	Compound Annual Growth Rate of Population	
					1961-71	1971-81
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
01	India	32,87,263	68,51,84,692	216	2.24	2.26
02	Uttar Pradesh State	2,94,411	11,08,62,013	377	1.82	2.30
03	Azamgarh (Distt)	5,740	35,44,130	617	1.73	2.18
04	Azamgarh (M.B.)	12.71	66,523	5,234	2.38	4.97
05	Mau Nath Bhajan (M.B.)	9.11	86,326	9,476	2.76	3.03

Source: i) Census of India, 1981, Primary Census Abstract, Series 1, India.
ii) Census of India, 1981, Primary Census Abstract, Series 22, U.P.

Table 3 a
Religious Groupwise Population (According to Hindus and Muslims only) in Azamgarh District and in Uttar Pradesh during 1961, 1971 and 1981

S.No.	Religion & Growth Rate State/District	Hindus			Compound Annual Rate of Growth			
		1961	1971	1981	61-71	71-81	67-71	71-81
					Hindus		Muslims	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
1.	Uttar Pradesh	6,24,37,316 (84.66)	7,39,97,597 (83.76)	9,23,65,968 (83.32)	1.71%	2.24%	2.40%	2.59%
2.	District Azamgarh	21,03,137 (87.34)	24,41,539 (85.44)	30,32,244 (85.66)	1.50%	2.19%	2.82%	2.11%
		Muslims						
		1961	**1971**	**1981**				
		(6)	**(7)**	**(8)**				
1.	Uttar Pradesh	1,07,88,089 (14.63)	1,36,76,533 (15.48)	1,76,57,735 (15.93)				
2.	District Azamgarh	3,04,406 (12.64)	4,02,023 (14.07)	4,95,193 (13.97)				

Source: (i) Census of India, 1961, 1971, Social and Cultural Tables. 1961, 1971. U.P.
(ii) Census of India, Series 1, Paper 4 of 1984.
Note: Figures in brackets show percentages with respect to corresponding state's/district's population.

Table 3 b

Population of Hindus and Muslims in Azamgarh (M.B.) and Mau Nath Bhajan (M.B.) in 1971

Sl. No.	Town	Total Population	Hindus	Muslims	Others
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
01	Azamgarh (M.B.)	40,963 (100)	29,606 (72.27)	11,009 (26.88)	348 (0.85)
02	Mau Nath Bhajan (M.B.)	64,058 (100)	20,711 (32.33)	43,221 (67.47)	126 (0.20)

Source: Census of India 1971, Series 21, Part II C (i).

Religious groupwise annual compound growth rate of Muslims in Azamgarh district has declined from 2.82 per cent in 1961-71 to 2.11 per cent between the decade 1971-81. However, the growth rate of Hindus has increased from 1.50 per cent in 1961-71 to 2.19 per cent in 1971-81. These facts falsify the propaganda by Hindu communalists that 'Muslims' are deliberately procreating at a faster rate so as to out-number 'Hindus' and to gain an electoral advantage to overshadow 'Hindus'. These facts clearly indicate that the population growth rates are increasing irrespective of religious groups. In fact, the growth rate of population of the Muslim religious group has not increased by as many percentage points as those of the Hindu religious group between the decades 1961-71 and 1971-81 in Azamgarh district. Notwithstanding the distorted interpretation by communalists, the increase in population growth rates is a function of non-adoption of birth control measures, fatalism, general conditions of poverty, etc.

Eastern Uttar Pradesh in general and Azamgarh district in particular have a higher density of population as compared to U.P. as a whole. The density of population in Eastern Uttar Pradesh was 485 persons per sq.km. in 1981 as compared to U.P.'s average density of 377 persons and to All India Average of 216 persons per sq. km. The density of population in Azamgarh district was 617 persons per sq. km. Among the two towns taken for study, Mau had the highest density i.e. 9476 persons per sq. km. followed by Azamgarh (MB) i.e. 5234 persons. The density of population is high in Mau as compared to Azamgarh (M.B.). The higher density of population, reduces the access of people to social amenities. The higher density of population, inadequate social amenities, and pervasiveness of communal ideology lead to the identification of causes for deprivation amongst persons along communal lines. This situation contributes to the building up of physical social and psychological pressures. These pressures alongwith other factors lead to tensions and violence.

Rural population in Azamgarh district is greater than the corresponding percentages for eastern U.P., U.P. and India as a whole.[1] As much as 90.80 per cent of the population in Azamgarh district lives in rural areas. This indicates a higher dependence on agriculture for livelihood and around 78 per cent of the working population is engaged in agriculture. The great pressure on agriculture is rendered particularly irksome due to small landholdings. In 1980-81, the percentage of small and marginal landholdings compared to the total holdings in Azamgarh district was 93.45 per cent.[2] The members of households owning these landholdings require subsidiary occupations in agriculture or alternative employment in industry for subsistence. But there is a severe paucity of Industrial Employment in the district. In 1980-81 as against 319 persons per lakh population in registered industrial establishments in eastern U.P. and 697 persons in U.P. the figures on this variable were only 101 persons in Azamgarh district. Similarly, the intake in the service sector was not very substantial. Hence, massive outmigration from this district takes place and the nature of this migration is mostly seasonal. During the field survey it was revealed that one person from almost every third household has to migrate outside this district in search for employment, particularly to Bihar, West Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra. Therefore the economy of this district is popularly called "money-order economy". Out-migration of males (or what is called single-unit migration) for employment from this district can also be inferred from the relatively higher female to male ratio in this district as compared to eastern U.P. and U.P. as a whole.[3] There were 1,021 females to every 1,000 males in Azamgarh.

It is also interesting that 6.55 per cent of the landholdings in Azamgarh district cover 38.31 per cent of the total cultivated are (Table 4). The oft-quoted figures for increasing yields in eastern U.P. are directly related to technological innovations and capital investments made by owners of these bigger land-holdings. It was revealed during the field survey that the prosperity which is accruing to these sections due to the embryonic Green Revolution is finding increasing expression in religiosity and the creation/strengthening of religious group identities.

[1] 89.31 per cent of eastern U.P.'s population lives in rural areas as compared to 82.05 per cent in U.P. and 76.30 per cent in India as a whole.

[2] In 1980-81, the percentage of small and marginal holdings compared to total landholdings was 91.97 percent in Eastern U.P., and 86.94 per cent in U.P. as a whole.

[3] There were 943 females to every 1,000 males in Eastern U.P., and 885 females in U.P. as a whole.

Table 4

Percentage of Small and Marginal Holdings and of Area (Other than Small/Marginal Holdings) to Total Area under Holdings in Azamgarh District, in the Eastern Region and in Uttar Pradesh in 1980-81

Sl.No	State/District	Percentage of small & marginal holdings to total holdings (1980-81)	Percentage of area other than small & marginal holdings to total area under holdings (1980-81)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
01	Uttar Pradesh	86.94	51.71
02	Eastern Region	91.97	41.47
03	District Azamgarh	93.45	38.31

Source: Districtwise Indicators of Development Area Planning Division, State Planning Institute, Uttar Pradesh, September 1984.

The towns under study fall in the relatively under-developed districts of Uttar Pradesh. More alarming is the fact that the percentage of working population in Azamgarh town is less than of the district averages. The rate of literacy is fairly high in Azamgarh town (Table 5) and most of the working people here are engaged in service, trade and commerce.

Table 5

Percentage of Literate Population to Total Population in Azamgarh District in Eastern Region and Uttar Pradesh during 1981

Sl.No	State/District/Town	Total Population	Total Literate population
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
01	Uttar Pradesh	11,0862013	3,01,05,260 (27.16)
02	Dist. Azamgarh	35,44,130	8,89,587 (25.10)
03	Azamgarh (M.B.)	66,523	38,154 (57.35)
04	Maunath Bhanjan (M.B.)	86,326	39,451 (45.70)

Note: Figures in bracket show percentages.
Source: Census of India 1981, Series 22, part II-B.

As against this the working population in Mau is fairly high, literacy is quite low and almost three-fifths of the people are engaged in household industries. In Azamgarh it was found that white-collar and other service occupations engaged a relatively large number of persons (Table 6). The percentage of persons engaged in trade and commerce at Mau is almost half of that of persons in the same activity at Azamgarh. This fact is rendered more glaring as not much trade and commerce takes place at Azamgarh, whereas Mau is one

of the biggest centres for trade in handloom products in India. It can, therefore, be inferred that though more in volume, trade at Mau is concentrated in fewer hands. The competition for jobs among white-collared sections and for market among trading sections often provides the background for the social appeal of communalism. These two sections are found in greater numbers in Azamgarh town.

Intensity and Frequency of Rioting in Mau

Mau has witnessed two major communal riots after independence - the first in March 1969 and the second in October 1984. But Mau has a history of communal rioting reflected in the pervasiveness of communal thinking and practice. For instance, in 1893, a dispute over the interpretation of government order prohibiting all cow sacrifices between members of two religious groups provided a fuel to communal elements. Consequently, riots erupted on this issue and engulfed the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujrat and Bombay.

Table 6

Distribution of Workers Employed According to Two Sectors of Industrial Origin in Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh during 1981 (M.B. and District Levels)

S.No.	State/District/Town	Total Workers	Agricultural workers	Household Industry Workers	Other Workers
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
01	Uttar Pradesh	3,23,96,754 (100)	2,41,34,846 (74.50)	12,00,005 (3.70)	70,61,903 (21.80)
02	Dist. Azamgarh	9,41,057 (100)	7,39,840 (78.62)	75,186 (7.99)	1,26,031 (13.39)
03	Azamgarh (M.B.)	15,946 (100)	1,046 (6.56)	1,159 (7.27)	13,741 (86.17)
04	Maunath Bhanjan (M.B.)	27,217 (100)	1,102 (4.05)	17,085 (62.78)	9,026 (33.17)

Source: Census of India, 1981, Series 22, Primary Census Abstract.

It is interesting that elements of communal ideology are very much reflective in people's perceptions and in their everyday interactions, but its manifestation in the eruption of communal riots and large scale participation of people in actual acts of violence are not frequent. Alongwith this communal mode of political mobilisations, there has been a long history of mobilisations by the secular and left oriented politics. It will be interesting to find out the

impact of these two divergent forms of mobilisations on the social and political fabric of Mau.

From the data on communal riots in Mau, it is discernible that rioting is short-lived and comparatively not so intense. To illustrate, in the riots in 1969, 17 persons were injured whereas during those in 1984, six were killed and 15 injured. Property worth Rs.11,281/- and worth Rs.48,980/- was destroyed in the riots of 1969 and 1984 respectively. The immediate cause of the riots in 1969 was the clash between Moharram processionists, certain persons obstructing it and the police. Similarly, in 1984 the riot was sparked off by a clash between Ram Lila processionists, certain persons obstructing it and the police.

The distinct features of communal rioting in Mau are:

(a) Communal groups have not clashed openly. Instead sporadic incidents like stabbing, killing, arson, looting etc. have occurred.

(b) The immediate provocation for communal riots has been an infringement of religious processions which themselves are occasions for the display of strength. The communal assertions of both groups are defensive and rooted in a minority persecution complex. These assertions and displays of strength by the communal groups grow out of fear and are intended to ward of possible offence from the antagonistic groups.

(c) The participation in the riots is limited. The sections which participate are usually hired riff-raff, delinquent youth, a small number of local weavers, petty shopkeepers and hawkers. Villagers from neighbouring areas are also mobilized by communal groups on the pretext of avenging the torture of their co-religionists, mainly Hindu.

(d) The communal interpretation of riots by middle and lower-rung administrative personnel and the local newspapers provide irritants for further communal rioting.

The FIRs registered on the occurrence of the riots provide a communal interpretation as illustrated below:[4]

(1) Criminal acts and criminals are identified on religious group lines. For example, “Muslim samudai ke logon ko girftar kar liya gaya…. (Inhonne) goli se Pargana Adhikari, Ghosi, ko ghail kia”.

(2) No distinction is made between communalists and the religious group to which they may belong. For example, a deputation of the highly

[4] For details, see copy of FIRs recorded at Police Station, Mau.

communal Ram Lila Committee or Durga Puja Mahasamiti are treated as if they represent the whole Hindu religious group.

(3) Majority and minority are identified on religious group basis. For example, "Raghunathpura mein bahusankhyak Muslamano dwara alpsankhyak Hinduon par hamla…".

(4) Lives lost and property damaged is recorded using religious group categories. For example, "Hindu varg ke char log mare gaye… Musalman varge kee 29,760 rupaion kee sampati nasht hui…".

This also perpetrates communal interpretation of various events and causes communal tensions.

Locale and Participation

Clustered living is the breeding ground for communal ideology and propels this ideology to grow into extreme forms. Clusters render their residents psychologically claustrophobic and leave a visual impact of being an organized threat to other religious or communal groups. This situation has contributed to the occurrence of communal conflicts for the following reasons:

(a) Cluster formations provide a fertile ground for cementing and strengthening communal loyalties, which could be used by communal organizations to spread communalism.

(b) It delimits social interaction, exposure to diversities of culture, etc. This builds an inward-looking attitude and in the process makes people less mobile to avail themselves of new opportunities.

(c) Uneven, lop-sided and slow development is interwoven with a situation where a particular religious group is clustered and nurses a deep-rooted persecution complex. This religious group perceives an immediate link between its deprivations and the underdevelopment of its area. This perception provides a leverage to vested interests to use human misery and the elements of communalism. These interests can also use such factors to emerge as 'community leaders' at the mohalla level and to strengthen their electoral position in Municipal elections. In a situation of communal rioting such so-called 'community leaders' appear as Messiahs who look after their own religious group through Ram Lila mela committees, Muslim Welfare committees etc. These leaders inflame passions, by counting the injured and those killed in communal riots on religious group lines. Such projections perpetuate antagonism between religious groups. These so-called 'community leaders' start asking for punitive measures against members of other religious groups and administrative personnel on a communal basis after riots. In certain situations these

demands for punitive action are granted by the administration and this further legitimizes the leadership of the so-called 'community leaders' amongst their respective religious groups.

(d) Locational confrontation of mohallas inhabited by diverse religious groups makes the identification of "targets" under the influence of communal ideology easier. The targets so identified become more assessable in the event of communal rioting. Besides, such a settlement pattern exaggerates the number of strength of the perceived antagonistic group. Consequently, a threat is perceived to one's own existence and also to the religious group one may happen to belong to. Like in other riot-hit towns and cities in Mau too mohallas inhabited mostly by members of one religious group are in locational confrontation with mohallas with a majority of the residents belonging to the other religious group. For instance, the lower strata Muslim-majority mohalla of *Pathan Tola* (78) is in locational confrontation with *Chamar Tola Uttar* (10), *Khatik Tola Uttar* (21) and Allauddinpura (1) which are lower strata Hindu-majority mohallas. *Pathan Tola* (78) was the site of communal incidents in 1969, 1980, 1983 and 1984. Similarly, *Raghunathpura* (98) which was the site of communal violence in 1984 is a Muslim-majority lower strata mohalla and is in locational confrontation with *Chamar Tola Dakhin* (8) and Khatik *tola Dakhin* (19) which are lower strata Hindu-majority mohallas.

Participation

The economic and political vested interests instigate communal riots by providing content and public expression to communal ideology in its extreme form. These vested interests mobilize and use incremental communalists coming from the middle strata on issues like discrimination in jobs, licences, subsidies, etc. The individual losses and failures are projected and believed to be of the whole religious or caste group.

The victims of communal ideology attack the life and property of antagonistic communal groups. The victims of communal ideology, thereby, are misdirected to avenge their miseries by attacking displaced targets. Sections among weavers who happened to be Muslims and rustics from nearby villages who happened to be Hindus participated in the communal riots in October 1984. Whereas some weavers are reported to have indulged in physical violence in some mohallas of Mau, the villagers are reported to have stolen or destroyed property in industrial sheds and agricultural fields on the outer fringe of the town.

The anti-social elements participate in and prolong communal riots. The vested interests patronize anti-social elements, some of whom come to acquire the status of mohalla level 'community' leaders. The victims of communal ideology and incremental communalists may also encourage and legitimize the acts of anti-social elements by identifying these acts to be service community interests. During the riots in 1969 at Mau a Moharram procession was stoned by anti-social elements. When the police tried to intervene, a pitched battle ensued between the police force and the anti-social elements, delinquent youth, mischief-mongers, etc. Similarly, during the riots in 1984, anti-social elements provoked violence when a religious procession was passing through the narrow lanes of the town. Certain incidents of arson by anti-social elements also took place during these riots.

During communal riots, rumours and gossip contribute to aggravating the situation by giving communal colour to individual acts of violence and crime. For instance, it was rumoured during the communal riots of October 1984, at Mau that copies of the 'Holi Koran' had been burnt and electric fans, mats etc., stolen from several mosques by 'Hindu policemen'. The tension arising from this rumour and the alleged involvement of policemen, particularly personnel of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), turned large mobs of people violent at several places. Mr. Indira Deo Singh, Sub-divisional Magistrate of Ghosi, was murdered when he went to pacify one such mob in Raghunathpura Mohalla. Earlier, in 1948, also a rumour was floated that "Muslims" had occupied the site on which the "Ram Bharat Milap" procession assembles. In 1983, rumours were rife about the imposition of a one-sided curfew to harass women and plunder the property of one religious group. Interestingly, this rumour was spread by communalists of both religious groups to incite communal frenzy.

A section which is neither a vested nor an incremental communalist nor a victim of communal ideology, but which may abet rioting is that of accidental beneficiaries. These accidental beneficiaries may be from among agents of the state who want to whitewash their omissions or politicians who want to cover-up their misdeeds. They can also be from among small traders who can earn a little more profit or landlords who want their premises evicted in a riot. These individuals cannot be said to belong to any groups as such, but they may indirectly and accidentally benefit from a rioting situation.

Increasing religiosity, the use of communal symbols, haphazard urbanization, fierce competition in trade and for jobs, communalized politics, non-functioning of democratic institutions and frequent misuse of military to resolve politico-economic problems, displacement and non-absorption of workers and clustering of religious or caste groups provide sufficient

conditions for communal rioting. These conditions derive their life force from non-expanding economy and operation of communal ideology.

Communal Terms of Political and Social Discourse Accentuate

Communal Rioting

It was interesting to find out that the terms of social and political discourse in Mau reflected a strong communal bias, whereas in Azamgarh communal bias was not as strong. This was inferred from the communal stereotypes, oral history and penetration of religiosity. The communal stereotypes in Azamgarh were mainly trying to reinforce the commonalty of interests of the members of a religious group. And the norms, belief and value patterns of one's own religious group as tolerant, universal and of other religious group as undemocratic, sectarian and communal in outlook. For example, in Azamgarh a section from amongst Hindu religious group perceived and projected Muslims as fundamentalists, brutal, anti-national and without having any civic sense. Whereas, a section from amongst the Muslim religious group perceived Hindus as untrustworthy, undemocratic and material in outlook.

In the case of Mau, due to its specific demographic composition, economic activity and political history, the communal stereotypes prevalent were more antagonistic in content. For instance, some members of Hindu religious groups typed the Muslims as immoral. To quote:

> Muslim claim to be inheritors of great moral traditions, but they marry as many times as they want and are morally corrupt. The result of these practices is that from 1901, when Muslims constituted only half of Mau's population, they have increased to three-fourths of the population today. Mau is the Karachi of India.

Further they are typed as anti-women and exploiters of their children:

> Muslim women are compelled to perform three duties religiously:
>
> (a) Keep the home (b) procreate; and (c) weave.
>
> They keep their women in 'purdah' and ogle at 'Hindu' women, harass unescorted women. The labour of children is abused for filling reels. Naturally, then, the Muslim menfolk can sit around, gossip, discuss politics, indulge in crime and participate in riots.
>
> Not only this, they live under unhygienic conditions and spend their resources in conspicuous consumption. They like to live in dirty surroundings, wear dirty clothes, leave their children

> uneducated and exhibit their cultural backwardness as their poverty.

A large number of traders, middle and lower class workers and professionals among the Hindus felt that Muslims were in a majority and this led to their overbearing social behaviour.

> They promote religious institutions, build them like medieval fortresses, use them to store arms and ammunition and spread fanaticism. We cannot celebrate our festivals at the places and in the manner we desire. A dog, a pig and a whore can pass Masjids but our revered Durgaji is prohibited by Muslims. What is the Tajia? It is mere headload of dead bodies carried through the streets with great pride under police protection. These Muslims walk in the middle of road unlike good citizens who should observe all the laws of the land, including traffic rules. This is the exorbitant price we pay to permit their continued residence in our country.

The specific nature of development in Mau, particularly, the distribution and formation of skills, has also led to some typical beliefs amongst communal Muslims. Many of the traders and other middle strata individuals among the Muslims felt that the increase in the recurrence of rioting in Mau was due to the betterment in the economic condition of Muslims.

> The economic prosperity of Muslims cannot be tolerated by Hindus and rioting is the best and the easiest way to make us insecure and destroy us. Riots also limit or movements outside clusters and this helps them to maintain their position in the market. Everywhere in India, including Mau, traditional handicrafts have been destroyed by the Hindu-Bania traders. In their guest for greater and greater profits they eliminated the fine skills of the craftsmen. These skills are our heritage. They have been handed down through generations by our forefathers who formed them with their blood. These craftsmen used to get liberal support from the Mughal rulers. Hindus are only interested in displaying their wealth and proving Muslim inferiority. There marriages, child-birth and religious ceremonies are performed with great fanfare. Their religious ceremonies are deliberately made pompous to provoke a jealous reaction from us.
>
> Hindus don't think Muslims are a part of India and its culture and history. They accuse our institutions of religious education to be centres for spreading religious bigotry and disloyalty.

> They accuse us of building these Madrasas on "Khairat" (or alms) from gulf countries.
>
> Hindus have no secular traditions or practices about which they boast so much. If we praise a folk hero who happens to be a Muslim (a medieval ruler, a military genius or an excellent sportsman) we are branded communal. But if Hindus praise such a hero they cite it as evidence for being secular, sportsman like. Etc. Why don't they declare officially that India is a "Hindu Rashtra", when unofficially it is so.

These stereotypes feed and fatten religious group identities, i.e. communalism. The communalists exploit the discrepancy between the self-perception of one religious group and perception of it by the antagonistic communal group to spread fear and insecurity among their co-religionists. For example, Muslim communalists often accuse 'Hindus' to be vicious towards minorities and to be communal. The Hindu communalists counter this accusation by reiterating that their secularism and tolerance is evident in allowing 'Muslims' to live in India even after granting 'them' Pakistan in 1947, whereas in Pakistan 'Hindus' have been virtually eliminated. Similarly, Hindu communalists charge that 'Muslims' are anti-national as they celebrate the victories of Pakistani sports teams over Indian teams. Muslim communalists rebut this charge by referring to the active participation of 'Muslims' in the freedom struggle and in the two wars against Pakistan.

There are instances when communalists accept the communal stereotypes propagated by rival communalists. For example, Muslim communalists often brand the Indian State to the 'Hindu communalists accept this and start prescribing a code of conduct for all 'Muslims'. Similarly, Hindu communalists charge 'Muslims' with being strongly organized and blind supporters of their own co-religionists. Muslim communalists accept this charge and claim that if they do not defend their religion the 'Hindus' will stamp out Islam. Communalists of all shades accept the belief that the gain of an individual belonging to a particular religious group is an achievement of the whole religious group and a loss of other religious group.

In this way communal stereotypes aggravate fears, suspicions and mistrust between religious groups. The individuals who fall prey to communal ideology, or some of its elements, seek refuge in religious group identities and also start rein-forcing them by propagating communal ideology. Communal ideology is able to win more and more adherents through a self-generating process. Thus, the communalism of one group, instead of emasculating the communalism of another group, feeds and fattens it through violence or high-pitched propaganda.

Religiosity Reinforces Communal Antagonisms

Communalists use religiosity for boundary definition in political and other spheres. Their emphasis remains on religious practices, festivals, processions etc. They try to promote solidarity by exaggerating incidents when such processions or festivals have been infringed upon.

Communalists are also behind the increase of religious ceremonies and processions like 'Bhagwati Jagran', 'Durga Puja Processions', 'Rath Yatras', 'Tajias' etc. For instance, between 1976 and 1984 the number of mohalla-level 'Durga Puja Samitis' has increased from one to 19 and each of these samitis instals its own Durga idol at Mau. The members of these samitis are mohalla-level political leaders and young businessmen. An alarming feature of this increase is the spill over of 'Durga Puja samitis' into some villages around Mau like Dumrao, Paligad, Mahudaari, Gokulpura etc. One of these, i.e. Kurti Jafarpur, experienced communal tension in this connection in October, 1984. The other religious processions organized by Hindu communalists with the wide participation of their co-religionists are 'Laxmi Pujan', 'Saraswati Pujan', 'Ganesh Pujan' etc. Tajias on Moharram are also taken out in grand processions in Mau and Azamgarh towns.

These religious processions have increased in number and scale of participation/organization over the years. The membership of the organization patronizing these processions mostly consists of those who may not be religious but may have their own political interests to serve. Most of these members are young. For example, the Durga Puja Mahasamiti at Mau (which functions under the supervision of the Ramlila Mela Samiti) co-ordinates the activities of all its mohalla level units and some puja samitis in villages. This Mahasamiti consisted of seven businessmen, three service workers and one student in the year 1987. All members of the Mahasamiti were below 40 years but more than 25 years of age. Planned and organized efforts are made for the public performance of religious rituals. The effect of this will be in widening the impact of the organizations planning these efforts, in sharpening the communal cleavages and also throwing up 'community' leaders to protect and promote 'Hindu interest', 'Muslim interests' and so on. Even the scale of organizing the public performance of religious rituals becomes an issue for competition among rival communalists.

Politics of Communalism and Eruption of Communal Rioting

Religiosity imparts passion and intensity to communalism. The extent of religiosity is very high at Mau at discussed earlier. Even minor variations in the public performance of religious rituals (for example, the place for the installation of the idol of Goddess Durga or the choice of a site for a mosque) evokes violent reactions. These violent reactions are the outcome of the

constant reinforcement of religious group identities through the propagation of communal ideology. Threats to these identities are constantly hammered on by a section of traders in yarn, most of whom happen to be 'marwari Hindus', 'grihasthas' who happen to be 'Ansari Muslims', some general merchants who happen to be both 'sindhis' and 'Ansari Muslims', some local political leaders of rightwing groups etc. (Political groups of the Left to not propagate communal ideology, but have occasionally used it). These interests are involved in severe competition in maximizing their economic and political gains. There is a growing tendency to maximize political gains by adopting short cuts in terms of usage of primordial identities, money and muscle power, communal slogans, obscurantist issues etc. Similarly, economic benefits are sought through the formation of guild for capital circulation along ascriptive categories, communal employment preferences, disinclination to use techniques of advertisement for sales promotion or professionalized management for efficiency or to buy advanced technology etc. Such orientations of economic and political vested interests cause the projection of competition, which is a product of objective conditions, as a communal competition. The communalists, therefore, expect every industrial worker to help his co-religionist industrialist to out-compete his competitor who belongs to the perceived antagonists religious group. For example, in Maunath Bhanjan (called Mau for short), some of the sizing and calendaring plant owners who happen to be Muslims often resort to the propaganda that 'Muslim' workers are not employed by those entrepreneurs who are Hindus, whereas their own attendance rolls do not have many workers from the Muslim religious group. In Mau there are 12 sizing units, 1 dyeing and bleaching unit and 6 calendaring units. On an average, 1200 workers find employment in these units daily. Out sample survey covered around 30 per cent of these aforementioned cloth finishing units, which employed 36 percent of the workers. Out of the units taken for sampling, 66 per cent were owned by entrepreneurs who happened to be Muslims and only 18 per cent of the workforce employed by them belonged to the Muslim religious group (Table 7).

Similarly, the traders and manufacturers said that no worker from the Muslim religious group found employment in the two spinning mills at Mau since these were owned by Hindus. This propaganda has carried conviction among the pauperized or unemployed sections of Muslims and led to the establishment or reinforcement of the 'leadership' of co-religionist traders and manufactures.

A majority of workers employed in the two spinning mills are from neighboring villages. Most of these workers belonging to small or marginal peasant groups and with growing pressure on land, as also corruption, some wards of middle

peasants are able to bribe their way to employment at these mills. The self-employment as weavers of a majority of the members of the Muslim religious group is the main cause of their relative absence from the spinning mills.[5]

Table 7
Results of Sample Survey of Units Involved in Activities Allied with Cloth Production

S.No.	Particulars	Units
(1)	(2)	(3)
1.	Number of Sampled Units	6
2.	Total Workers	433
3.	Religious group affiliation of Owners	4 M, 2 H
4.	Workers employed by Owners who happened to Muslims	245
5.	Workers employed by Owners who happened to be Hindus	188
6.	Religious group affiliation to workers employed by Owners who happened to be Muslims	45 M, 200 H
7.	Religious group affiliation of workers employed by Owners who happened to be Hindus	188 H

Source: CRRID Field Survey 1987.
Note: H indicate Owners/Workers who happened to be Hindus.
M indicates Owners/Workers who happened to be Muslims.

The competition between a section of yarn traders majority of whom happened to be marwaris Hindus and grihasthas who happened to be Ansari Muslims have been projected and perceived by some as communal competition in this town.

In Mau there are around 138 yarn merchants out of whom 20 are wholesalers. Amongst the retailers there has been considerable increase in the number of traders during the past 10 years or so. Most of the new entrants in the yarn trade happen to the Muslims. These new entrants were weavers working on self-owned powerlooms and benefitted from the boom in nylon saree production during 1980-83 and the expanding market for powerloom products, mainly lungis.[6] Established traders in yarn perceived the emergence

[5] The managements of the mills gave the following details of the workforce. In Swadeshi Textile Mill, out of 800 workers only 1 per cent were those who happened to be Muslims. And in U.P. Spinning Co-operative Mill which employs 2700 workers, 4.40 per cent workers happened to be Muslims. In both Mills more than 90 per cent of the workers were from nearby villages and were daily commuters to the own.

[6] The share of the decentralized sector in the total cloth output in India has increased from 20.40 per cent in 1951 to 30.40 per cent in 1961, 46.20 per cent in 1971 and 61 per cent in 1981. Within the decentralized sector, the powerloom sector contributes more than the handloom sector. The handloom sector has been

of the new entrants as a threat to their profit. Some of them genuinely believed and others deliberately propagated that the new entrants had been facilitated by Gulf money and support by weavers who also happened to be 'Muslims'. It is interesting that none of the established traders mentioned the fluctuations in yarn output and speculation arising thereof as one of the causes for the emergence of a few new traders or the decline of some established ones.

The impact of fluctuations in the prices of yarn in projected communally. The emergence of retailers of yarn during the early seventies is perceived by wholesalers, most of whom happen to be Hindus, as the emergence of "Muslims in yarn trade". Even the reasons for the emergence and the growing prosperity of the new retailers are based on factors like "Muslim traders sell their product to Muslim weavers on credit. We cannot do so and hence are at a disadvantage. We can bear with less profits, but not payments which may never be made by these Muslims, who instigate riots to absolve themselves of credit liabilities".

Such beliefs arise from actual or pretended ignorance about market conditions in the household industry operating within a capitalist economy. The emergence of retailers in the trade of yarn could possibly be attributed to:

(a) Surplus accumulation amongst sections of weavers during the different booms in the local cloth market, viz. 1966-69, 1980-83 etc.

(b) The gradual emergence of small brokers as merchant manufactures and yarn traders.

Trade in cloth particularly has a great credit component, some of which is advanced by organized credit institutions but much more by wholesalers, middlemen and retailers. The amount of credit varies with the market demand of commodities, i.e. the higher the demand the more the likelihood of faster circulations of capital. Because of relative depression which have been plaguing Mau since 1984, payments on a credit basis have become more predominant. Such compulsions of the market are projected as benefitting only one section of traders who happen to be Muslims. Competition arising from a clash of economic interests is thereby given the form of communal antagonism.

Perception along communal lines is also discernible amongst cloth traders and 'grihasthas' (or merchant manufacturers). Sections amongst the 'grihasthas', most of whom happen to be Muslims, have started direct wholesale-trading in

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producing less than its proposed targets during the successive plans. During the sixth Plan the production of hand-woven cloth has been 3,300 million metres against the target of 4,100 milion metres.

There are almost 40,000 weavers and around 20,000 handlooms in and around Mau. The handlooms are owned by weavers themselves and almost every household of 'Ansari Muslim' have at least one handloom.

handloom products during the past 10 years or so and are engaged in stiff competition with established commission agents and cloth traders, most of whom happen to be Hindus. These sections project themselves as the benefactors of the whole religious group by organizing and financing social service institutions. It is also projected by them that their profits will benefit the religious group as a whole.

Common religious group affinity between the wavers and the 'grihasthas' is used by the latter to create the impression that 'Marwari and Bania traders' had a monopoly over handloom trade in the past and this was responsible for the destruction of the craft of weaving and the deprivation of weavers. Such propaganda and postures are utilized to bargain with the weavers for deflating wages and competing in the market for a favourable position. The competition for market amongst the traders belonging to both the religious groups is thus fought in a communal guise.

Besides traders, these fluctuations have further pauperized the weavers who were already impoverished. The weavers are dependent on yarn traders, merchant-manufacturers or 'grihasthas' and commission agents. Though these weavers own handlooms, they are totally dependent on these middlemen for earning their livelihood as they do not possess capital. [7] The prices of

[7] The weavers in Mau are linked with the handloom market through the intermediaries in the following ways:

1. They are dependent on 'grihasthas'. These 'grihasthas' are said to be around 300 to 500 in number. The 'grihasthas' are mostly 'Ansari Muslims'. Those among them the approximate business of Rs.50 lakh per season are four to five, those with Rs.20 to Rs.50 lakh are 15 to 20, those with Rs.10 to Rs.20 lakh are 40 to 50 and the rest have a business of Rs.10 lakh or less. These 'grihasthas' sell the produce of weavers through commission agents or directly to wholesale traders outside Mau. They get handloomproducts manufactured as per the market requirement from the weavers under the following two systems:

(a) The 'Poat or Dhara' system – the 'grihasthas' has a stock of yarn, colour and starch which he 'sells' (but actually loans) on a premium to the weavers. The weaver, on completing the order, "sells" the finished product to the same 'grihastha' and pays a certain commission to him for buying it. The price of the finished product is usually depreciated and that of the raw material inflated by the 'grihasthas' as immediate cash transactions seldom take place. Helpless weavers, therefore, have to bear the losses due to fluctuations in the market price of products. The 'Poat or Dhara" system is generally resorted to only by the bigger 'grihasthas' today, though it was widely prevalent some 20 years ago.

(b) "Baani system", the 'grihasthas' advance raw material and a certain percentage of working expenses to the weavers. The weavers are paid predetermined piece wages on completing the order. This is more prevalent today.

2. The weavers can sell their produce directly to the commission agents who market the finished product. The raw material and other working expenses are borne by the weavers in this case. Depending upon the demand for the finished product and the actual terms of contract between the weaver and the commission agent, the produce of this category of weavers is marketed. This system of marketing is nominal today, but was widely prevalent during the nylon saree boom between 1980-83. The commission agents may sometimes order the manufacture of certain specific products through brokers from weavers on the "Banni system".

3. The weaver is sometimes linked with the market through "brokers". These "brokers" often weave on their own handlooms also. They perform the role of agents of bigger 'grihasthas' or commission agents.

handloom products remain so low that the employment of family labour becomes necessary. Our sample survey reveals that the earnings of family labour range from Rs 16 to Rs 42 per day. These earnings depend upon the nature of the product produced, work availability, craftsmanship etc. apart from other factors which affect the textile industry as a whole. It was also found that the average size of families was considerably large. This fact reduced the per head earnings of a weaver's family.

The changes in consumer preferences also adversely affected weavers more than the others involved in handloom manufacturing. An instance of the nature of the product produced affecting the earning of and the uncertainty faced by weavers is that of nylon sarees. Around 1980 there was a boom (which lasted upto 1983) in the production of nylon sarees. At that time the weavers were getting approximately Rs 50 per piece and that too in cash. Today, for the same labour, these weavers cannot expect more than Rs 15 piece and the payment is deferred on the will of the traders and merchants.

This boom and crash in the wages of handloom weavers is quite often repeated in Mau, compelling this mass of semi-literate and illiterate people to turn fatalistic, religious and vulnerable to communal mobilization. That there is an increase in religiosity is reflected in the celebration of religious festivals through processions, an increase in the number of "Haj" and aspirants thereof, an increase in the number of Madrasas and enrolment of pupil therein, an increase in the number of new mosques, the expansion of noticeable improvement in the maintenance of old mosques, etc.

Similarly, in the powerloom sector weavers are as vulnerable as those working on self-owned powerlooms. Most of the weavers on powerlooms are wage-labourers whose employment is casual, payment is made to them on piece rates and who are daily commuters from nearby villages. Most of the powerlooms are owned by "textile owners" or those who are also a category of merchant-manufactures. Some of the powerlooms are owned by individual families who employ either family labour or wage labourers from nearby villages. These individual powerloom owners also produce cloth for traders on "Baani".[8]

They place the orders to weavers usually of the "Banni system" and keep a share of the profit for themselves at the cost of the earnings of weavers.

[8] The labour force employed in the powerloom sector is of two kinds:
(a) Wage-labourers who number around 5,000 and who work on piece wages on looms owned by "textile owners". If power supply is regular, a wage-labourer in a 12 hour shift can earn Rs.10 to Rs.12 with one weekly unpaid holiday. The nature of employment is casual. Most of these labourers are daily commuters from villages falling within an approximate radius of 15 km of Mau. They are usually landless or marginal farmers who mostly belong to backward castes such as Bhars, Chamars, Dhobis, Ahirs, Nonias and Passis, though some labourers also belong to the higher castes like Thakurs and Brahmins.

Apart from the competition in trade and for jobs, the access to social amenities or otherwise is also projected and seen through the communal prism. Municipal level politics has played a significant role in perpetuating the notion that civic amenities can be availed of and are provided if electors vote for their co-religionists. This was evident from the general feeling that things were better when their co-religionist was representing them on the Municipal Board. These perceptions under the influence of communal ideology ignore:

(1) the overall neglect of social amenities in the development strategy;

(2) the fact that the elections to local bodies have not been held since 1970 which has deprived the people of a forum for grievance redressal;

(3) that there is an uneven distribution of limited amenities and given the conditions of clustered living by members of religious groups, the non-accessibility of amenities is seen as an act of discrimination;

(4) that there is a general neglect of lower strata mohallas where the density of population is higher, living conditions are unhygienic, sewerage is poor, water (including potable) is scarce etc. It was observed during our field survey that mohallas inhabited by the lower strata, irrespective of religious groups, miserably lack social amenities. However, communalists are determined to prove discrimination. Hence they compare social amenities in lower strata mohallas inhabited by co-religionists with higher strata mohallas inhabited by other religious groups.

Competition, unemployment and pauperization are some of the objective facts produced by our socio-economic formations. Communalists are able to reinforce and use the insecurities arising out of competition in trade and industry and for jobs as well as the people's own perception of unemployment and pauperization. Fierce competition in trade and handloom products, the unemployment and pauperization of weavers, severe fluctuations in the crisis-prone textile industry, limited openings in trade, service and industry, inadequate social amenities, etc. are some of the necessary conditions for communal rioting in Mau.

(b) Family labourers whose number could not be ascertained and who work on the looms owned by weavers themselves. Most of this labour is engaged through the "Baani" system. The weavers mostly own less than three powerlooms per family and the average earnings per loom accruing to the family-labur range from Rs.20 to Rs.30 per day. Most of the coloured cloth is woven on "Baani" by family-labour on powerlooms these days. Those weavers who own more than four powerlooms also employ wage labour. This labour is also from nearby villages and belongs to the same social and economic groups as mentioned in (a) above. Some of the wage-labourers employed by weavers in this category also belong to the pauperized sections of weavers of Mau town who happen to be 'Ansari Muslims'. This labour, on an average, earns around Rs.10 to Rs.12 day for a 12 hour shift with one weekly unpaid holiday.

The persistence of communal term of social and political discourse, communal politics, are some of the sufficient conditions of communal rioting.

The strength of communal forces can be gauged from electoral support to political groups which subscribe to communal ideology and propagated also. In a situation where communalism is deep rooted the electoral response to communal appeal is greater. For example, in Mau, the communal stereotypes were more antagonistic as compared to Azamgarh town. This may be due to the persistence of minority-majority persecution complex among a section of Hindus and majority-minority persecution complex among a large section of Muslims (Muslim constitute 66 per cent of Mau's population as compared to 25 per cent in Azamgarh (MB). The Hindu communalists, while declaring themselves a persecuted minority in Mau, propagate that there is a threat to their survival from 'Muslims' and therefore, all 'Hindus' should unite. Further, they urge co-religionists to project their unity in politics and through public performance of religious rituals. In electoral politics, the impact of this communal propaganda can be inferred from the percentage of votes polled by Jan Sangh. In 1957 Jan Sangh secured 22.20 per cent votes, in 1962 it mustered 25.53 per cent votes and in 1967 it got 32.27 per cent votes polled for Legislative Assembly elections from the constituency in which Mau falls. Ever since then, Jan Sangh (reformed as Bharatiya Janata Party in 1980) could secure around 18 per cent votes in subsequent Legislative Assembly elections with the exception of 1980.

The organized antagonistic assertion in social activities by communal Hindus is reflected by the increase in religious processions, tightly knit organizations conducting these processions in Mau. The religious organizations were seen to play a dominant role in politics. For example, the office-bearers of the Ram Lila Mela Committee, which is the apex body of all other 'Hindu' organizations, are also active political workers and leaders. Similarly, some of the patrons of Madrasas and Masjids participate in electoral politics as in the case of Mufta-ul-uloom. Even while these patrons may not be contesting elections themselves they often lend their support to political groups as they did in the 1985 Legislative Assembly elections when they supported a BJP candidate. These alliances in no way alleviate mistrust and suspicion prevalent among members of these communal political groups. Some activists related to the politics of the patrons of Mufta-ul-uloom appeared apprehensive of BJP even after voting for it, remarking "We have committed suicide".

Communist Party of India (CPI), which is one of the main political groups in Mau, has a substantial support base amongst weavers (a majority of whom happen to be Muslims). Due to the pervasiveness of fatalism and elements of communalism among some weavers, the left forces have not been able to mobilize all the weavers despite several movements they have launched on

their demands. Mau has been a centre of trade-union activity under the influence of left parties. A trade union of weavers by the name of 'Bunker Union' was established in 1952, by CPI. During the 1950s several agitations were organized by this union asking for marketing facilities for finished products, financial help to procure raw materials and formation of law for weavers' co-operatives in the handloom sector etc. It is generally believed that apart from the formation of a few co-operatives, no sizable gain accrued to weavers as a consequence of these agitations. In early 1970s, particularly in 1973, a state wide movement seeking stability in yarn prices, marketing facilities etc. was launched jointly by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) affiliated 'Bunker-Union' and the CPI and Congress affiliated Bunker Majlis-e-Amal. This movement achieved considerable gains, viz. formation of U.P. Handloom Corporation to market the produce of weavers and rationing of yarn to registered weavers at controlled prices. The ration cards on which weavers were to be provided subsidized yarn by the industries Department of the Government of Uttar Pradesh could only partially meet the yarn needs of weavers and as per respondents who were weavers "the government did not supply yarn for more than two months in 1973". On similar issues of yarn and marketing, an agitation under the leadership of the Left forces was launched in 1980 also.

Communal violence and the communally tense environment of Mau has left traces of communalism amongst some sections of these weavers as revealed by our field survey. Besides, political groups and other vested interests are perpetuating religious, caste and sect affinities to maintain the existing socio-economic and political arrangements. Some of the weavers under the influence of this ideology even reprimanded those leaders who combined in themselves the role of political as well as religious leaders. It is the nature of Indians that they do not mix religion and politics in a desired manner. Politics without religion breeds immortality.

Further, these weavers who happened to be Muslims however complained that BJP had united "the Hindu" and if there is any communalism in politics at Mau it is because "Hindus" are organized.

Fatalism, particularly makes weavers amenable to communal propaganda. When social life is conceived as given and unchangeable it becomes very easy for vested interests to use traditional loyalties like caste, religion, sect in the name of God, common good and social stability. For instance, the 'Grihasthas', middle men and brokers from amongst Muslims often become 'nazims' of religious institutions to project themselves as leaders of 'all Muslims" and thereby, serve the 'Divine Cause', 'Common Good of Muslims' etc. This helps the vested interests to maintain affinity with the weavers while the relation between the two sections are put under severe strain. The impact of all this

was one of the factors leading to perception like "Hindu traders have destroyed traditional crafts everywhere in India. Given half a chance, they will destroy handlooms in Mau by devaluing skilled craftsmanship and encouraging mass production".

The preponderance of unprincipled politics, mobilization of 'Hindus' by communal organizations and emasculation of the common voters by the money-oriented political system are cited by weavers as factors for their political deprivation. Propaganda about the organization of 'Hindus' is carried out by the Jamat and the Tabliq with the active support of some political leaders and economic vested interests. This results in increasing elements of religiosity amongst weavers as expressed by their increasing participation in religious processions like prophet Mohammed's birthday, different Milads etc.

Elements of communalism are no doubt prevalent among weavers in Mau. However, simultaneously there is a streak of secular thinking among them some of the weavers condemn 'Hindu' traders more than co-religionist 'grihasthas', while identifying both as the source of their miseries. On the other hand, these weavers are not antagonistic towards their fellow workers who may be 'Hindus'.

It is interesting that some traders constitute the support base of the political groups of the left and most of them belong to the Ahl-e-Hadis sect of Muslims. Most of the traders support the Congress, irrespective of their religious group affiliation. Some of the traders, who were also local-level leaders of Congress, were quite in contrast with the professed secular principles of the party. After extensive interviews with these leaders and the perception about them among general public, it can be said that they openly use and propagate communalism.

On partition of India in 1947, a section of the Muslim League joined CPL, under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Baki. Ever since then a general impression has been created that CPI in Mau is Muslim League in disguise. This impression has been created by the –

(a) propaganda of the rival political groups;

(b) the policy of protecting "minorities" which resulted into the appeasement of communalists.

CPI, as also some other political groups, did not make a distinction between the communalists of the religious "minorities" and the religious "minorities" as such. The failure to make this vital distinction resulted into the legitimization of communal propaganda that "minorities" face persecution as society is divided along religious group lines. Further, this failure or conceptual error led to the appeasement of "minority" communalism and the demands articulated

by communalists got wider acceptance when professedly secular parties also voiced the without shedding the communal overtones in these demands.

The widespread electoral support to the political groups of the left is not derived from the questions of ideology, programme and policy only. This was discerned during the course of our field survey. Some traders, like some of the weavers, opined that religious and politics should be missed so as to provide a moral basis to politics. In the 1957 Legislative Assembly elections the political groups of the left polled 44.95 per cent in the constituency in which Mau fell. The maximum number of votes, i.e.51.89 per cent, were secured by these groups in the 1977 Legislative Assembly elections. These groups have never polled less than 35 per cent votes in Legislative Assembly elections from Mau constituency but for 1969 and 1980.

The data on electoral politics, electoral alliance and political movements reveal that the extent of pervasiveness of communal ideology has a bearing on politics. The nature of contemporary politics in Mau is dominated by two kinds of groups, viz. those who are patently communal and those who use communalism.

On the Contrary

Communalism has been pervasive in Azamgarh town. But it could not degenerate into communal rioting. This is so because there is an absence of sufficient conditions which can provide teeth of communalism. There is not a large population of lumpen elements which can provide violent edge to the ideology to communalism. It is not to deny that a sizeable middle class did emerge, but in the absence of availability of job opportunities it has been migrating outside the district. The educated middle classes did not develop vested interest in the politics and the economy of the district. However, there exist a parallel tendency in politics which is using a competition for employment in job market to bread religious group antagonism. For instance, the Shibli national postgraduate college, Azamgarh (whose foundation was laid in 1882) is designated as Mini-Aligarh Muslim University by Hindu communalists. In February 1985 around 2800 applicants were registered with the employment Exchange at Azamgarh town. The employment Exchange at Azamgarh had 29175 applicants registered for 1984-85 out of which only 22 could get job. With the intake of applicants being less in services and with limited opportunities for industrial employment competition for jobs is very intense. Such a situation is being used by communalists to propagate the point that under-employment or unemployment of their co-religionists was due to the over-employment of members of other religious group.

In the realm of agriculture the notion of commonalty of religious group interest is also gaining ground in the district of Azamgarh. The traditional

landowning interests which mostly belong to the higher castes, i.e. Thakurs, Bhumihars and Brahmins, are increasingly resorting to the propagation and use of religious group identities. The reasons for this trend of preference or religion as compared to caste is to checkmate the consolidation of the strength of middle peasants who mostly belong to intermediate castes and also to formulate a larger group so as to have an advantage is electoral politics. Even the Harijans are being increasingly brought to the fold of Hinduism so as to serve as volunteers in these larger groups. This trend of creating and consolidating religious group identities is reflected in a marked increase in the number of new temples and the renovation of old ones through the 'donation of labour' or 'shram daan' by all castes.

It is evident that the competition for the jobs and in trade is limited and also perception of this competition is not widely seen as communal. However, there are mobilization which are providing communal time to the perception of people. However, historically Azamgarh town have experienced mobilizations along non-communal lines. These mobilizations were dominant. Whereas in Mau, the mobilizations on communal lines were frequent.

It is not merely competition in job or trade which create conditions for communal rioting. A historical account clearly shows that the non-communal mobilizations transcending religious group boundaries were dominant in this district. These mobilizations on non-communal lines have checked a growth of communalism and also its degeneration into communal rioting.[9]

Before and after independence, the political groups affiliated with the left politics were able to consolidate their political strength through various mass movements launched by them in the region as a whole. The most notable among these movements were "Hari Begar Nazrana Movements" launched after the formation of All India Kisan Sabha, 1936, the movement was aimed

[9] Howere, the religious festivals and religious leaders were occasionally used to spread anti-colonial sentiments. For example, the Kumbh Mela in 1930 at Allahabad was used to propagate issues in the civil disobedience movement. Ascethics and Sadhu turned politician like Congress leader, Baba Raghava of Gorakhpur condemned the British Rule as being worse than the thousand cows slaughtered daily. The Hindu Mahasabha since 1928 organized camps in lathi-wielding and use of knives in Azamgarh besides Meerut, Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Basti. The caste mobilization were visible in the movements launched by Bharat Singh Yadavacharya and J.P. Chaudhary in 1930 through what they called, "The Triveni Sangam". This was a confederation of several lower and intermediate castes like Yadav, Monia, Meam, Kushanda, Rajbhar, Kurmi. The issues on which these castes were mobilized were the right to wear the sacred thread called 'Janeyu' and to study in Gurukuls. These privileges were considered the birth right of solely the higher caste. During this phase and after partition, these organizations were active in mobilizing people around religious group identities. Notwithstanding the restricted franchise, it is interesting to note that Muslim League won all but one of the Muhammadan reserved seats in Azamgarh district in the two elections to U.P. Legislative Assembly in 1937 and 1946. Similarly, the Hindu Mahasabha, though it performed very badly in these elections, registered its presence and emerged as a second important political group after the Congress in the general constituencies in this district. These communal groups did weaken the pesant and other progressive movements.

at putting an end to willful ejectments of tenants by *zamindars,* compulsory offerings, i.e. Nazrana, tilling zamindar's land without wages, i.e. Hari and doing errands for zamindars without wages i.e. beggar. The positive demand put forward by the activist who launched the "Hari beggar nazrana movement" were security of tenure to the tenants and relief from arrears and debts; slogans raised during these movements were 'abolition of zamindari' and 'land to the tiller'. The 'Hari Begar Nazrana' movement continued in different forms till the abolition of zamindari in 1952.

However, another trend within nationalist movement was represented by the militants of different political groups of the left. The Nand Ganj Conspiracy Case and Dacoity of 1942 in Ghazipur district in the eastern region was aimed at the formation of parallel national movement when police repression was at the peak and economic oppression had multiplied the miseries of the people. The persons involved in this struggle were Pabbar Ram, Shiv Pujab Rai, Bacchi Singh, Comrade Salim, Jharkhande Rai etc. These groups tried to regenerate national and non-communal consciousness among masses between 1942 and 1946 through plays like *Tadapati dhunia* and *Bhagat Singh ki phansi* as also through 30 night schools in and around Nand Ganj and monthly newspaper *Azad*. Police repression was let loosed on these activists and night schools and newspapers were forced to close.

After the legal abolition of 'zamindari', the political groups of the left continued their struggle with the main thrust on agriculture and for those working in this sector. The main movements launched by these groups were Anti Eviction Movement in 1953, anti-consolidation movement in 1955 and for a new food and land reforms policy in 1955, 1958, 1963, etc.

However in Azamgarh the political groups merely use communalism to feed the perceptions of people regarding the existence of "Hindu interests", "Muslim interests" and so on. However, there is a tendency among the main political groups to use religious symbols alongwith caste group affinities so as to widen their appeal among different caste groups in response to the increasing competition in politics. For instance, the 'Ram Janmabhoomi Liberation Movement' was not discouraged by any political group. So, instead of promoting scientific outlook and rational values the main political groups appear to be giving tacit support to obscurantism and reactionary ideas.

The vacuum caused by the gradual eclipse of the leaders who had participated in socio-political movements and had rural background is being sought to be filled by the leaders who are the product of that social milieu which promotes opportunism, unprincipled politicking and communal orientation in Azamgarh.

Secondly, the communal stereotypes at Mau are antagonistic as compared to Azamgarh.

Thirdly, the persecution complex arising from the perception of discrimination against “minorities” is pervasive among members of both the religious groups at Mau and, therefore, the people feel a necessity to politically assert themselves. The extent of politicization is less and the nature of persecution complex is milder in Azamgarh.

Fourthly, in Mau, religious group identities are sought to be reinforced for political purposes by Madrasas and the Ram Lila Committee in a more systematic manner as compared to Azamgarh.

Fifthly, religious processions and public performance of religious rituals at Mau are directly contributing to the stoking of communal fires whereas at Azamgarh these are only contributing to obscurantism.

MEERUT RIOTS: AN ANALYSIS

Dildar Khan

Communal riots in India in the recent past have become more frequent and intense. Not only this, incessant communal riots have engulfed even those areas which have never before experience with riots. In terms of its frequency communal riots have increased one and a half times in India between the periods 1954-69 and 1969-82. The intensity of these riots can be gauged from the number of details, injuries and loss of property cause by these riots. For instance, in these 42 years of independence, nine thousand riots have claimed more than eight thousand human lives and caused injury to around fifty thousand. The widespread effect is visible from the number of districts which came under impact of communal riots. In 1961, only sixty one districts were affected by communal riots. But by 1970, more than two hundred districts were affected by this. During the same period in Uttar Pradesh number of districts affected by communal riots increased from thirteen to thirty one out of 54 districts.

It is in this context that an attempt has been made to understand and analyse the existing social, economic and political situation of Meerut city and how the existing conditions are creating forces which inculcate and cement communal violence. The city seems to have become the most riot-hit in Uttar Pradesh. It provides an interesting case study of the growth of communal violence because it is the city from where the first war of Independence in the form of a revolt in the Army ranks started in 1857.It has in history always been in the forefront of revolutionary and national movement of the country.

Meerut city has witnessed frequent, intense and widespread communal rioting since the late sixties. Riots erupted there in 1932, 1946, 1962, 1968, 1973, 1982, 1986, 1987 and 1990. However, the major communal riots were those of 1973, 1982 and 1987.

The first incident of communal riots in Meerut erupted in 1932 on a trivial issue between a customer and shopkeeper belonging to two different religious groups, i.e. “Hindus and Muslims”. Members of these religious groups clashed in the Anaj Mandi area. This incident was spontaneous and it ended within one day of its occurrence.

However, the first major communal riot which occurred in 1973 in Meerut was sparked off by a minor incident between riders of a bicycle and a cycle rickshaw. The two riders belonged to different religious groups. This riot was

sparked off spontaneously, but planned subsequently in different stages. It continued for more than one month. About 100 persons lost their lives.

On the other hand, riots which erupted in 1982 and 1987 were planned in nature. Communal tension was simmering on a dispute over a building in the Shahghasa area since the beginning of 1982. People of both religious groups displayed element of communalism during July and August (these were the months of Ramzan and Id according to the Muslim calendar). The dispute itself was the creation of economic and political vested interest groups which wanted to acquire the property attached to the disputed "place of worship" which, according to the local elders, was neither a "temple" nor a "mazar". It was a place called "piao", from where thirsty passers-by could get drinking water.

The provocative act responsible for the rioting was the tolling of a mandir's bell at the time of Aftaar. Muslims objected to this. Accordingly, a time was fixed for ringing the bell. But the anti-social elements, in connivance with the pujari of the temple, according to most of the respondents, continued to ring the bell at the time of Magrib's Azan.

Communal riots (September 1982) were sparked off when the pujari of the temple was stabbed to death. This communal riot lasted more than one month. Officially the toll was 50 lives.

The recent eruption of communal riots in Meerut in April, 1987, gravely affected the social life of almost five lakh inhabitants of the city. The inhabitants of the other cities, towns and villages also became tense. This communal riot was sparked off when a person called Ajay Sharma was stabbed to death in Gudri Bazar. This time the rioting engulfed the entire city due to the wide prevalence of communal propaganda unleashed over the controversial Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri Masjid issue.

The recent riots in Meerut 1987 is a clear indication of the brutalization of the human psyche and the degeneration of human relationships. Some new dangerous trends were noticed enhanced the intensity of the communal riots.

Some New and Dangerous Trends in the Recent Communal Riots (*Kumar & Khan, 1987*)

A. Some new trends were noticed with regard to the participation of people in the riots. For instance, participation in the previous riots used to be limited. The sections which used to participate were usually hired riff-raff, delinquent youths, a small number of artisans, petty shopkeepers, unskilled workers and hawkers. But this time, perhaps for the first time in the history of communal rioting, people living in the same mohallas attacked each other in connivance with riff-raff from outside.

There were several instances when a "Hindu" neighbor attacked his 'Muslim' neighbor and vice-versa. It was found that residents living in the same locality, instead of coming to the rescue of their neighbor, either joined hands with the rioters and indulged in looting, arson or killing or became silent spectators.

B. Another new and dangerous trend noticed was the participation of people from the lower middle and middle strata of the population, arson and killing. The active participation in communal riots by this section of the society can have serious countrywide repercussions. In previous riots, this section of society, although it did nurture antagonistic feelings, never participated in physical violence. The increase in participation in riots by diverse sections of the society is an indication of the degeneration of human values and the brutalization of the human psyche. Further, it is symptomatic of the pervasiveness and increasing appeal of communal feelings and antagonism.

C. A large section of Harijans attacked localities inhabited by Muslims. So much so that in certain areas the rioting appeared to be between Harijans and Muslims. This tendency imparted a ferocity to communal rioting and also provided caste Hindus with a vanguard.

The important characteristic of the 1987 communal riots in Meerut are as follows:

(a) It was shocking that people prepared themselves, both mentally and physically, to live and die in a violent environment. Violent behaviour became the normative behavior opposed to the natural human urge to strive to make society more humane.

(b) Another characteristic was that anti-social elements patronized by the community leaders, traders, and by the administration were in the forefront for maintaining peace and resolving social conflicts. For instance, in 1982, they were said to be involved in resolving the dispute relating to the claims and counter-claims made by members of the two religious groups regarding the disputed "temple-mazar".

It is in this context that an attempt has been made to understand and analyse the existing social, economic and political situation to Meerut city and how the existing conditions are creating forces which are perpetuating and strengthening communal violence. The city seems to have become the most riot-hit in Uttar Pradesh. It provides an interesting case study of the growth of communalism because it is the city from where the First War of Independence in the form of a revolt in the Army ranks started in 1857. It has in history

always been in the forefront of revolutionary and national movements of the country.

Role of the Administration, Police and Media

Why do the administration and police personnel concerned find it difficult to control criminal activities like looting, arson, stabbing and killing during communal riots? It was noticed that in certain cases the administration and the police played a partisan role, which added to the ferocity of rioting. The past two decades have shown that the police force particularly the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) have been the subject of criticism by impartial citizens. In Meerut, it was found that a section of the PAC sided with those attackers who were their co-religionists in killing, looting and arson. This indicates that the elements of communalism were very much pervasive amongst a section of the administration as well as the police personnel. For instance, during the 1987 riots in Meerut, an Army major who gave instructions to his men to launch a house to house search in the Suraj Kund locality, which is numerically dominated by the members of the Hindu religious group, was exasperated by the behavior of a Hindu sub-District Magistrate who kept insisting that only the Muslims were responsible for violence. “Even educated responsible officers here have been affected by the communal madness”, the Army Major remarked. Further, it was also reported by many respondents who happened to be Muslims that PAC personnel abused the Muslims, saying “Bulao apne Mohammad our Allah ko dekhte hain who kaise bachata hain”, “Allah ko manna chhor do nahi to hum tumhari haddiya tor denge”.

Such discriminatory behavior on the part of the administration and police personnel aggravated the situation instead of facilitating the normalization process.

It was observed during our field survey that the mere presence of the PAC in the Muslim-majority mohallas created and strengthened the feeling of insecurity among the Muslims, while the Hindus wanted the deployment of the PAC in their localities. The Hindus also did not prefer the deployment of the CRPF or other paramilitary forces in their localities. This was simply because the PAC not only sided with their co-religionists but provided patronage to the attackers and criminals who belonged to their own religious group during the communal riots. For instance, the District Mahila Congress (I) President of Meerut, a lady demanded: “We want only the PAC deployed in our localities. They are the only saviours of the Hindus”. When asked how women managed to travel to the Collector’s office during curfew period, she answered that the PAC had helped them.

A section of loom-owners, scissor manufacturers, white-collared, professional and skilled and semi-skilled workers who happened to be Muslims alleged that the administration was so badly disposed towards Muslims that it treated each one of them as a criminal or rioter whenever there was any deterioration in the law and order situation. However, the "Hindus" in these sections did not endorse such allegations and instead blamed the Muslims for antagonizing the administration by persistently cribbing and complaining against it.

Keeping in view the above mentioned factors, which indicate the Muslims have lost faith in administration, particularly, the PAC, the government should either take steps to train its personnel in such a way that they are not partial or the Government should counter the propaganda launched against the PAC.

The role of vernacular newspapers which are communal in orientation often inflame communal feelings and sentiments. These papers describe communal riots or other conflicts as a clash between two religious groups. Further, the victims of riots are counted as "Muslims" or "Hindus" and not as human beings. Such appearances in the media not only inculcate hatred but enhance the social and physical distance amongst the members of different religious groups.

A glance at newspapers reveals that they choose to report extremely offensive statements of blatant communalism (Faisal Jadid,1987). Such reporting leads to an immediate confrontation amongst the two religious groups which perceive each other to be antagonistic. Further such reports not only perpetuate fear, hatred and antagonism among members of one religious group against the members of other religious groups, but also hamper process of secularization, in the sense that these do not provide secular persons with an objective critique of the allegations and apprehensions floated between communalists.

How Communal Ideology Is Fed by Discrepant Perceptions

In order to understand the ideological orientation as well as the extent of the penetration of communal feelings and antagonism amongst the "Hindus" and the "Hindus", we ascertained the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of the respondents on various issues. Sharp discrepancies were found in the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of the respondents belonging to these two religious groups. The discrepancies in perception provide content to communal ideology. Ultimately, these discrepancies govern the behavioural patterns of the members of the two religious groups differently, and evoke fear, insecurity and antagonism, leading to communal violence.

Political Alienation

It was found in Meerut that a vast majority of the "Muslim" respondents, irrespective of their occupational categories, not only felt deprived of their due share in politics but they also believed that they were politically alienated. For this, these respondents blamed the "Hindu" – dominated Government, saying that it did not provide proper representation to the "Muslims" in the political sphere. They justify their feeling of political alienation in various ways.

Thus:

(a) The hostile treatment meted out by Government agencies like the public sector, the local administration, the police and the PAC to "Muslims" is a major factor which perpetuates feeling of political alienation. A majority of the respondents who happened to be Muslims believed that government agencies always discriminate against them in recruitment for jobs and grant of licences and subsidies etc. This discriminatory behavior is because of the "Hindu character" of the administration, they alleged.

Further, the police and the PAC always treat every "Muslim" as a criminal or an anti-national. Such treatment is lucidly observed during a period of communal tension. For the past two decades "Muslims" have been demanding that either the PAC should not be deployed in Muslim-majority areas or that the PAC should be disarmed because it is a communal force.

(b) Development schemes of the Government do not benefit "Muslims". This is because the Government frames policies in a way which does not suit the "Muslims". For example, educational policies totally neglect the "Islamic ethos". The curricula of the modern education is highly loaded with the "Hindu idiom".

Furthermore, the respondents who happened to be Muslim felt deprived even in the case of the Urdu language. The Government refuses to recognize Urdu as a second language.

These were some of the factors which sharpened the feeling of political alienation amongst "Muslims".

However, almost all the respondents who happened to be Hindus, irrespective of their occupational categories, expressed satisfaction at the political power they enjoyed.

It is of interest that a majority of the respondents (white-collar workers, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, petty shopkeepers and hawkers) irrespective of their religious group affiliations, expressed dissatisfaction with

the economic distributive system. They considered industrialists, political leaders, traders and anti-social elements to be the main beneficiaries of the Government's policies because the system patronized them.

But despite such a consensus on economic issues, members of the two religious groups harboured several other discrepant perceptions. For instance, a majority of the respondents who were mainly engaged in white-collar skilled or semi-skilled work (i.e. 85% of the Muslims and 91% of the Hindus) justified the social and religious practices of their own religious group and condemned the practices of the other group.

Perception of History

As regards history, a majority of the respondents, that is 94% of the "Muslims" and 88% of the Hindus, glorified those rulers who had belonged their own religious groups. The respondents who happened to be the Hindus alleged that Muslims cherished the memory of Mohammad Ghazni, who destroyed idols and temples, or that of Muslim rulers like Aurangzeb, who persecuted Hindus. On the other hand, respondents who happened to be Muslims said that every Muslim ruler was just towards everyone, irrespective of religious group affiliation. Further, these respondents said 'Hindus' unnecessarily propagate the belief that Muslim rulers practiced discrimination and compelled Hindus to embrace Islam.

Perception of the Root Causes of and Solution to Communal Violence

As regards the perception of the root causes of an a solution to communal violence, a majority of the respondents engaged in white-collar jobs, professional services and trading and political leaders who happened to be Hindus held the belief that communal violence occurred due to the absence of nationalist sentiments among "Muslims" and the growing social appeal of communal organizations like the Muslim League, the Adam Sena, the Jamaat-e-Islami. These respondents expressed the need to ban Muslim communal organizations and said steps should be taken to disseminate scientific education among the "Muslims" so as to wean them away from intolerance and fanaticism and to solve the problem of communal violence. However, a small number of these respondents felt that communal violence was the product of an unjust social order and that it could be checked only by ensuring socio-economic and political justice.

Most of the respondents who were unskilled or semi-skilled workers, hawkers, petty shopkeepers or rickshaw-pullers who happened to be Hindus believed that communal violence erupted due to the extra-territorial loyalties of Muslims towards Pakistan. The way out from communal violence, according to

these respondents, lay in creating the feeling of brotherhood, particularly amongst the Muslims so as to make them amenable to Indian nationalism.

On the other hand, "Muslims" respondents who were engaged in white-collar jobs, professionals, loom-owners, traders and political or community leaders felt that economic disparities, competition for jobs and in economic activity, widespread unemployment and discrimination in jobs on religious lines were the factors responsible for communal violence. These respondents believed that the intensity and frequency of communal violence could be reduced if the administration and political leaders did not aggravate the situation by adopting a partisan role.

A negligible number of the respondents belonging to the above mentioned sections who happened to be the Muslims felt that only communal politics was responsible for the eruption of communal riots. Therefore, strict vigilance over the strategies of the political parties was needed so that religion was not used for narrow gains.

However, a majority of the respondents who were unskilled or semi-skilled workers, weavers, rickshaw-pullers, artisans and hawkers who happened to be Muslims believed that the partisan role of the police and the administration, acts of sacrilege and hatred were the root causes responsible for the occurrence of communal violence. These respondents felt that communal violence could be overcome if deprivation and anti-Muslim attitudes were brought to an end.

Allegations and Apprehensions

We have already briefly given an idea of the widely prevalent communal allegations and apprehensions amongst one religious group regarding the other group, which indicate the extent of the penetration of retrogressive values and ideas and the degree of the prevalent inter-group relationship. Our field survey reveals several more interesting details. For example, vested interest group seek to strengthen religious group identities and feel fear and mistrust through communal allegations and apprehensions. Communal propaganda has invariably resulted in the formation of certain allegations and apprehensions, some of which are common to the different sections of the Muslim religious group.

Thus for instance, the following allegations and apprehensions:

(a) Hinduism is a farce. It is based on superstition as is evident from the fact that Hindus believe in thousands of Gods.

(b) Hindus are money-minded. They can mortgage their wives and daughters for money. They charge interest on money whereas interest is not permitted in Islam.

(c) Hinduism preaches bad conventions like sati, dowry system, etc.

(d) Injustice is the nickname of Hinduism. Hindu practice discrimination against Muslims in economic and political activities.

(e) Hindus want to destroy Islam and its culture. This is evident from the curricula of modern education which are highly loaded with the Hindu idiom.

(f) Hindus want to destroy Islamic tradition by changing the Muslim Personal Law and trying to form a uniform civil code. They are engaged in converting mosques into temples.

(g) Hindus want to annihilate Muslims, therefore, they instigate communal riots.

Communal allegations and apprehensions widely prevalent amongst the different sections of the Hindu religious group are:

(a) Islam is devouring Hinduism. Muslims are orthodox and fanatics. They do not want any reform in their outdated religion.

(b) Islam is against idol-worshipers. It preaches brutality.

(c) A majority of the Muslims are engaged in communal and criminal activities. Even in the past they destroyed many temples and left despoiled remnants intact to humiliate the Hindus.

(d) Muslims have no national loyalties and they have no interest in secular education. They send their children to madrasas which make them fundamentalists and impart the ideology of Darul-Haram.

(e) Muslims want to out-number Hindus. Therefore, they multiply their number at a very fast rate. Muslims do not follow the family planning norms so as to establish another Pakistan in India.

(f) The Jamaat-e-Islami is consolidating Muslims on religious lines in order to establish Darul-Haram in India.

Such allegations and apprehensions reveal the extent of the pervasiveness of communal feelings and antagonism amongst the members of the two religious groups. To put it systematically these allegations and apprehensions inculcate and strengthen:

(a) Fear and mistrust amongst the members of the two religious groups since Muslims have developed a fear of assimilation of their religious and cultural identity while Hindus have the fear of being out-numbered by the Muslims;

(b) Hatred and religious antagonism by continuously condemning the social and religious practices of other religious groups;

(c) Religious bigotry; and

(d) The social and physical distance between members of the two religious groups.

Thus, the communalism of one religious group, instead of castrating the communalism of another, feeds and fattens it through highpitched communal propaganda.

Religiosity and Communalism

Religiosity sharpens communal ideology. It imparts passions and intensity to communalism. It may be defined as a deep and intense emotional commitment to matters of religion as the tendency to let religion and religious emotions intrude into non-religious or non-spiritual areas of life and beyond the individual's private life, to refuse to separate religion from politics, economics and social life that is to be over-religious or have too much religion in one's life.

It was found during our field survey that most of the members of the two religious groups uncritically accept the religious values, rituals and traditions of their own religious group and condemned the values and traditions of the other religious group. The prevalence of such feelings not only restricts intermixing but it enhances social distance amongst the members of different religious groups.

In the past, religious celebrations were usually performed in places of worship without much fanfare. But, lately vested interest groups have started using religion to organize the people. Consequently, most of the religious celebrations now involve organizing processions with much pomp and show. These processions lucidly become the immediate provocation for communal tensions or riots to surface.

The celebration of religious festivals of the Hindus like Holi, Rath Yatra, Shiv Ratri, Dassera etc. and the Muslims (e.g. Moharram Tazia, Id-u-Izha, Sab-e-Baraat, etc.) often generate communal tensions in Meerut. This does not mean that the celebrations of the religious festivals cause tensions. But it is the spirit and manner of celebrating these festivals as a manifestation of the religio-political strength of particular group which strengthens communalism.

The fanfare and pomp with which any religious festival is organized lead to a competitive response from communalists claiming to represent another religious group. The result of such a competition is that members of different religious group perceive their interest to be similar with those of their co-

religionists and divergent from other religious group. The impact of such efforts of communalists sharpens religious group identities and leads to the emergence of "community leaders" who are expected to protect and promote "Hindu interests", "Muslim interests" and so on.

Demographic and Economic Characteristics of the Area under Study

Demographic and economic features are essential to understand the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the area under study. Meerut falls in the Western region of Uttar Pradesh. This region is the most urbanized as well as industrially developed area of the state.

The Municipal Corporation (MC) of Meerut covers an area of 37.03 sq. k.m. with 417395 living in it. The city has a population density of 11271.8 persons per sq. k.m. which is about three times that of the state density of urban population (Census 1981).

The high density of population reduces the people's access to social amenities and contributes to the building up of social and psychological pressures. Such pressures, alongwith other factors, lead to tension and violence.

Our field observations indicate that a high density of population, the dearth of social amenities, and a pervasiveness of communal feelings and ideas lead to the identification of causes of deprivation, particularly amongst those living in clusters, along religious or caste lines. For instance, in Meerut it was found that a majority of respondents who happened to be Muslims and were living in Muslim majority mohallas like Khair Nagar, Karam Ali, Kotla Islamabad, Karim Nagar, etc. perceived the paucity of social amenities, i.e. sanitation, streetlights, public latrines and schools, in their mohallas as a conscious attempt of members of the majority religious group to dominate in district as well as the municipal administration.

In the Meerut Municipal area Muslims constituted about 41 per cent and 'Hindus' 55 per cent of the total population. The popular notion is that the higher the concentration of 'Muslims' in an area, the higher is the possibility of the eruption of communal riots. It is too simplistic a description for such a complex social phenomenon. Our survey indicates the following:

(i) It is not the proportion in terms of number, but rather it is clustered living which is one of the contributive factors in communal rioting. For instance, it was found in Meerut that the inhabitants of the city formed clusters at the mohalla level on religious lines. Generally "Muslims" wanted to live in Muslim majority mohallas like Islamabad, Karam Ali, Khair Nagar, Kotla, Ismile Nagar, Purva Faiz Ali, Gulzar Ibrahim, etc. and 'Hindus' wanted to live in Hindu majority mohallas like Adarsh Nagar, Devi Nagar, Jattiwara, Kailashpuri, Brahmpuri,

Bhomiya Pul, Bhatwara, Purva Jungal Kishore, Prahlad Nagar, Ram Bagh, Shivpuri, etc. There are very few mohallas e.g. Purva Ahiran, Valley Bazar, Burhanagate, Purva Delhi Gate, Purva Sheikh Lal, Goal Koan, Banshipura etc. which have a mixed population.

(ii) Mohallas which are in locational confrontation with mohallas inhabited by religious group perceived to be antagonistic are more prone to communal rioting. For example, in Meerut, Shahghasa, is a Muslim-majority mohalla, surrounded by Hindu-majority mohallas in the north, west and in the east. In South, Muslim majority mohallas are located. Its boundary touches Khandak and Ceepiwari in the north and Moripara in the West. It serves a border area for rioters belonging to the two religious groups.

Economic Features

Scissors, sports goods and weaving are the major industries of Meerut. The industries of the city are basically artisan-oriented. In many cases the artisans involved in scissor-making work in their own homes on a contract basis for a business concern, which put its trade mark on the finished product and markets it.

The unorganized powerloom sector is a major industry in Meerut and employs more than 30,000 persons on around 40,000 powerlooms. More than 70 per cent of the workers on powerlooms are migrants from within the State. This migration is in the form of single units instead of families as a whole. A majority of the migrants belong to the Ansari sect of the Muslim religious group. The owners of the looms mainly belong to the local Ansari or Saifi sects of the Muslim religious group.

Trading in raw material i.e. the yarn required by the owners of the looms, called cloth manufacturers, and the trade in grey cloth, sarees, etc. woven on the powerlooms, has been the main activity of the trading section comprising Banias, Jains, Rastogis and Marwaris. They have had a dominant hold on the trade in both cloth as well as yarn.

The powerloom industry was the worst hit in the recent 1987 riots, which severely reduced the turnover. The turnover of this sector during 1986 was about Rs.600 crore.

Recently, a very small section of the Muslims who have accumulated wealth through powerlooms has entered into the trade in cloth and yarn and is increasingly threatening the traditional domination of the Rastogis, Jains, Banias and Marwaris in the business.

Political Economy of Communal Riots

The nature of the economic development in Uttar Pradesh has created the necessary conditions for the persistence and existence of social and communal tensions. Communal forces in the form of economic and political vested interests and with the motive of monopolizing or dominating economic, commercial and political activity communalise tensions to achieve their narrow ends.

The most powerful psychological factors which govern human behavior are 'aspirations' and 'motives'. When aspirations and motives are directed towards monopolizing or dominating a particular economic or political activity, interest groups often resort to communal strategies. Thus competition in economic and political spheres, which arises out of objective conditions, is perceived and even projected as communal competition. For instance, in Meerut established traders and suppliers of cloth, yarn and scissors, who mainly belong to the Rastogi, Jain, Bania and Marwari sects of the "Hindu" religious group perceived a threat to their profits from the new entrants in trade and emerging merchant-manufacturers who happened to be Muslims. The established traders and suppliers believe that "Muslims" have become more organized and fanatic over the past few years, particularly since the 1982 riots which erupted on the Dargh-temple issue in the Shahghasa locality. The Jamaat-e-Islami, an orthodox and revivalist organization, became very active after the 1982 riots. It governs the behavior patterns of the 'Muslims' in a communal fashion. They further believe that 'Muslim' loom-owners and merchant-manufacturers (cloth and scissors) are not only consolidating the members of their own religious group on religious lines but also spreading the communal propaganda that "Hindu" traders are exploiting "Muslims" manufacturers (cloth and scissors) by delaying payments while reaping higher profits themselves.

On the other hand, "Muslim" loom-owners, manufacturers and merchant-manufacturers (cloth and scissors) believe that "Hindu" traders practice petty tactics against "Muslims" to out-compete and break their dominance in cloth and scissor manufacturing, "Hindu" traders want to displace "Muslims" from the market. Therefore, they depress purchasing prices, inflate selling prices and delay payments to ruin the economic condition of the "Muslims".

Thus, communalism generates deep suspicion, mistrust, and discontentment. Consequently, it enhances the fear of loss of status and self-esteem. In short, fear of the loss of status (in economic or political activity) enhances social distance and perpetuates antagonism between the members of different religious groups. It is such a communal antagonism which aggravates the existing communalism in Meerut to a feverish pitch.

What motivates the emerging section in economic and commercial activities is the desire to accumulate capital so as to be able to stand up to competition from established trading interests. In a communally surcharged environment, such accumulation is easily sought through the formation of jamates or guilds and the mobilization of workers on communal lines. The formation of jamates or guilds for capital circulation along ascriptive categories runs counter to the principle of economic rationality. Thus, communalism is used to secure vested interests and it strengthens the belief that economic benefits can be sought through the formation of jamates or guilds on religious or caste lines. Such an orientation projects competition, which is the product of objective conditions, as communal competition.

Just as the emerging commercial interests, the established traders, resort to communalism to maintain or enhance their privileged position in the market by appealing to religious or caste group affinities.

Thus, it can be observed that vested interest groups are involved in severe competition for maximizing their profits or to have dominance or monopoly over economic activity or to enhance their political power.

It is these vested interest groups, i.e. economic and political, which instigate communal riots by mobilizing and using those individuals who are victims of communal beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and propaganda. These vested interests have a high level of aspiration, namely, capital accumulation and want to fulfill aspiration in whatever manner possible even if it entails feeding communalism in its extreme form.

Our field survey fully corroborates this phenomenon. In Meerut vested interests who instigated the 1987 riots derived their antagonism primarily from a clash of economic and political interests and that they tactically imparted to such a clash of communal form. Those who instigated the riots were local community leaders, traders, professions and merchant manufacturers.

Initially, the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue, which created a storm on the national political scenario, was seized as an issue by Meerut's petty community leaders. The issue was given colouring by the traditional discrepant perceptions outlined above. Once tension began simmering, the traders, professionals and merchant manufacturers seized the opportunity to give their economic antagonism a communal colour.

These vested interests then aggravated the communal situation and provoked individuals to attack the life and property of the members of the group perceived to be antagonistic. The victims of this sordid drama, that is those who were actually provoked into a communal violence, were from among the

lower strata of society – artisans, factory workers, weavers, menial labourers, hawkers and rickshaw pullers. Their indulgence in arson, looting and killing brought into relief the extent to which they had been fed with communal allegations, fears and distorted perceptions.

Vested interest also patronized criminals and antisocial elements to participate in and prolong communal disturbances. What motivates these criminals to participate in the communal frenzy is that it gives them some hope of transforming their wretched living conditions.

The vested interests further justified and legitimized criminals acts by saying that these served the interests of their religious group. This prolonged the duration and increased the intensity of the riots.

A section of white-collar workers, professionals and other segments of the middle strata, competing each others for scarce economic and other opportunities, provide expression to communal feelings and communal ideology. For instance, in Meerut a widely prevalent notion amongst the sections of vested interest groups and the middle strata, irrespective to their religious group affiliations, is that the secret of economic affluence lies in maintaining religious, caste and kinship ties. This notion has been getting strengthened due to the consolidation of individuals along ascriptive group lines. The frequent eruption of communal riots has only strengthened such feelings amongst the members of both the religious groups. It was observed that after the eruption of the April 1987 communal riots guild formation strengthened, particularly amongst the loom-owners, merchant-manufacturers who happened to be Muslims and suppliers and traders who happened to be Hindus. A negligible number of "Muslims" started to emerge in the trade of cloth, yarn and scissors by forming guilds to break the dominance of the traders who belong to the Rastogi, Jain, Bania, Marwari sects of the 'Hindus', religious group. These emerging 'Muslim' traders believe that 'Hindu' traders are reaping more benefits and that they harass and exploit 'Muslims' by delaying payments by charging a higher interest on loans.

The newly emerged traders who belong mainly to Ansari and Saifi sects of the 'Muslim' religious group, perceive themselves in competition with the established traders and supplier who belong to Rastogi, Jain, Bania, Marwari sects of the Hindu religious group. Feelings of competition were further sharpened when some of the Hindu traders and suppliers of cloth installed their own powerloom units. This generated a sense of economic insecurity amongst the 'Muslims', a section of who considered it a conscious attempt of the established 'Hindu' traders to displace 'Muslims' from the manufacture of cloth. Thus both the sections, i.e. established 'Hindu' traders and emerged or emerging 'Muslims' still perceive a threat from each other. In essence fear of

the loss of status (economic or political) generated by the perception of displacement or competition, makes people more communal.

In order to ascertain the penetration of retrogressive ideas and communal feelings which provide content to communal ideology a sample of 20 household units manufacturing cotton fabrics was carried out. The sample indicates the following trends:

(a) Sixteen units were owned by Muslims and the remaining were owned by Hindus. The Hindu powerloom owners installed their looms after 1981.

(b) All the unit owners who happened to be Hindu were merchant manufacturers, while only four loom-owners who happened to be Muslims were merchant manufacturers.

(c) The sample revealed a very significant trend. All the Muslims loom-owners had been purchasing raw material i.e. yarn, from traders who happened to be Hindus before 1982. After the September 1982 communal riots, a few "Muslims" merchant-manufacturers entered the trade in yarn. But this tendency was due to the frequent eruption of riot. For instance, in our sample, 14 units had started to purchase yarn from the traders who happened to be Muslims. Earlier, these unit owners purchased yarn from the traders who happened to be Hindus. In essence, religious and kinship ties became stronger after the eruption of communal riots.

(d) Earlier, a majority of the unit owners (16) in the sample produced fabrics for the traders who belonged to the Rastogi and Bania sects of the Hindu religious group. But now, most of the 'Muslim' loom-owners preferred to sell their fabrics to 'Muslim' traders. Therefore, it is the perception of a threat and a fear of the loss of status which is perpetuating and strengthening communalism amongst the members of both the religious groups.

We have been discussing the economic issues which lay behind the communal trouble in Meerut. Let us now turn to some specific political aspects of the problem. Electoral strategies adopted by most of the political parties in India play a crucial role in the growth of phenomena of the phenomena of communalism by sharpening and articulating people's perceptions and by turning socio-economic problems into religious ones and directing their energies towards collective action. Thus, communal politics acts as a catalyst and motivates political groups to mobilize their support base by catering to the communal perceptions of the people. For example, a 'Muslim' communal politician might come forward to propagate the point that only 'Muslim'

leaders articulate and protect the interests of 'Muslims' and vice-versa. Or it might be held that a religious group's interests can only be safeguarded by Muslims/Hindus organizing themselves in the political sphere as Muslims/Hindus.

Such perceptions have been strengthened and used by political vested interests to cash in upon electoral politics or to strengthen support bases. Communal political groups, firstly, project individual gains of persons belonging to another religious group to be those of the whole of the "religious groups". Secondly, the gains of that group are so exaggerated as to imply the loss of all co-religionists in this group. Thus rival communalists look on individual gains as having benefitted an entire religious group.

For instance, if an individual in Meerut who happened to be a Muslim got elected in assembly or parliamentary elections, communalists would project this to be a gain for all Muslims and loss for other religious groups. An elected member was considered as merely a leader of the religious group to which he belonged. This is how communal political mobilization has been reinforcing divisions on religious lines. Significantly, the choice of candidates in elections by most of the political parties are made by keeping in view the religious or caste arithmetic of the constituencies.

Strangely, even the so-called secular political party like the congress (I) have been polarized on communal lines. A majority of the congress (I) leaders who happened to be Hindus were vociferous about the damage done to the property and to the life of their co-religionists. On the other hand, leaders who happened to be Muslims highlighted the same point in the case of their co-religionists. During the 1987 riots in Meerut, at a time when the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal were actively reinforcing and strengthening "Hindu identity" and increasing their appeal amongst Harijans (a traditional support base of Congress (I) the local Congress (I) leadership, in order to keep its support base impact, was following a policy of appeasing communalists of both groups rather than adopting a secular approach to politics.

It is important to keep in mind that political groups using communalism merely as an instrument add to the legitimacy sought by political groups using and propagating communalism as an ideology. Individuals or factions within the Congress (I) may gain in the short run, but in the long run it is the political group ideologically committed to the communalism like the RSS, and the Jamaat-e-Islami which will gain. Such as opportunist use of religion will only cause reckless acceleration towards extreme forms of communalism. Communal politics, as such, remains a potent and criminal force as a propagator of communal ideology, leading to communal riots.

Thus the issues which we raised as to why people participate in communal rioting – what motivates them – can be answered on the basis of our field survey as follows:

(a) The behavior pattern of individuals is often governed by communal beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and propaganda, that is, communal ideology. In a communally surcharged environment, such modes of behavior create suspicion, insecurity, hatred, and antagonism amongst the members of different religious groups. This phenomenon in itself encompassed a variety of causes of communal rioting.

(b) But more significant is the role of political and economic vested interests which feed on the behavior patterns governed by communal ideology. They tend to "legitimize" and "justify" communal behavior patterns by saying that these serve the cause of religion, while their real motives may be seen to lie in their aspirations for political and economic power.

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FROM SEDITION TO RIOTS

Surjit Hans

In Punjab under the Sikh rule, *fasad* was sedition. A potentiate was *mufsid* when he was either rebellious against the state or disorderly towards his neighbor.[1] The change in the meaning of the word is a pointer to change in social reality. How did it come about?

The potential for religious conflict was there: *din ki larai*[2] Sayyid Ahmed waged a *jehad* against the kingdom of the Sikhs for years. Why did it not spread to people at large in different parts of the country? A number of 'material conditions', considered later on, were lacking. It is our business to enquire into them. I do not set out to be exhaustive. Such a task is beyond my competence. An attempt at partial understanding of communalism is my aim. One may also add logically that to the extent there are communal riots our understanding of the phenomenon is necessary inadequate.

1

Pre-British ideas on politics in Punjab are relevant to the understanding of the genesis of communalism.[3] It did not come about from nothing. Traditional society is a God's world, 'Everybody is born into the world with his wherewithal. Animals, birds and insects have subsistence marked out for them'. Not to speak of man making himself through history, he cannot even produce his subsistence. Wealth cannot be produced; it can only change hands, 'It cannot be collected without sinfulness and if fails to accompany man to the next world'. Such a wealth invites misfortune and ours. He who believes in the happiness of riches is not wise. 'The kings, too, lay their hands on the treasures of the rich'.

A king should be trained in 'wisdom'. He should have 'insight into the ways of the land, causes of prosperity, workings of men, the secret of ruling over others and courageous manliness… princely virtue, truthfulness, the knack of success, commanding presence, extensive rule and wisdom are a gift of God…. The purpose of kingly sway and taxing the country is to ensure against the calamities of internal and external disorder'. One of the royal concerns is to protect the humble from the rural grandees. 'There is an element of waywardness, in kings who reward men for nothing or rob others for the fun of it'. Royalty is divine blessing to the country. A king is his own witness. 'A king is always good and right, the people, in error'. It is royal forgiveness that makes the business of society function. Lastly, the king is more a divine figure

than a human being. He is not only a father but also a hero and saint, a chairvoyant and gnostic.

A lazy king invites the ruin of his people. He is arrogant in ruling the country and too busy in pleasures to listen to the cries of men.

Works on politics were largely addressed to the courtiers, as royal favours, manliness and ambition go together. A courtier should realize the importance of money. It wins friends and brings success to one's scheming. His violent campaigns win him the neighboring country – not necessarily a foreign land. A lion kills an elephant and numerous animals feed on it. Similarly, the followers of a fighting noble lives a joyous life under him. He becomes a royal servant for his own sake, for his brothers, *jati* kin and friends and strikes terror in the heart of the enemy ultimately to win heaven. Service to a master is an art and a kind of devotion. He who cannot win over the king can hardly succeed with God. Devotion to God is a difficult undertaking in which *yogis* and angels fail. Pragmatism enjoins men to choose devoted service to the king. The zenith of ambition is to control *prabh,* i.e. king or God.

Politics is religion. At times it gives an impression of material spiritualism. A youth, versed in politics, cannot be deceived. The old receive gnosis by shunning misdeeds. There are two kinds of learning *shastr* (the weapons of war) and *shastr* (religious books). Religion is becoming in both stages of life. *Rita,* i.e. universal order governs politics, which lives on different kinds of friends, their advantages, war and armistice. According to realistic *rajniti,* body (not soul) is immortal.

The state functionary makes his pile. 'It is difficult to part with money. Men keep it hidden with numerous devices. An administrator is a sore full of pus. Unless squeezed, it would not let it out. A minister has to be tortured to recover wealth. A wet piece of cloth has to be repeatedly squeezed to take water out. Equally, a royal servant cannot be sure of his wealth when the king could sequester it any time'. That an official of the state would not be corrupt or fail to oppress was hardly creditable.

The conjunction of human virtues is disturbing. The rulers are identified with light, virtue, wisdom and courageous initiative; the ruled live in an area of darkness, full of evil, ill-mindedness and degradation. 'The people are like children, dishonourable, foolish and low. They are ignorant of the joys of life to be as good as dead- *jivat hi mrit man.* Their virtue is to be engrossed in themselves. That way lies safety. Forced labour is a part of their lot. Their wisdom lies in obedience. Upward social mobility can be fatal to men of lower classes'. Budh Singh is very un-self consciously contemptuous of *Jats.* It appears from his works that identification of Sikh rule with Jats or Jat Sikhs could largely be a misconception.

'A poor man is devoid of intellect like a stream drying up in winter. A foolish rich man is known to be wise. The servant is a corpse at the door. They are living dead who are happy to die in the end. One who lives with honour is counter in the "quick". Death is better than dishonourable life.

d*ware mritak jeo pradhin*

jivat mui in ko jan

marhe to pawe sokh nidan

jas so jiwat jagat me

jiwat so parwan'

Neither, salvation or damnation, the annihilation of the living corpses is taken for granted.

A householder who is not running about fails to get honour. Yet he should not be too greedy to earn pain. He should be courageously patient to discourage his mundane obligations. If spoken to contemptuously, he should save his pride. He should know how to survive a famine and increase his intellect.

Contemporary society was incapable of conceiving of universal man. Men are divided into three categories (1) the ones who love carrion comforts (2) life, (3) greatness of rank. Budh Singh shows professional weakness in inventing the category of the 'wise'. Religion is equated with wealth.

d*han ted dharm dhar par hot*

ta bin karj nahe udot

Only fools are unhappy and it is their fault if they cannot be educated into a better world. Such a class view of man was dictated by the presence of the dishonourable 'dead'. The 'dead' have an uncounsciously explanatory value in history in that transience of empires is equated with an immoral woman – an arch homologue of the oppressed.

Lastly, works on politics had no idea of the 'external enemy' or the British presence.

2

The British conquest of India had unforeseen consequences visualised neither by the conquerers nor by the conquerred.[4] It was really the colonial economy which materially made 'social reform' and communalism possible. 'In contrast

with a genuine bourgeoisie, produced by structural changes in the economy, the intermediate classes rose to prominence due to a disproportionate expansion of the state apparatus as contrasted with the level of technology and production'. The new middle classes, produced by the British educational system, were different in their outlook and orientations from the traditional quiescent middle class, the merchant and money lender. The British system of government necessitated the education of Indians for administrative purposes. Macaulay wrote in 1835: "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern – a class of persons Indians by blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'. The educational policy aimed at making Indians intellectually and morally fit to perform their duties with efficiency and probity, especially in the revenue and judicial branches of the public service. As a result, new avenues of employment opened leading to wealth, power and prestige. Professional men like doctors, engineers, lawyers and teachers came into being.

It was hoped that the enlightenment because of education would make the Indian people gladly accept English rule and engender a sense of attachment to it'. Of course, nothing of the sort happened. On the other hand, British rule impinged on the private world of wo(men). The caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850 made the loss of caste inconsequential. The abolition of infanticide and Sati were some of the forms in which law began penetrating the Indian social system. The later civil and penal codes were further examples. Western culture posed a challenge to traditional India, with its 'natural rights' of man, progress, representative institutions, observation, science, reason and laws of nature.

The cultural response to the Annexation was determined by history. Punjabi society reacted to the secular liberal British rule with a religious view of the world. The Reformers could think only in terms of pleasing the rulers. Only those reform movements succeeded which cooperated with the British and sought their approval for having westernized, themselves. Their reforms were almost identical – monotheism, elimination of priestly class, equality of caste, prohibition of child marriage and expensive weddings, widow remarriage, temperance, repressive morality to popular religion. They could not invent a single reform beyond what the British approved. The religious reform movements were more western than fundamentalist. They appeared so because the reforms were advocated in three separate religious vocabularies. The Punjabis lacked a common language of discourse to put across the reforms to the people as such.

British rule substituted the rule of law for capricious violence. It guaranteed the 'dead' security of life and property. That is why British rule was universally welcome for at least two generations. All the reformers were practically unanimous in calling it 'just'. One of the added reasons for its justness was that everybody could openly preach his religion as was pointed out by Bhai Kahn Singh.

The state lost its religious dimension. The homology between king and god was broken. Similarly service to the state lost its religious parameters. A lower rung bureaucrat could not aspire to win the world and heaven, too, by pleasing the royal master. The native clerks' vision was limited to the mundane. Nobody could dream of becoming a grandee of the Empire, who could feed thousands of his brothers, relations, kinsmen and friends to reach heaven. The late nineteenth century opportunities in government service and professions were on a meaner scale befittingly to be grabbed in a more squalid manner.

The nascent English-educated elite availed of the openings without wanting to lose their 'souls' in exchange for jobs under an ambient Christian power. The new-middle class daily commuted from the traditional India in their homes to the West at the places of their work. They were in a precarious condition in being defenceless in the westernized sector and ill-adjusted to the customs, values and attitudes of surrounding society. They were ready for an organizational action to transform Punjabi society, to be capable of commanding the respect and commitment of a lost generation. They wanted to justify themselves and to find out who they were. They were in search of an ideology. This search for self-identity was spawned by the new middle class religious reform movements.

The fountain-head of modernized Hindu cultural aspirations in Punjab has been the Arya Samaj. Introduced in 1877-78, it soon became a powerful religious, educational, cultural, and political force. Thus, the founder, Swami Dayanand strongly believed in the infallibility of the Vedas. The knowledge of the Vedas was as good as western science. They contain the truth of science as well as religion. The Vedas have the secret of creation and laws of nature by which god governs the world. Swami Dayanand tried to 'scientize' the Vedic religion. He was a monotheist by definition. His god includes the absolute of philosophy and the personal god of religion. The universe was constituted by god, soul and matter.

Swami Dayanand laid stress on the freedom of thought and conscience of an individual. He propounded the idea that everyone should be treated on merit. It is 'individual merit' that decides caste, not that caste determines merit. The idea of the direct relation of man with god was advocated at the cost of

Brahminical intermediaries. Meaningless rituals, magic, *yantra, mantra* and belief in astrology were denounced. Swami Dayanand's idea of merit, equality, freedom and individualism suited men of upward mobility. Being men of merit, by virtue of education and professional positions, belief in merit was an ideological reflex. Influenced by the western idea of democracy and nationalism, the Arya Samajists had an implicit vision of a free Hindu India – a new mental attitude not to be found in the last thousand years of Indian history.

The western principle of equality forced the orthodox Hindus to change their attitude to the lower strata, as they could not ask for equality with the British without conceding it to the untouchables. According to Prof. Ravinder Kumar 'Arya Samaj was popular among the Hindu middle classes because it provided them with the intellectual poise in the new world of prosperity in which they found themselves. The "this worldly attitude" of the Samaj, its projection of rational calculus, its beliefs in personal equation between man and god as the spiritual counterpart of the 'free' individual in a market society of unlimited material possibilities, all combined to meet the ideological needs of an emerging class society in the Punjab'.

Sikh conversions to Christianity and anti-Sikh speeches of the Arya propagandists precipitated the founding of the Amritsar *Singh Sabha*. It aimed at spreading literacy, education and religious awareness among the Sikhs. Earlier efforts to change the prevailing conditions had been limited to sects, which were considered heterodox. The *Singh Sabha* introduced an associational form of Sikhism instead of traditional sectarianism. The Sikh adjusted themselves easily to the British rule, because Sikhism has lost its political clan under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Sikh were a collection of 'devout' individuals privately concerned with the Guru in the Granth. It was then that the idea of the divinity of the Granth to the exclusion of the ideas of the divinity of the *panth*, i.e. *Guru Panth*, was finally adopted to the negation of political vision as such.

The doctrine admirably suited the Sikhs in the British period when the *Singh Sabha* could organize itself for the benefit of Sikh individuals only. The *Singh Sabha* was not intellectually equipped to dig up the popular tradition of the heroic period of the Sikhs. A specifically 'Sikh' rule was never brought forward as an alternative to foreign rule. According to Bhai Kahn Singh, the British Government provided employment opportunities to Sikh soldiers. The *rehat* enjoined them to be *nimak halal* (loyal) to the crown. The government made possible the preaching of Sikhism without let or hindrance. Ironically, British rule was a condition of Sikh resurgence.

Among the Muslim responses to the British rule, the Ahmadiyah Movement emerged as the most influential. In contrast to the urban educational movements, it was a small town, rural, middle class resurgence. Mirza Ghulam Ahmed claimed that he was *masih-mawud*, the promised messiah with a mission to reform decadent Islam in the beginning of the new century. He was the essence of the *Shariah*, the Muslim way. He was convinced of rationalism to such an extent that he tried to prove miracles scientifically. The unknown laws of god are superior to the know laws of nature. God is omnipotent. Science deals with what God has done. It can presume on the future acts of god. A divine manifestation cannot be rejected because it has not so far been apprehended. Ideally science should include not exclude, miracles. The Mirza talk of the mechanism of the fulfillment of prophecy. A person is ruined by the very efforts he makes to improve his condition. Technically, this is called make and god is called *khair-ul-Makrin*. Prophecy is a promise made by god. It proves the godliness of the prophet. By denying one prophecy, all prophecies are denied. Such a general denial would demolish religion.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmed was all praise for the 'careful', 'far-sighted government', which kept on making plans for the welfare of the people. The Ahmadiyahs were under obligation to the British for relieving the Muslims from Sikh tyranny. He was under the impression that European scientists and philosophers were under the British monarch.

The Mirza was prophetic about the consequences of religious debates. Hindus, Muslims and Christians are the equal subjects of the emperor. Injuring the sentiments of one community is injuring the interest of the state. Such a thing can lead to subversion and rebellion. In 1985 he sent a mahzar, appeal to the Viceroy, signed by four thousand Ahmadiyahs, suggesting measures to control religious debates lest they spill over into communal violence. In 1898, Bhai Kahn Singh called upon different religious *qaums*. Our country can progress if people faithfully follow their religions. The followers of one religion should count those of the others as their own. Difference of religion need not be a cause of disunity. Despite wishing communal peace, most of the reformers were historically playing a functional part in the making of a communal divide.

The socio-religious reform movements were really a way of introducing the idea of human equality into traditional society. Rationalism was used to rejuvenate religion, not to challenge its validity. It was not only a means of reinterpreting one's religion but also a weapon to be used against other faiths. Each community proved to itself that only its religion was based on reason. Their accommodation with 'equality' and 'reason' were compromises, not an overhauling of the human mind. We missed the Enlightenment, was on religion, and the compounding debates on the evolution of the species. The

Mirza made out that the future acts of gods are a guarantee of evolution. The reformers set out neither to conquer souls nor to march on heathen lands. A note of inauthenticity enters Indian culture from the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Besides following the line of least resistance philosophically, the structure of the new middle class was such that it had a very moderate chance of becoming fully rational. Despite its western impact, the inevitable tendencies of strictly literary education restricted a purely modern and scientific response. In 1910, the graduates of the Indian Universities were:

Arts	85 per cent
Law	9 per cent
Engineering	4 per cent
Science	2 per cent

It was an immature class as far its age, economic power, traditions and outlook were concerned. The new middle class was westernized to some extent yet its attempts at shedding old values remained half-hearted. According to Anderson, the dawn of the age of nationalism is also the dusk of the religious mode of thought. Unfortunately, our nationalism was the product of a religious mentality.

3

A fortuitous combination of (1) the maturing of the native press in the eighties, (2) free enterprise in education in 1882, and (3) the expansion of local bodies in 1885 'institutionalised' communalism in a way that it could not be dismantled.[5] By the eighteen-eighties the reformers had ensured their religious 'defences' against the Christian missionaries by 'making use of the tools of the missionaries – Western logic, debating skills and mass communication technology. We can have some idea of the scale of development of the press. In the eighteen-thirties Wade's '*Ludhiana Akhbar*', in handwritten Persian, had a circulation of about 30. The *Partap* started on the eve of the Rowlatt Act agitation, had a circulation of 30,000 in 1919-20.

The government reports of the eighteen-fifties speak of political apathy and the absence of public grievances in Indian publications. The British wanted to establish communication with the 'subject community' from whom proper allowable discussion on matters affecting native interest must be elicited. The Punjabis soon 'leant' that print could be a valuable supplement to oral presentation. Meetings at which petitions and memorial were drafted could be advertised on printed posters: Newspapers and journals could then 'advertise' and publish details of the reports of the meetings as well as activities and reactions there caused.

There is close connection between the development of the press: its being made use of and used by the religious reformers and the rise of the 'communities'. For example, early attempts of individuals and *Singh Sabhas* led to a pattern of rapid rise and fall of print enterprises, prior to 900… Khalsa Tract Society, established in 1894 "institutionalised" the spread and popularity of Sikh literature in Gurmukhi script. Over a dozen papers owed their existence to *Singh Sabha movement*, Sikh newspaper were often established to campaign on a set of issues. Unless patronized by wealthy men, slim budgets meant that when enthusiasm faltered, subscriptions declined, the newspaper then waited for a new issue or conflict before returning to life a phoenix. The two key words 'enthusiasm' and 'conflict' are the essential makers of the new communities. Religion, social groups and the press were closely intertwined. There was 'a pattern of voluntary associations which rose to defend the interest of a religious heritage or of a social group, employing the printing press, sometimes extensively as a tool in the struggle'.

Anderson has pointed out that print capitalism unites readers over distances to make them live on the same time scale. In their imagination, they form a community, called nation. A nation is an 'imagined community produced by print capitalism.[6] The peculiar association of religious reform with the introduction of the press in the country produced 'communities'. Emmet Davis wrote that the Arya Samaj leaders 'could communicate every week with thousands of people' through *The Regenerator of the Aryavarta*, founded in 1882. 'Through the mail, they could 'hear' what their readers thought about their ideas'. With the help of the press the religious reformers literally produced the 'communities' not in the sense of their 'is-ness' but in the way they perceived themselves. The imagined universe of man was limited to his religious groups.

'Out of the religious use of the press developed a new genre of the political press'. The religious reformers had successfully demonstrated the political utility of the printing press as a mass medium for coordinating campaigns and also for popularizing an ideology. The political leaders followed suit in awakening to a similar utility of the printing press for political purposes. 'The politically and commercially oriented newspapers of the early twentieth century grew partly out of the late nineteenth century religious press, which made veritable attempts to develop into an effective mass medium'. Influenced by the attitudes of its readers, reflecting the conflicts of the wider world, an uncommitted newspaper could succumb to communalism. *The Tribune* was a participant in the birth of the divisive religious and political reform press. The Hindus and the Muslims were united in the Indian Association, Lahore, until *The Tribune* published articles reflecting the point of view of the Hindu members of the Association'. The congress did not own a

single newspaper right upto 1937. Its secularism depended on the shifting sands of the communal press. Referring to nationalist feelings the altruistic revolutionary editor of Zamana, Kanpur said in 1921 – 'the expression of popular feeling has a commercial value. The expression and exaggeration of communal bitterness is a giltedged security without any danger to investment'.

Free enterprise in education from 1882, led to two paradoxical results: (1) primary education for the masses was neglected for about three quarters of a century and (2) it turned high school and college education into a question of profitability to be managed by the voluntary efforts of religious reformers. The magnitude of the task can be gathered from these examples. A mission college at Lahore was set up in 1866, closed in 1869 and revived in 1886 as Forman Christian College. An Oriental College was set up in 1865, withered in 1968 for want of funds and reopened in 1870 as a part of the Punjab University College. Jones has given the arduous details of fund raising for DAV College, Lahore, in Ya Dharun. The Khalsa College Amritsar, faced a threat of closure in the nineteen-hundreds in the face of financial difficulties. It is known from observations that denominational institutions were the engines of communalism. A look at the constituent college of the Guru Nanak Dev University would give some idea of the scale.

Table 1

Total Number of Colleges in 1985 = 76		
Sikh	=	30
Hindu	=	30
Govt.	=	14
Others	=	2
		76

Table 2

Total Number of Students in 1985 = 63,537

Percentage of Colleges

Sikh	Hindu	Govt.	Others
39.4	39.4	18.4	2.6

Percentage of Students

30.8	53.1	13.1	2.8

Degree of Utilization

0.7	1.3	0.7	1

(Ideally, the percentage of the colleges should be equal to the percentage of the students. The degree of utilization is the percentage of students divided by the percentage of colleges). The communal organization of college education before Independence is likely to be much worse (see Table 3).

Education was beset with crisis from its inception. It had only one decade of heady achievement from 1881-90. In the next decade 1891-1900 population in-creased by 15 per cent but the English titles were practically at the earlier level. Hindi titles were roughly halved; Panjabi reduced to two-thirds Urdu to

Table – 3
Population in millions

	1881-90	1891-1900	1901-10	1911-20	1921-30	1931-40	+ %		
	20.8	23.0	24.3	23.8	25.1	28.5	141		
				Census of Titles					
				Total + Relative Population					
	16,906	12,448	14,122	17,028	22,233	19,338	114	80	Desired extra % increase 141-81-61
English	724	768	992	1,749	2,271	2,2599	358	254	Over increase 254-141 113
Hindi	1,615	759	885	733	1,514	2,014	120	85	141-85 56
Punjabi	3,470	2,419	3,981	5,880	7,418	4,249	122	86.5	54.5
Urdu	7,656	5,924	5,934	6,302	9,226	8,281	108	75	66
Arabic	752	376	261	225	316	105	14	10	131
Persian	787	390	277	152	342	275	35	25	116
Sanskrit	264	133	101	80	168	106	40	28	113

Source: Emmet Davis

four fifths; Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit titles were halved. The decade of world war I witnessed a decrease in the population but a spurt in English, Punjabi and Urdu titles. There was a remarkable coincidence in the decade of 1921-30. It was the first decade of large scale communal riots in the country, and also one of the rise in Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit titles, after suffering an absolute decrease for twenty years. Even our much vaunted orientalism had a murderous context. Except for English increasing by more than 113 per cent relative to the population, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic Persian and Sanskrit should have increased their titles still more by 61, 56, 54.5, 66, 131, 116 and 113 per cent respectively to keep pace with the growing population. The last three figures, with respect to Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit, demonstrate that the claims of the socio-religious reformers in producing a synthesis of the west and the East in their educational enterprise was resoundingly false. The denominational education did not redress the balance between the two. Our education has been more Anglo than Vedic or oriental. Figure 113 is symbolic. The books in English should have decreased and the ones in Sanskrit should have increased by this percentage to sustain the claim. Thus, to Westernize under the garb of religion was a late 19th century resurgence.

The prospect of power turned the religious reformers into communalists. The graph of communal trouble ran alongwith the line of progress to independence. To a communalist, job prospects and professional well-being, educational opportunities, and religious identity are closely allied to political power. The religious reformers were pioneers in making the common man take part in the politics of representative institutions. The very mechanism of 20th century politics has been 'communal'. Pandit Nehru told the convention of Congress Legislators in 1937- 'We have too long thought in terms of pacts and compromises between communal leaders and neglected the people behind them. That is a discredited policy and I trust that we shall not revert to it. The (rational) mind wilts but the flesh (our body political) is weak. During the experiment with provincial anatomy, discerning minds could see that the only alternative to violent revolution or communalism was communalism. Sedition found its remedy in *fasad.*

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ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

T.N. Chaturvedi

The machinery of administration is instrumental in character, because it carries out, implements, the policies of the government; not only the policies of government, but its fundamental objectives as they manifest themselves, particularly in the various programmes, projects and so on. Otherwise, it becomes an amorphous thing. Administration is not only instrumental in character, but also has a value of its own, whatever may be the system of government; whatever may be the political complexion of the state. The administration is a value in itself or by itself. That is why I say that administration has a positive connotation; it has a positive value of its own. That is why, apart from the question of its instrumental value, sometimes we ourselves feel that it cannot be dispensed with.

It has been found that somehow or other there are some values, there are certain worthwhile elements in the administration, and possibly even as a tool, the administration is much more adequate and much more effective while carrying something as a value in itself as a part of the system. This brings out the need for a proper recognition of the value of administration instead of, the usual temptation of continuing denigration. That is why I think that administration has relevance both as an instrument, and also as a value in itself in a civilized society.

The second point I would like to mention is that when we think of the administration, normally we think only at the policy level, or the higher level and so on and so forth. The administration in a big country like ours, geographically so widely spread and with the vast population, has a much more variegated character. There are echelons and levels and so on. Even from the standpoint of the set-up, ours is a federal government. That is why the Home Minister always talks of curbing the riots and so on, while stressing that taking care of these matters is the basic responsibility of the State Governments. It is a constitutional fact. Although it may not be a constitutional imperative, but the kind of message that the constitutional provisions give is that maintenance of law and order is the basic responsibility – primary responsibility – of the State Governments. We are aware how in situations of communal tension and violence State Governments rush to the Union Government for the help of Central forces, etc.

I am saying this only to show the complexity of the problem. There is something that the States have to do; there is something that the Central Government or the Union Government has to do. Then also, at the State level, it is not merely the State headquarters; there is something at the district level, at the town level, at the tehsil level. Whatever problems we might have, one of the important factors which we have to reckon with is the various levels, the various echelons of the local government, or the local self-governing bodies, or the district set up. Whatever the problem we have, this is much more important, whether one likes it or not. This is extremely important for a balanced perspective of the problem and the remedial measures. It highlights the need for imaginative coordinated action.

It is normal that when we think of the administration in the context of communalism or communal riots and so on, by and large we think of the police and a magistracy especially, officers under the District Magistrate as now there is formal judicial separation. More knowledgeable people know that as far as the administration is concerned, in times of communal riots, while there is what is usually described as a 'fire-brigade approach', the responsibility for dealing with these incidents lies or rests mainly with the district administration, i.e. the outward symbols of authority, namely, the police and the magistracy. While this is basically so, there are a few other agencies which are also involved. I will have something to say on this later.

When we think of the administration we have to bear in mind that there is an immediate and proximate situation, in which one has to work and deal with, and then there are also distant or predisposing causes with which the administration is also concerned, be it the police or the magistracy. In this inter-linkage, it is the other agencies which are much more concerned with questions of petty discriminations or grievances and so on. Grievances may have their roots elsewhere. You know something of that happens in the cooperatives; what may happen in the small-scale industry, the Directorate, or the Inspectorate and so on; these may be at the root of dissatisfaction and violence. It may be something where small functionaries in the Education Department in a particular district or a tehsil or a town or a village are really concerned.

I am saying this because the world is small. I am not saying it in the figurative sense, because I believe that in the administration, people at different levels are functional in their nature or in their character. It is a small world, in the sense that the immediate responsibility is entrusted to a particular functionary or agencies in the district or something like that, while the higher responsibilities are entrusted to the people above him, or may rest with officials not directly under the control of the district officers. That is why one has to think of this form both the long term and short term angle of

administration. It is the immediacy of the situation where normally it is not only the top people but even the smaller functionaries and the other immediate agencies that come in. One has to keep a total picture of the administrative set up in view and clarify the different responsibilities and power.

When I am talking of the administration it is not only about what are known as the 'civil servants' or 'public servants' and so on. So far as the politicians – the masters – are concerned, some describe them as 'public servants'. Sometimes, when the anti- Corruption Act comes in, they are not public servants but there are certain other aspects, for which they are public servants. When I talk of the administration I mean both the civil servants and the people in power, the ministers of representatives of the ruling party which has sent its people to run the administration i.e. the government in the States or the government at the Centre. It does not necessarily exclude the MLAs or MPs – the representatives of the people I think in all fairness, they too have a role to play because, after all, the administration is accountable, ultimately responsible to the legislature of which they are a necessary part. Probably, I am extending it much too far, but it is with a purpose, because elected representatives and ministers are operationally a necessary part of the administration. They may not have an immediate responsibility for what happens, but then they have their eyes and ears open and they have their voice. When we talk about the accountability of the administration, it includes them and the climate which they create and contribute in which the administration has to function. It is not a question of so-called political interference, but the interplay of administrative and political forces in a number of ways and at different levels and times.

I would also like to mention, when we talk of communalism and the administration, we cannot altogether ignore the opposition groups and the opposition parties. We know how the political system operates, particularly the democratic system, with many parties and the parliamentary system. That is why democratic system, with many parties and the parliamentary system. That is why it is the opposition parties, particularly the legislative representatives of the opposition, who have also a role to play, because ultimately according to the constitutional convention, the political consensus, they are the alternative government. That shows that they also share some administrative responsibility. We cannot face issues like communalism squarely unless at least a part of the burden of responsibility is shared by every political party. Very frankly, let us not forget that there is a difference between the constitutional position and the political milieu. Both the ruling and the opposition parties contribute to the political milieu, the environment, the political ethos. The ethos in which the administration has to function has a

very wide impact on the society, on the polity and on the economy as such. It is in this ethos that we find that the communal virus increases.

A reference was made the other day in parliament about the accountability of the district administration. You will pardon me when I say that I am a little frightened. This accountability has been there all along. The real question is why is this accountability not fulfilled? What are the factors and forces which impede this? One has to see both the limits and the possibilities of this kind of approach in the totality of the political milieu. How is this responsibility exercised? The way it is done? Many of these things will have to be thought of; otherwise, there will be a special court, but that will not do the trick. I think in many instances the special courts exist without any cases before them.

Nobody seriously bothers to pursue the cases of miscreants challanned. Very often, for inexplicable reasons, they are not sent for trials. As soon as the trouble subsides, in the name of creating goodwill and a peaceful atmosphere, cases are withdrawn or dropped. Powerful forces suddenly begin to operate for the release of anti-social elements and law-breakers. Crimes get condoned and nobody bothers that criminals thus get emboldened and the lawful authority comes into disrespect. Authority even becomes negligent and indifferent. Communal outbreaks repeat themselves as mischief-mongers know fully well that it is only the second act of a drama again with a happy ending. That is why all the tall talk of stern measures comes to nothing. In the same places and similar situations communal riots continue to recur. That is why I said one has to go into some of these problems deeply and honestly. I share with you the concern bout the way this communal virus is spreading. More and more areas are falling prey to it. More and more sections of society are being sucked into it. The frequency and the intensity of communal riots and the process of rioting constitute a major disruption of the nation-building process.

While thinking of the problem I recalled that some sixty or sixty-five years back, Surendranath Banerjee had called his memoirs ‘A Nation In Making’. Man of you must have read it. It makes one aware that even after sixty-five or seventy years we are still in that particular process, or we are still groping our way towards nation-building. That is why the frequency and the intensity of the riots must cause us deep concern. It is not merely the destruction of life and property but also the damage to people’s psyche that it causes. Children of the bereaved and affected families can never be the same again. This will produce a horrendous and uncertain future.

We have reason to be worried also about the protracted nature of the riots. Earlier, the riots used to occur for two or three, or three or four days, but for the last four or five years, we have seen that the riot is prolonged. What is

more, even if it subsides for a few days when effective action is taken, it recurs after a brief lull. These are factors which the administration has to take note of.

Communalism has not been defined so far. Even government has expressed helplessness about clarifying the term from strict legal point. People have tried to define it sociologically, even politically; even constitutional or legal experts have tried to d so, but ultimately, somehow or the other the approach has remained one of '*neti, neti*' – not this, not this. The manifestation in a particular situation and the symptoms of communalism, the attitude of mind or the psychological dimension which communalism connotes are quite obvious.

The genesis of communalism lies in narrow loyalties or tribal instincts; a desire to help those who belong to the group and considering those who profess loyalty to other groups, as outsiders. Religion or sectarianism only accentuates this feeling. So do historical memories or distorted education or even electoral politics. Another psychological factor is the lack of fairness, impartiality, justice and equality of treatment except for persons close to oneself. In groups professing a different faith, it naturally assumes the garb of communalism. But even, otherwise, this want of consciousness to be fair or just to outsiders creates social tensions and undermines social cohesiveness, what to say of national solidarity. The instinct to act as a part of the herd and not to act and conduct oneself as a citizen transforms itself into communal orientation and attitude in a particular atmosphere. The dignity of the individual as a co-citizen is ignored and fear complex or group instinct to operate as a unit takes over. From a different angle, this also contributes to national chauvinism – my nation right or wrong – irrespective of all claims of common humanity or man as man.

Such a psychological attitude is not peculiar just to groups or the parties conventionally not considered secular. Even a secular group, a professedly secular political party, can also have a communal outlook. It may be confined to a particular point of time, a particular segment, only in relation to a particular problem, and at a particular point of time or place. The fact of life is that in all parties we come across communal minded people and all parties, for all kinds of purposes despite pious postures, seek allies among communal groups.

Communalism in this country cannot be completely isolated from a few other nagging problems, which can also be communal from a particular angle; for instance in linguistic chauvinism or linguistic conflict or linguistic divisiveness that one comes across in this very place. A very respectable Sikh theologian, the late Dr. Mohan Singh Diwana told me I do not know how far it is true –

that Gurumukhi was really devised by the Sikh Guru, particularly because it was felt, in the circumstances then prevailing, that anything in Sanskrit might be considered by certain sections of the people, or certain section of the rulers of that time, as particularly symbolic of religion. That is why, in order to preserve the entire heritage Gurumukhi script was used like a camouflage. When a script is ascribed to the people of one particular religion, language and religion get mixed up. It creates an unfortunate situation. I believe all scripts and all languages are part of our heritage and deserve equal respect.

Take casteism, you can say that it is a more intensive form of communalism, a more localized form of communalism; you can say it is a much more widespread and a much more continuing form of communalism vitiating social mores, personal conduct and political or democratic norms of the community with adverse ripple effects.

It is a pervasive form of communalism. It takes the color, or it gets its sustenance from communalism. Casteism does become very relevant when you look at this problem from the socio-economic perspective, or from the cultural angle. It is strange to find in religious groups professing equality of religion, caste-conscious behaviour. Extremely unfortunate is the unashamed open alliance of caste politicians with communal politicians. What will be the role of the administration in combating violence, or in preventing this kind of situation, the attitude of mind? – This will naturally spill over in the work situations whether it is the immediate handling of a communal problem or it is a question of trying to devise measures to counteract and contain communalism in general from a long-term angle.

This is not something where a kind of automatic mechanism can be immediately invented. That is why deeper consideration becomes a very important element for evolving any policy or strategy. The need is for a well-conceived policy and plan of action not mere fire-fighting r inventing alibis and blaming everybody else. Government and society cannot escape their responsibility for long if they have to survive. Before independence, we could attribute much of the communal antagonism or even the communal outbreaks to the colonial rulers, to the policy of divide and rule, to feudal society and so on. Why is it that there is a spill-over after independence? It cannot be denied that even now occasionally some people may try to reap the benefit of the tactics of divide and rule. Similarly, if economic reasons give rise to communalism, why not have a holistic approach? It is no use breast-beating when there is an outbreak of trouble without doing anything about it during the intervening period.

It is no use looking at the past. The old framework of looking at the problem probably may not always be applicable. Whether it is the question of law and

order, the role of the administration or even the association of the political groups and the ruling parties with the administration all these have to be considered afresh. At the same time lessons have to be learnt from the old framework: its adequacies and inadequacies, its strong and weak points, or the way that the old framework operates or is being manipulated or is capable of being manipulated today even when the set-up, from colonial or foreign domination, has now been transformed into a democratic set-up of government and administration.

It is not for me to go into the question of where the political power resides in the changed context. After all, what is political power? After all, what is politics? Politics, in the right sense also, is a struggle for the power of the vote. Just as the rupee represents economic power, a vote represents political power. I try to garner more and more votes, so that I can get into political power, into seats of authority. Because there, I will command the economic resources; I will command the political resources. That is why I fight the elections. I have access to manipulation of power. When allocating resources, if I can decide who gets what; whom I give; from whom I take. This leads you to the social structure, the economic structure, questions of impartiality, fairness of the administration, its rationality and so on.

The administration thus dominates the public mind. It is not just a fleeting authority of the moment, or only administration in the narrow sense. It is administration in the wider sense, because it is only that administration which is inspired or permeated by a sense of equity which will be able to combat the parochial tendencies of communalism, linguistic chauvinism, casteist evils, and so on. It is only an administration which is not only capable but also fair and confident, as well as proud of its responsibilities, which will deliver the goods, not an administration on sufferance and under duress. That is why it is important to appreciate, the dimensions and directions of the problem in a realistic context.

It is in the context of the scarcity of resources that competitive politics and populism do great damage. The problems of Centre-State relations, of particular regions, of particular groups not only located throughout the country but sometimes located at the borders of our country, arise because of what is called many a time ‘ethnicity’. That is why sociologists, particularly American sociologists, began to talk of ethnicity, and this is also something which the administration has to take note of – administration, meaning not only administration in the government and its political counterpart, but administration even of the universities and the other institutions.

The break-up of India was foretold as far back as 1959 by Selig Harrison in his famous book and often the same gloomy prognostications are made even

today by many scholars and others who may not like a big developing country. But during the last few years there has been more than usual interest in research by foreign scholars n problems of ethnicity in India and in regional history. Such an upsurge of interest in the ethnic identity of the different groups of people in India among many others very closely linked with western research scholars and universities makes one naturally, think. I see the number of books by foreign scholars who come and try to promote local scholarship in the sources of Maratha history, Sikh history, Rohillas history, the problem of the hill tribes in Assam and so-called Jharkhand, and there is even a peculiar interest in the study of the Dravidistan movement. One was amazed by the kind of funds available for they want to make a study of the impact of the family planning programme on labourers, they choose a district which, form our angle, i.e., from the Indian angle – I am not talking of the official angle – but even from the citizen's angle, is liable to face many other kinds of influences and problems. The same applies to many studies of communalism. I am the last person to advocate that these problems be pushed under the carpet or shut out to foreign scholars, for many of whom I have great regard. All I want to say is that one must be careful about motivated research under the garb of academic study when outside scholars also involve persons from our universities and institutions.

There is another point in this connection. After independence there was euphoria, if I might put it bluntly, during the first ten years or so, that 'we are a nation'. We have left that past behind. Gradually a number of books have begun to deal with forms of migration, study of geographical migration, historical migration, or economic migration. In my college and university days I have been a student to some extent of international migration of both capital and of the people owning the capital. But here we have begun to study the migration of the Punjabis to the Northeast, who own the timber and transport industries. You have Marwaris in many parts of the country. Sometimes when we are much too near the events and are involved in them, it is best to work unitedly for a solution without going into a clinical analysis of the particular problems. This might lead to more complicated situations. What is significant, however is that many of the arguments which some young people engaged in such studies put forward – and some of them extremely well motivated persons – are derived from Mynor Weineris book named 'Sons of the Soils'. He had even written a book earlier on pressure groups in India. He calls it the 'Politics of Scarcity'. Later, I saw another book 'The Agony of Assam'. The authorship was ascribed to an Indian national in the United States – an engineer probably. According to some it was a ghost-written book. I saw and read that book, because we have to study the working of the minds of others, which contribute to that kind of cerebral operations on thinking in which the other person is making a simple thing into a big grievance. One cannot ignore

that the wrong kind of ideas, notions, or opinions can have a long term adverse effect unless the position is ideologically and appropriately clarified.

I am saying this because, in a process where certain positive steps are being envisaged, one finds certain subterranean forces, ostensible innocuous, trying to see how we fare as a nation. Either they do not believe that we can become a nation, or there are even many among them who believe that the federal structure and the parliamentary system in this country cannot last, unless it is a much more regimented society, or under a much more authoritative administration. No one can erase the legacy of our freedom struggle and also that we have inherited an inequitable society. Even so, in a pluralistic society all effort at regimentation will have built-in cracks, and will not be able to offer mechanistic solutions to our problems of national unity.

Yet, ideas are being thrown up and misgivings are being created that it is not possible for us to survive as a nation. That is why I think that a study of a particular kind of literature by foreigners sometimes provides a valuable insight into what we are faced with. There are studies about the Sikh resurgence by somebody, the Arya Samaj movement or the Arya consciousness in the 19th century, Tamil revivalism, anti-Brahmin movements, etc. One has to see whether these are motivated; whether there are political motives, or economic motives, or is it some ignorance of history from which they suffer or are the studies genuine. All this is relevant when you go into the question of communal violence. After all, what are the motives of those who participate in communal violence: who are behind it and what are their motives? What exactly is the problem? You will also have to think about the effects on the riot victims. I firmly believe, that in the world of ruthless power politics, despite lip homage to peace, efforts to set our house in order in the context of complacency and weakness are of paramount importance.

It is strange that there are a number of studies on communal violence and yet I do not know who starts the riots. Dr Pramod Kumar must have a better knowledge from his studies. In a number of studies I have come across, it is maintained that the minority community, the Muslims started it. In some other studies it is said that the Hindu or even anti-socials created the mischief initially. The important factor is not who started it, but what was the cause, what were the reasons behind the person or persons who was/were supposed to have started it. That is relevant for a solution or guidelines for the future. A fair understanding of the genesis of the riots is necessary. A number of committees and commissions in different states over the last four decades have gone into the complex of issues. It is a pity that many of them have been forgotten. One is not sure if at all these reports are even available at one place. Has a comparative study been made of all of them? What operational matters of caution for administration emerge? Or, do we, according to our

own personal predilections or ideological blinkers, choose only those which support our own pet thesis? This, in the long run, tends to become an exercise in futility. In my case, I think even the study of old repowers in the true spirit of academic research for social good, in the final analysis, is a fruitful field for CRRID to look after with its resources, dynamism and scholarship.

Communalism, it is agreed, is a multi-dimensional problem. It is a psychological problem; a sociological problem, it is sometimes a problem of consciousness. People are influenced by sheer ignorance, by sheer repetition of things, by sheer stereotypes. You have stereotypes of a Sikh, a Hindu, a Muslim. Because the *rasoia* or the cook of Guru Govind Singh betrayed his mother and his children to his enemies, therefore, every Brahmin is a traitor; you give it a communal form – because the Brahmin is a Hindu, therefore, a Hindu will betray; everything about him is communal. These are stereotypes that have become common. Too much emphasis on distinctive identity – identity exclusiveness – transforms itself into communalism. Identity, yes; I want to maintain my identity; it is good to maintain one's identity; but when it becomes insular, it becomes exclusive. It is propaganda, directly and indirectly, sometimes in a subtle manner, and sometimes as a matter of fanatical conviction and misplaced belief, that the interests of the various identities are different and antagonistic, that forms climate of opinion. It is then that the second myth starts.

The emphasis on a particular myth – myth-making – itself forms an important chapter in political philosophy and political thought. It can also lead to political deception and political disaster. There is the myth that the interests of different identity groups are antagonistic. From this naturally other things follow – how benefits can be manipulated in favour of one group and against other, and who will help realization of the objectives or interests of a particular identity group. This will mean working for its benefit by hook or by crook and it is this which ultimately transforms itself into communalism. In the search for identities, in the struggle for serving solely the interests of such, of identities, the casualty is the national identity and national good. Hence the need to realize the significance of socio-economic justice in society and the treatment of individuals as citizens with full regard to their claims, rights, obligations and duties.

We know about the Assam disturbances: the tribals killing both Hindus and the Muslims. The Muslims and the Hindus were part of one country till 1947, but under force of circumstances, the tribals killed both as they suspected them and also killed some of the migrant labour from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and did not leave out even the so-called pure-blooded Assamiyas. Part of the country to which I belong, which is near Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh are form that. Most of the names you find in Assam they went to Assam in the centuries of

12th, 13th and 14th. There was no trouble till the identity question raised its head. Once the misgivings and apprehensions in the leadership are formed, it interacts with, and reinforces the communal interests seeking power and legitimacy for itself; and the administration, whether political or any other, is a part of a segment of this entire psychological ethos that is generated. That is why one has to go behind this external assault, behind the external symbols or forms and concern oneself with the handling of the communal attitude and the communal leadership and its psychology.

That is why I differ from those who try to distinguish between minority communalism and majority communalism. I am one of those who believe that such distinction is vicious. I will give one or two simple reasons why I do not believe in this distinction. If we ignore the communal stance of the minority community it will become much more aggressive, much more fanatical, much more alienated from the national mainstream or the national consciousness or the national awareness, because it will come to believe that its benefits and its advantages lie in emphasizing and stressing the danger which arises from majority communalism. That kind of aggressiveness is there.

The second danger which arises from this is that it gives a handle to the majority community. Such a majority community then becomes much more aggressive, and its leadership much more apposed to the secular leadership, or the secular forces which then weaken. The basic point is that when the leadership, or the secular forces which then weaken. The basic point is that when the leadership of the majority community, be it Muslim or Sikh or Hindu or may be in a particular district even Christian, becomes communalized and on its basis becomes strong, and the administration loses its grip on the communal environment, through pressure or oversight, to that extent the administrative fabric which is supposed to cope with the long-term and the short-term aspects of this situation, gets weakened. These are some of the issues that require to be studied.

I would like to mention another subject for study. It looks as if more than one-third of the total districts in the country – something between 30 and 40 per cent are more prone to communal violence. I am not going into the demographic position. This is a very special kind of situation. At one time we believed that riots are more – except the riots during the partition – in the urban areas; that it is really an urban phenomenon born out of urbanization. I have seen in Shahjehanabad while I was Chief Secretary in Delhi – what it means to move families out; how difficult it is to persuade people to go out because there are a number of social mores. I know how difficult it was to persuade even the artisans in that area to go to what are known as the flatted industrial estates. There were a number of reasons why they would not move. This kind of thing happened elsewhere also: in parts of Karnataka, and also in

Maharashtra. So, we have to find out whether riots are still essentially an urban phenomenon or the disease has moved to rural areas as well.

I have already mentioned that riots occur and recur after a short period in the same place. That is something to be studied. Since riots are also prolonged and protracted, it is all the more necessary to see what kind of pre-planning goes into them. Take the Ahmedabad riots. We have to see who are the people who are planning them. Suddenly, if within twenty-four hours, the administration finds riots recurring, then either there is something wrong with the diagnosis or there has been some kind of deliberate mischief. Why is it that this type of thing happens? This is another aspect which one has to go into.

I do not agree with what I would call the 'prosperity theory'. Many of these communally sensitive areas in our country are very unfortunately considered more or less Muslim or Hindu prosperous areas. It is simplistic to say that disturbances arise due to growing prosperity of a community. Why do we have riots in areas which till the end of the 19th century were free from riots; why do we today find distrust and mistrust in certain parts of the country? If there is trouble in Jabalpur, the bidi industry there suffers and it belongs to the minority community. In Moradabad you have the brass industry and if one community has the economic upper hand, the other community suffers. I think it is not very difficult to find out the truth as to why these things happen; The other day I was passing though Khurja on the way to my home town. As one passed by one could see the chimneys from which one could distinguish the communal identity. I think the trouble always starts from an economic base. One can study the origin and do something about it. Probably economic prosperity leading to communal aggressiveness breeds irrational reactions.

That brings me to the basic proposition which is that it is utterly wrong to attribute all acts of omission and commission to an entire community anywhere. Similarly, I am one of those who would not like to tar either the armed constabulary of the Punjab or Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh or Bihar with the same brush. I think this will be completely self-defeating. I do not want to go into the details of this, but here too there is a stereotype, as I said earlier. It is a question of psychology. I do have a few comments from the administrative angle. We have to go into the pre-disposing causes or the indirect causes; we have to see the force or impulse behind it and also the normal and obvious reasons.

There were not as many communal riots during British times unfortunately as we have today. But even in British times there were instructions on the arrangements to be made to deal with bad characters – and the bad characters are known – the communal leaders, on how to contain violence and

then to provide relief and rehabilitation. There are strict instructions to the State Governments and they have been repeated not only in 1980 but consolidated and subsequently circulated many a time. There are instructions on how to take action in particular situations. Why are they not strictly enforced? There are certain intelligence agencies both at the Centre and the States to assist.

Now, the question is, as the Home Minister has raised one has to go into it why today the intelligence machinery is not worth the name? the real question is has this been discovered for the first time mow, or has it been so during the last fifteen years, and if so, what steps if any have been taken by the Centre, or has the Centre simply left it to the states to take the steps and what have been the imponderables in this matter? To be fair to the intelligence agencies, at many points of time, there are imponderables, because nobody is always or perpetually informed. Also, if they had given some information, the question is how was it taken and processed and acted upon? We may find that there might be some personal or partisan reason behind the failure. It is not a question of mere information. The question is primarily of determining how to act on the information. Then there are anticipatory measures and some of these are spelt out in the instructions.

There is only a ritualistic following of instruction sand it does not help.

Violence may erupt on minor pretexts, hence need for anticipatory alertness and vigilance. For instance, a claim is made that the Vedas or the Guru Granth Saheb has been desecrated. There might be nobody who has read it from cover to cover, to find out that something has been torn, even a page has been desecrated by a mischief-maker, but this could be the genesis of big trouble. What are the geographical areas, the particular days, whether they are days of festivals, all these things are there in the instructions. Then you have a description of the measures which may be needed, when there is an immediate danger of a communal outburst; there are certain steps outlined for adoption when you call a boiling point is reached. You call together people of different communities and take effective preventive section. You bind them down, you arrest them and so on. Whether the proposed action will be implemented and followed at a particular stage by the holiest of the holies is something else. It is here that political pulls and pressures and individual influences have to be contained.

A beginning must be made with this group of influential touch-me-nots and then, when the boiling point is reached, you see who are the persons who at that time can be bound down, arrested or persuaded so that wise counseling can be exercised, because that is a way of convincing people of something. Everybody is not unreasonable; they know what are the stakes; they known

who is going to suffer; that is why the administration can utilize them at that particular point of time. You call the Peace Committees. Peace Committees are formed or activated, ten days after the riots, and the usual excuse is that the officers were busy or the administration was busy or the political bosses were touring that district or the constituency or something. This is a pure administrative function, which has to be done, but to pass a fleeting judgment is dangerous.

I may not be out of date and things may have changed, but there is one important point that I wish to make, and that is in the Peace Committees the post-partition generation is unrepresented. This is a very sad, a very dismal and a very disquieting feature. I have seen the Chief Minister, the Home Minister and the Prime Minister attend meetings, but the younger generation, supposed to have been brought up in a very secular environment is absent. In the post-partition days, such situations, sometimes left behind a scar psychologically on us, who felt that we should do our utmost to see that the situation should not be repeated or get escalated; that the evil should be contained. The young people did their utmost to help, but today it is a disturbing feature that the new generation, which is the hope of the future, which has to carry India forward into the 21st century – and on which economic and social developments depend – acts differently.

I am one of those who believe that we should not bypass the people with the local knowledge, with local understanding and that, as far as possible, the State police must be strengthened everywhere in all the states. It is a very dangerous proposition to call in the Central forces every time. In the district there is what is called the 'civil police', which, if need be, can use arms. They are trained in arms though normally they carry batons and not arms, they can carry and use arms. Then there is what is called the 'armed constabulary' in the state; it is the force of the last resort. The Central forces are the ultimate resort and when you have them, much of the leadership will come from the Centre and sometimes, it gives rise to misgivings in the locality. That is why I said I am one of those who believe that we should strengthen the State force.

It has been said that we must recruit more and more people from the different minority communities. To be fair to the police, this is not totally neglected but such representativeness is not the only thing that will check this in-built conflict or in-built imbalance. It will not automatically remove the conflict. Besides, the question of minority or sectional representation should not be stretched so far as to communalize the police force or create communal factions within it. They should be trained to deal with people as individual citizens and not as religious or denominational groups. The tendency on the part of the State Governments to depend upon the CRPF or the BSF completely demoralizes and makes the State forces completely heedless so far

as their responsibility is concerned, whether it is the dacoity menace or communal riots. The real problem is the leadership of these forces. I will give one simple example.

I was assured in Meerut, when the question arose during the riots a few years back, that a senior officer would be the Welfare Officer for the force engaged in anti-riot duties. You have to realize that these people should get tea at a proper time, they should get food on time as they have to deal with riots 24 hours. In such conditions everybody's nerves are taut. Suddenly when I visited this place after 24 hours, I found that the fellow who was supposed to be the Welfare Officer had disappeared!

The problems are at the leadership level. It is a question of training. Then there is the question of the rehabilitation measures. That is why I spoke about long-term measures, in which other wings of the administration come in. Even short-term or immediate steps depend for their success on long-term planning of preventive measures. The role of the administration in taking prompt adequate measures for rehabilitation is very important.

In some cases, the amount of compensation is Rs 7,000 and in some it is Rs 70,000. It does not come from the pocket of an individual; it comes from you and me. But is that the remedy? There are cases of corruption which keep recurring. This is a very high economic cost for society. The remedy lies much more in the preventive steps, in increasing that such things do not happen. Moreover you have no end of false claims. If these claims are investigated, you may find that somebody has had the same injury twice! This is the kind of situation the administration has to deal with; it has to find out how a particular proposed measure has to be actually implemented; otherwise, there is only a ritualistic reiteration.

Besides good leadership, training is very important. This training has also to be at different levels. A great deal of attention has to be given to selecting the people to be trained, the people who will train them, the training material and approach and the objectives of the training. Communalism is an all pervading phenomenon. It is like a disease from which people recover when the injection is given but the moment you stop it, there are eruptions of cancer or malignant tumours somewhere else. That is why the training will have to provide comprehension and the ability to look at the problem from a long-term angle, and see that it promotes the capability to cope with the situation if it unfortunately arises. It is a question of the attitudes and the kind of values which these people should have, which just cannot be injected within a few hours even through sensitive training. We have to see what kind of sensitivisation of the administration to these values is necessary. I believe that the broad spectrum of the administration must be so trained as to have a

proper appreciation of the communal problem and its remedies though many may not be concerned with dealing with situations in the field.

I have made two points. One is the political milieu – what is called the politicization of administration and the communalization of politics; politicization of the administration by communalization of politics and communalization of politics by politicization of communalism. Sometimes you will find a combination of both. Politicization of administration must be avoided if we really want no religion in politics. If there is no politics in religion we can ensure that there is no religion in politics. WE are not unaware as to how in different parts of the country efforts have been made over the years to avail of the services of religious heads of different religions for electoral advantages, while talking of secularism.

We find that not only is politics commercialized but communalism is also commercialized. It is here that, what I earlier called prosperity theory breaks down. It also becomes a racket at times, in which well –intentioned people also get involved during the riots for preventing them. Sometimes Ekta Samitis are formed and this conference and that seminar, national integration seminars are held. It is a question of converting the converted in these seminars. On one occasion I had to tell the Chairman of a prestigious body, you hold it in Moradabad, or in Ahmedabad, or Amroha I am prepared to come. It does not matter whatever be the time taken, but for this seminar in Delhi I will not come. The whole thing gets commercialize; it politicizes the administration. This is the political milieu. This is how national integration also becomes commercialized.

Expressions, such as ‘emotional integration’, ‘national integration’ can be used properly or misused. I have seen how glibly the phrase ‘national integration’ is employed and sometimes for extremely different purposes. At this rate it will lose its spirit, substance and become a phrase without any meaning, like a mantra which one might repeat without any impact.

LAW, POLICING AND COMMUNALISM

K.F. Rustomji

I must admit that I have a certain amount of experience of communalism and rioting which few people in India have, the reason being that being a Parsee and neutral I was pushed into every situation in which some type of order had to be restored. From the very first month of my service I was engaged in handling one riot after another and when I retired in 1976 I was convinced that communalism will take us down the path towards anarchy. So I began to go into this matter in greater detail, to analyze it, to examine what the parameters were and to find out what would be the best way, if I may put it, of helping this country to survive.

Let me begin with a statement unconnected with communalism. You must have all seen the report of the Pay Commission and I have marveled at the largesse that has been distributed to everybody. It is almost as if it said, '*Lo, apko chahiye, eh le jao.'* I have never known a pay commission which has been so liberal. The result of course will be that there is bound to be inflation. The thousand crores which they say will be expended will turn into two thousand crores because of pay fixation and so on. While many will benefit, the common man will be crushed by inflation, price rise, unemployment, everything that makes for communalism. So the first point that I am making is that in a poor country we have to be very very careful of every pie that we spend and that it must go in one way or the other to remove the basic causes of tension and conflict, the economic causes. In another contribution I have tried and elaborated on the theme that all communalism emerges from economic factors, but here I will merely touch on what we have to do to analyze communalism, which is to examine one peculiar feature which is now becoming evident, but has been clear to me from the very start. It is not communalism that we have to fear, it is the struggle for survival which takes the form of communalism. As you saw in Gujarat or in Delhi, how one problem phases into another. In Gujarat, if you remember, it was a question of the reservation of posts and it became a Hindu Muslim riot. It started in Delhi as Hindu-Sikh problem and became Hindu Muslim problem. So there is a connection between all disorders which we have to accept from the very beginning. All disorders start on one side and go on into another, depending on the opportunities and the amount of control that the administration is able to exercise.

One other point, which is pertinent regarding the Pay Commission Report, is that it has given a very hard blow to our exertions in the National Police Commission and to the Police in general. When we examined the police work in all its aspects in the National Police Commission we came to the conclusion that a major overhaul of all police practices is required. I stress the word 'major overhaul'. We felt that things were so bad that everything had to be changed and if we did not do so, the path towards anarchy, terrorism and all those complaints which go with maladministration was very clear. One aspect which we stressed very much and this is the prime cause of the failure of the police in India, is that the constable who is the lowest rank in the police force is not only underpaid, but not looked after at all. He does not have any of the powers that a police constable has in any other country in the world. In a sense the police rank of constable in India is totally irrelevant. It is only numbers. As Indian history proves, as all disturbances prove, and as Punjab proves, numbers do not count. What counts is method, the type of persons employed, the direction that is given, and the direction which the administration takes.

One big blow to police work in India was given when I was Special Secretary in the Home Ministry, although I resisted it to the utmost. This was the year when the issue was raised whether to have associations in the police or not. Unions are out of questions because trade unionism is not permitted in a service like the police. There was an IGs' conference which was held in Delhi and I pleaded with them "Please have some method through which the grievances of the lowest ranks can be represented in the proper way." Many of them opposed it saying that there would be indiscipline, they would fight with the officers and there would be a gulf between the officers and men. The result was that no associations were permitted in the police force, though some of them have come up despite that. The result is that the police have no real say in matters concerning their own welfare. Senior officers at that time said 'we will look after the men and they do not have to worry.' But in the end we found that nobody was able to help the constabulary and that is why the direction of police work in India continued to be wrong, despite everybody realizing that it has got to be changed.

It started the wrong way. As you know, the police in India was modeled on the Irish constabulary. It developed through three police commissions, 1857, 1902 and our commission of 1979. Each commission said that certain changes should be made, otherwise there will be trouble, and each time they were ignored. They were not implemented and today we are in a position where there is a growing fear in the hearts of people in this country what we will have serious disorder.

The point that I want to stress is that you cannot have effective policing unless one begins to work at the grass roots level. The British left behind a system of policing which was good and efficient. That system tried to ensure one must get to know every single person in the police station area. It emphasized that knowledge of the area and knowledge of the police are the most important aspects of police work. The result was that a head constable in charge of each mohalla knew who loved there. He knew the bad hats, the good men, the respectable men; he knew all the vices, all the dens. His knowledge of the area was such that if anybody asked him a question, he would say 'I think this crime is committed by X, Y or Z.' That was policing at its best, where knowledge of the area was so complete, that if a stranger came to that place he would immediately be registered.

In the course of our development, we have lost the basics of policing, we have developed a system in which the constable is not able to perform his duties, the head constable ceases to function, and there is total dependence on the top, under a Rebeiro or a Jog or somebody who is an outstanding policeman. But when the system itself is defective, when it has been built up on a wrong foundation, what can outstanding men like these do? They can at best try to stem the rot, to improve matters. But the fact is, the system basically is decrepit; it is not able to produce the results. It has resulted in so many wrong directions that to correct it now is going to be very very difficult. If we do not correct it, we will never get the peace and security that this country hungers for.

The defects in the police system today are numerous. As a citizen one may only know that this man is rude or that man beat up someday or this man is accused of corruption or that man is accused of drunkenness. It is true that these defects exist but they will exist in any organization of men, even in the academic community.

The point that I am making is that outwardly there are certain aspects of police defects which are obvious. Take for instance the habit in the Punjab of shutting down the *thana* at sundown and downing a sundowner and hoping that nothing will happen in the night. Well, everything happens at that time only. Or, the practice which has been perfected in Punjab, unfortunately, of not depending on the courts for punishment but only on police *zabardasti.* It has been a tradition which has developed in Punjab over the years, that one does not take a man to court for having committed a crime but tries to settle the matter either through some type of administrative pressure or through police pressure. That is one reason for the situation that one is facing on Punjab today.

This is the direction that police work is taking in other states also and facing the same problem as well. The very fact that a policeman takes upon himself the responsibility of punishing anybody is totally wrong and totally against all concepts of good policing. The idea should be that the policeman can only investigate and put it up before a magistrate or a judge, and it should be he who decides what is to be done. But over the years our system has deteriorated; the law has become ineffective; the lawyers have made the law a matter of earning bread and getting one adjournment after another; with the result that nothing moves and all courts are, if I may put it rather bluntly, full of garbage that has accumulated year after year.

This distortion of the system of jurisprudence or general justice is one of the causes of all the problems that we are facing in Punjab and in many other states of India.

One very important factor that has emerged in the last few years is, the result of there being no associations in the police service. The officers assured the men that they would look after their interests. But gradually the assertion, even this authority has passed out of the hands of the officers and gone into the hands of political leaders. The Home Minister, the Chief Minister began to say 'We will look after their interests, you do not worry.' Their idea of policing was, help this man, arrest that man, detain that man, release that man, all on political grounds. This is not justice. That is a distortion of justice. In this way the whole system has got into a situation from which it will be very difficult to rescue it.

One result of this has also been that officers – I do not confine my remarks to police officers only – have starting relying too much on paper work. We want to prepare our defences; we want to make sure that we are safe. So we are not in touch with the people in the field. We like to write long notes; prepare beautiful schemes; prepare lovely studies and say, 'What would we do, we did our best but there was no implementation.' Implementation is the worst aspect of Indian administration. What surprises me is that the Prime Minister has been saying that the police in India has had a very bad deal and it must be corrected, all the defects should be removed and we must do everything in our power to achieve this. He has made this statement four or five times, and the Pay Commission took no notice of it. Why is there such a gap between theory and practice in India? It is because we are in a way a people who depend only on plans, and are not concerned with the nitty gritty, the nuts and bolts of proper administration.

What has been the result? If one goes to a thana anywhere, even in Delhi, one will find that policemen on duty will not register a case. There is even no chair for any visitor to sit on. There is no way in which the head constable can be

persuaded to record a report. Once, in Bangalore I was driving a friend's car and entered a one-way street. The constable stopped me and insisted that I should accompany him to the police station. I thought this was a good opportunity of seeing what happens in a police station, where you are not known. My wife said, 'No, no you will go to jail for six months.' I said, 'Let us see what happens.'

We went to the police station and sitting down in a corner, we waited and waited. Then a man asked us what it was all about. I said we made a mistake, and wrongly entered a one-way street. 'Very serious, very serious,' he said. 'I have made a mistake and if you want you can *chalaan* me, I said. 'Yes, yes, we will *chalaan* you, there is no way, and you are talking rudely to me.' (I was perfectly normal and he was the man who was rude). I thought I would provoke him a bit and said 'Why should I not be rude to you? You are treating me in a bad way.' It became a first class quarrel and I felt that this time it is going to be a real good case. He took down my name and wanted my address and I said, 'Put it in the care of the I.G. of Police?' 'Yes, he is a friend of mine.' His attitude immediately changed. It was, 'Sir, can I get you a cup of tea? Can I do this for you, can I do that for you?' Is that the way a policeman should behave with an ordinary citizen of the land? Why can't we improve it? Because people do not pay any attention to it. The senior officer never visits the thanas at all because he feels that they are best left to their own devices.

The essence of police work is proper functioning of police stations. Once the grass roots work, the work at the lowest level is satisfactory and the people get satisfaction from their police station, then there will be peace in the land. There will be no disturbance, there will be no way in which people will want to defy the law. But when the rot starts from below, when men cannot get justice, then they begin to seek justice on their own and vendetta sets in. They begin to fight each other, quarrel with each other and in a poor country there is always dissatisfaction because of poverty and starvation.

Now, a brief look at what goes wrong at the intermediate level and the top level.

A few years ago, when I was an SP, it was unthinkable that anybody should put up pictures of gods or gurus or Jesus Christ in a police station. If anybody had dared to do it. I would have chucked him out of the force because I insisted on the utmost impartiality. I insisted that not only should one be impartial but everybody must feel that one is impartial. Religion, of it enters politics, becomes communalism. But religion in the administration is worse still. We have condoned all this, and we are going to pay a very heavy price for it.

At the top one finds Chief Ministers saying that this is such a problem that as a consequence our Hindu votes will be lost or, he says name this road according

to some religious deity, some religious guru, and indicates his preference for a particular religion. Thus, there is misdirection at all levels, because politicians want to make use of every device that they can, to get votes. So in the administration a disease has crept in, which I would call partiality.

I stress that the job of anybody in the police today is not to please the Chief Minister. It is to please the law. The law is his guide, his bible. The law is what he has to go by, not pleasing this Governor or that Chief Minister. We have given all that up. The purity of the administration has been destroyed. In consequence we are getting troubles, like the one that is being faced in Punjab today.

Apart from these, other defects arise from an increase in work. One of the worst results is that there is no training worth the name in the police. The normal concept of a police force should be that a man should be trained for at least seven to eight months as a beginner, when he joins the service. It should be a year in the case of a sub-inspector, six months or eight months in the case of a constable. These are the levels at which direct recruitment is done. Then the normal concept should be that every year he should devote one month's time for training. In between he would attend courses. For instance, when I was head of the Border Security Force, I said that each man will go through courses in between, a machine gun course, tactics course, law course, disciplinary course, whatever. In each course he will be judged: his strong points, his weak points. The people who give the training have to be developed to judge men in the right way. The result was that in each year one could get at least seven or eight opinions about the man's work. All of them were told to lookout for any signs of communalism or partiality. Today, you will agree with me, one of the forces that has a good reputation is the Border Security Force, because it is totally impartial or tries to be so.

When you have seven or eight opinions about practically every man and when they all say that a particular man tends towards communalism, and needs to be watched, and you find grounds for suspicion then you can say that this man has been accumulating bad reports, he is a liability, a danger to the public, he is not fir for government service, and has to go. There are, as you know, people who have tendencies which are very very dangerous in a policeman, and one of them is, the man who delights in giving pain, a sadist. If there is a policeman who is a sadist then that man must be sacked. He cannot be retained in the force. Alcoholics, drug addicts, those who have serious vices have no business to fatten on the land and to stay in service and make the people pay for their weaknesses.

Training is not only meant to keep the man on his toes. It keeps him physically fit, but it is also meant to find out the characteristics of each individual and to

make a record of the man so that he can be either corrected, warned or rewarded or promoted or put out of the force. That opportunity also we have lost, because there is no training.

A very vital point mentioned earlier is the total knowledge by the police of the area and its men. But when cities develop – now I think the population of Delhi is seventy lakhs – to keep track of people in the right way, to keep records in the right way becomes very difficult. That is why we need computers, to improve the methods of recording. Instead of improving our recording we have gone and demolished whatever system that existed and today our records are not enough to deal with a problem like terrorism. So a big effort will have to be made to correct this.

When I have attacked the police in such strong terms, I would like to stress also that when they are properly looked after, properly led, they can perform miracles. You have not the slightest idea, how good they can be. I have seen a sub-inspector in a riot, standing with a rifle and saying, 'Dare anybody do anything in this area?' I have seen a constable respected so much in the countryside that people used to call him 'dada' everywhere. I have seen men fight dacoits. Five constables busted a gang of fifty dacoits in Madhya Pradesh on one occasion. All of them were awarded the President's Police Medal for gallantry. I have seen them attending the sick, getting people inoculated against cholera. I have heard of one delivering a baby because there was nobody in the police station and the women's time came at that place. I have seen them perform miracles as any human being will if he is given the right atmosphere, the right leadership and the right direction. What we have to endeavour is to make sure that in all policing the right atmosphere is created, the right way in which to work.

How do we go about correcting the mistakes or the deficiencies? There is the Police Commission Report where we went into full details and tried to indicate the direction of police reform. But because we included one quotation from the Report of the Shah Commission the Congress Government felt that they could easily neglect the report, they need not implement it. Then they suddenly discovered, when the Rajiv Gandhi Government came in, that police work was going down very badly and so they brought it out form the dusty shelf and said it was for the states to implement it. Unless there is a whole-hearted attempt to implement that Report and to lift up police work from all the evils into which it has fallen, I am doubtful whether any results will be achieved.

There was a very interesting debate in parliament just about a week ago. Scathing references were made to the failure of the police in Punjab, but there was no attempt to find the remedy. The point that I would like to emphasize is

that we have to find out the correct methods of removing defects and deficiencies that have come in. The media too has been working on it. You will find lengthy editorials on police inability to do this or that. But why not make it a constructive effort to show that these defects can be cured? We fail to take every opportunity that comes our way, such as a Pay Commission Report, to correct the imbalances that have developed in the police.

There has been a great deal of criticism of the Punjab Police. I can tell you this, that it is one of the finest forces in India. I have worked with it. It has saved India a number of times. I have seen them work during the infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir in 1965. I have seen them time and again helping Jammu and Kashmir. I have led them myself in many places and I can tell you that it was one of the finest forces and that it was allowed to deteriorate by improper supervision and direction. It can still be pulled up if the correct angle occurs in the government and in the administration. There is a tremendous potential in the Punjab police. Rightly guided, it can deliver results. I have no doubt that if the entire police work is lifted up on the lines that is being planned, Punjab once again will become the land of peace and plenty that I have known.

I have seen the refugees coming from Pakistan. I have seen the caravans of misery tracking across on either side. I was present the day the foundation stone of Chandigarh was laid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was there when the first bucket of concrete was poured into Bhakra Nangal. I have seen the state develop in all its grandeur, all its beauty – the brave men and beautiful women – and they have done such a lot for India. At times like these, one should not lose sight of the fact that this is one state which will always create problems of one type and solve problems of another type. Which state has solved the food problem in India? It is Punjab. The way it has built up agriculture, small scale industries, the way the men have fought in all the wars, the valour that they have shown, we just cannot afford to let it all die on the poisoned roots of communalism. It is too good to be lost.

There are several reforms which are required on the police side which I might comment on.

As you know, the police Act is a central enactment. In the same way, all armed police should be under a central enactment and there should be easy interchangeability, the ability to go to the help of any state that is having problems or difficulties.

Secondly, the authority of the senior most police officer must not be diluted and there should be no political interference in mattes of investigation. If that can be assured and there is regular supervision and inspection – inspection is

something we have lost touch with; if every police station had to be inspected once a year by the SP there will be a great change.

I have mentioned to you the defects of the police. What are the defects of implementation of law? We have gradually lost faith in the legal justice completely. The law is there only to be read by students and practiced by advocates. It is not something that gives security and stability to the land. You prosecute a man for murder. The case of the man who killed the Chief Minister of Punjab, is still going on. His mercy petitions are still under examination, I think. I have not read about his execution. But the fact is a case of murder drags on for twenty, thirty years. Supposing a man had to live in the death row for ten years he would go mad. I have seen a man going mad in one of the Bihar jails, because his case was too long delayed. Where is the sense in this type of judicial work? Justice has almost ceased to exist in the land. If you loan money do you think a court will give you an order inside of five years to get it back? If your landlord wants to throw you out and does succeed in putting your bistara outside, do you think any court will help? It will take five years for you to get back. Early decision in legal case is unheard of, with the result that today we cannot face any problem, particularly of a difficult type, with confidence. Nobody, as far as I know, has ever been convicted in a communal rioting case. If we are going to depend on legality why should we allow this sort of thing to continue? Why can't we take steps to see that each case is decided almost as if it is a military court martial, and the decision must be taken before the court rises, as in several of the Moscow courts?

Actually, laws in India need only small changes. It is the procedures that is wrong. The law was drafted by Macaulay and unfortunately we have not been able to find another good draftsman as Macaulay in India after independence. But perhaps no major changes are required in the law. What is required is to improve the procedures in courts so that quick decisions, summary trials, might be made effective. I feel that the country should have a central judicial commission, like a law commission, that would look after all aspects of criminal administration, that is, police, courts and jails and of course the making of law also.

I have tried to show what policing is, the defects that it suffers from. May be I have overstressed the defects because improvement is so vital. But I am one of those who thinks that improvement is easy that it can be done, that there are people who will be able to get the results that are required. I have no doubt that proper coordination of work in the districts will produce the results. But we must not hesitate to think in terms of a total overhaul of the system. We are in a period when our problems, if not solved today, will take us straight to anarchy.

SECTION 9

COMMUNALISM: THE WAY OUT

SECULARISM: SOME OBSERVATIONS

Bhupendra Yadav

Secularization is not an end in itself. It is, however, an important historically intermediate stage of transition from feudal society. In a multi-religious society, like India, where the constitution promises liberal democracy, secularization appears to be a pragmatic necessity. Under the circumstances prevailing in India, secularization is necessary for substantially reducing the appeal of communalism, authoritarianism, obscurantism, superstition and the like.

The Western Experience

The secularization process had several distinctly national contours.[1] But in could be initiated only after non-metaphysical rational and scientific explanations were satisfactorily provided to the evolution of the universe and human life thereon. In this regard, the trail-blazing contributions of the Renaissance thinkers and later-day philosophers and scientists were important steps.[2] It is, however, necessary to consider the social history of these developments 'for we live not only in nature but also in human society and this also, no less than nature, has its history of development and its science'.[3]

The feudal State had almost blood relations with religious institutions. Kings lavished revenue-free land grants on religious institutions and the latter endowed their patrons with the 'Grace of God'. For a short duration in its struggle against the feudal State, the bourgeoisie sought recourse to science and rationality with an anti-religious edge. The demands of parishes were curtailed, a number of clergical establishments liquidated, the staff of the clergy reduced and the election of clergyman was instituted. Practice of feudal privileges based on hereditary, oppression based on the will of the Sovereign and the 'Divine Right' of kings to rule were challenged on rational grounds. In

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[1] The struggle between the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie took a religious form in England and Netherlands but not so in France. Havrilyuk, O. (1984), *Freedom of Conscience in a Socialist Society,* Politvidav Ukraini Publishers, Kiev.

[2]The most important contributions were:

(a) the method of experimental mathematical investigation of nature, philosophically generalized in the works of Leonardo da Vinci;

(b) the determinist interpretation of reality as opposed to its teleological interpretations by Scholastics who defended Christian dogma; and

(c) the formulation (by Keiper in astronomy and Galileo in mechanics) of genuinely scientific laws of nature from anthromorphism.

[3] Engels and Marx (1976), *On Religion,* Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 206.

the emerging modern nation-states, democracy was proclaimed and rights of citizens guaranteed through evolution as in England or revolution as in France. One of these rights of citizens was the freedom of conscience.[4] Whereas the ideas produced in the period of the Renaissance were confined to a few, the secularization process popularized them among many by publicity, viz. mass education and free press, and social movements. In the nineteenth century people like the great secularist campaigner Bradlaugh believed that extensive propaganda would endure secularization. He held that secular ideas can be spread better not by playing on flutes but by beating for drums.[5]

Capitalist institutions, like the market, integrated vast areas and people. But capitalist social relations divided the large national states into what Disraeli called 'two nations', viz. the wage-earners and the capitalists. The wage-earners were divorced from the means of production due to their poverty and were alienated from the fruits of their labour due to the prevailing social relations. So, they grasped religion to compensate in imagination what they lost in reality or to make the conditions of the 'heartless world' slightly more bearable. On the other hand, capitalists needed religion to buffet the brutal uncertainties strewn in their path as individuals of firms accumulating capital and also to pacify potential rebels among wage-earners. Ironically, therefore, the bourgeois State also resorted to religion to bless its actions, crown its dictators, sanction its laws, define as just its wars against enemies or violence against citizens and be the decorous master of national ceremonies.

Capitalist societies can be divided into two main groups according to the nature of Church-State relations. In the first category are forty three countries which have declared a State religion. Only adherents of the State religion can become heads of State, members of high State institutions and participate in the management of State affairs in these countries.[6] In the second category, fall countries where formal declarations are made about the separation of State form Church but in practice religion continues to play a big role in the cultural life of nations. Agencies of the State, therefore, get involved with religious ceremonies in the interests of public order, religious education in the interests of uniform educational standards and religious institutions in the interests of public good. The Indian case falls in this category.

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[4] Theologians say that conscience is the 'voice of God within us'. Instead, non-theologians hold that conscience is a product of society's development. Freedom of conscience is said to have passed through three basic stages:
(a) the struggle for religious tolerance in a confessional state;
(b) the assertion of religious freedom of conscience in a liberal democratic polity; and
(c) the accomplishment of genuine freedom of conscience where atheism is freely allowed on the assumption that conscience is the yardstick of religion and not vice-versa.

[5] Chadwick, Owen (1985), *Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century,* Cambridge Universtiy Press, p. 103.

[6] Havrilyuk, D., op.cit., p. 24.

The Indian Situation

To separation of the State from the Church is believed to have been accomplished in India during the medieval period. It is said that the Turk, Afghan and other rulers realized that they were a 'pinch of salt' in the vast ocean of the multi-dimensional society in India. Hence, these rulers are reported to have separated Church from the State. But this fact does not testify the existence of a secular State whose ruling classes held the conviction that religion was not to meddle in the governance of worldly affairs. Instead, there are contrary facts which corroborate the 'religious intolerance' of some rulers in ancient and medieval times.[7]So, the contention that India had a secular State since the dawn of history is open to question.

There is also a belief that religious tolerance was practiced in Indian society since ancient times. The peaceful co-existence of members of different religious groups in almost all parts of India is also a fact. But how can it be deduced from this that Indian society was secular? Religious tolerance is not the same thing as secularism. It can, however, be safely inferred from this fact that disharmony between members of different religious or caste groups is not of ancient origin.

The definition of secularism being propagated by the political leaders in India amounts to be the subversion of this concept. 'Sarv Dharma Sambhava' or equal respect to all religions is ultimately the same thing as religious tolerance. This may open a host of questions, such as:

1) If religion is worthy of respect, why should it be separated from politics? Why should it not be the organizing principle of national life and the basis of personal law dealing with inheritance, divorce and marriage?

2) If religion is worthy of respect, why should its practices be subjected to public order, morality, etc.?

In practice, the 'Sarv Dharma Sambhava' policy of secularism is exposed to the danger of fuelling existing communal feelings. For instance, the policy of the State-owned media to broadcast or televise performance of religious rituals is often alleged to be favouring one religious group or another. The devoutly religious, of course, object to the wrong manner or inauspicious time of some of these broadcasts. So, instead of reducing the sphere of metaphysical beliefs, the 'Sarv Dharma Sambhava' definition of secularism appears to increase their influence on social and political life. Hence, this definition and policy of secularization has some patent pitfalls.

[7] Chatterji. P.C. (198), *Secular Values for Secular India,* New Delhi, pp. 148-169.

The social history of secularization should be recalled at this stage because theoretical criticism will be ineffective unless supported by social changes. Capitalist development is painfully slow in India as also in other so-called third world countries. This fact is explained in different ways, prominent among which are following:

a) India is an early stage of industrialization and capitalist growth and, therefore, its development is slow as was also the experience of developed countries.[8]

b) India is caught in the relationship of subordination and domination as a satellite with metropolitan countries.[9]

c) India experienced capitalist development at a different historical conjuncture. Its industrialization is blocked by domination of merchant capital and inadequate internal market leading the production structure to be export-oriented.[10]

d) India experiences a co-existence of different modes of production whereby a kind of dualism is created which in turn inhibits growth.[11]

e) The co-existence of different modes of production is likely to pass through three states-

    i) an initial link in the sphere of exchange wherein interaction with capitalism reinforces the capitalist mode of production;

    ii) capitalist mode takes roots, subordinates pre-capitalist modes but still keeps using them as in India;

    iii) the total disappearance of pre-capitalist modes of production, even from agriculture.[12]

As a consequence of this, the trends of industrialization and urbanization have also been slow. And these two trends formed the backbone of the secularization process in the West. The slow accrual of these trends is largely limiting the expedition of this process in India.

On the top of all, Indian bourgeoisie has not declared war against feudalism. In fact, there is a belief that the political formations representing this class and lionize religious leaders to legitimize their rule, win elections and form

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[8] Bill Warren, ' Imperialism and Captialist Industrailization', *New Left Review,* Sept.-Oct., 1973.
[9] Gunder-Frank, Andre, *Capitalism and Under Development in Latin America,* New York, 1967.
[10] Geoffrey Key and Samir Amin, *Development and Under Development: A Marxist Analysis,* London, 1975 and *Accumulation on a World Scale,* New York, 1974.
[11] Krishna Bharadwaj, Notes on Political Economy of Development, The Indian Case, *E.P.W. Annual Number,* February, 1972.
[12] Pierre-Philippe Rey, Les Alliances de classes, Pariss, 1973 (The Summary of this is provided by B. Bradley, 'The Destruction of Natural Economy', *Economy and Society, Economy and Society,* Vol. IV. No. 2 (1975).

governments. In a word, the Indian bourgeoisie has all the vices of old age without any of the virtues of the young (bourgeoisie of the West).

In theory, liberal democrats should support the secularization process because the non-initiation of this process leads to further communalization of society, regular communal conflagarations, frequent intervention by the repressive state apparatus and thereby curtailment of constitutionally guaranteed liberties. A liberal democrat conceives of the State in antagonism to individual freedoms. Hence, any curtailment of liberties by the State should be intolerable to her or him. The reality, however, is that only a few liberal democrats in India appear to be interested in fighting against communalization of society and consequent curtailments of liberties.

It is also generally accepted that India has not undergone the equivalent of European Renaissance. It can be argued that it is not obligatory for all societies to see their images in the mirror of Europe or to beat the beaten track. Nevertheless, it is necessary to popularize the scientific discoveries about natural phenomena and to disseminate rational explanations of social phenomena among vast masses. The medium available for achieving this purpose is the educational apparatus including press, radio, television, films, cultural activity, etc. and, of course, social movements along secular lines.

Summing Up

In the ultimate analysis, ignorance about social and natural phenomena can be reduced by ideological struggle. But the need for metaphysical beliefs can be eliminated by dissolving the social conditions, structures and institutions which breed alienation. The secularization process in the West has halted half-way because universalization of rational and scientific knowledge has been alienation still remains to be done. In this sense, India can learn from the experience of the West and make the struggle for secularism a part of the struggle to de-alienate society, groups and individuals.

SECULARISM: CULTURE AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Mulk Raj Anand

'Destination Man' was the ideal which Jawaharlal Nehru put forward as the goal of India's advance towards the future.

And he tried, in his series of surveys of our various cultures, to arrive at a possible synthesis of the different heritages of the faiths, to discover in them the basic unity in the approach to life.

He felt that almost all the major religions of India, with their creative arts, temples, mosques, gurudwaras, the music and the kirtan dances, had been based on the compulsive need of man to have some relation to the beginning of the universe the place of men and women in the world, and the ways to realize the beauty and magnificence of the elements of the cosmos. To Nehru it seemed that all our beliefs sought to exalt life by ascribing a divine origin to it.

The Hindus had, indeed, defied various elements in the Vedas. The world began, so the myth ran, when Prajapati embraced his spouse in a playful mood. The sun was exalted as the God Surya and the Gayatri hymn was inspired for greeting his splendour every morning. Dawn was made the lovely Goddess Usha. The vast sky was called Varuna. Thunder and lightening were exalted as Indra. And Saranyu, the spouse of Indra, was conceived as the great mother.

In the *Upanishads,* already it was suggested that there were various ways for achieving yoga, or union with gods. The fundamental approach was by experiencing these elemental energies inside one's own body-soul.

As the psychology of contemplation necessitated deep concentration, men and women had to dissolve their various egos, by transcending surface relations and uniting with the One that was all, from within the parts of One.

In later times, the supreme deity came to be represented, or symbolized, through the particular aspect of Him, which was preferred by the worshipper. So Vishnu came to represent the gracious and benign aspect of the One (Krishna Vasudeva being considered another incarnation of Vishnu). Shiva, once the wild God of other storms, was transformed into the acme of power, by invoking whose name, the warriors went to battle against enemies. In the next thousand years he was transformed into Shiva Natraj, the Lord of dancers, who embodies the rhythm of the world. He puts the snake cunning

round his neck. He wraps Tiger fury round his body. He crushes dwarf evil underfoot. And then he begins to dance, the dance of cosmic rhythm in the circle of fire.

The Great Mother, Saranyu, went through many transformations and ultimately became Shakti, the spouse of Shiva, who is Durga when gracious and Kali when she is in a terrible mood.

Many myths were woven during the centuries and symbolized in images. Through these icons the gods were worshipped in temples and shrines. The *Rigveda* had held: 'Ideas for the learned and images for the people', which meant for the illiterate. Intricate psychologies of ritualistic worship were evolved on the presumption that image precedes idea. Thus millions of idols were carved in stone, or caste in bronze for contemplation. These were made to skillfully, that they have been called 'Great works of art'. The Natraj Bronzes adorn many drawing rooms in Paris, London and New York.

Other faiths flourished in India, like Zoroastrianism, in which fire was worshipped as the essential principle of the Universe. Islam, which was initiated by the prophet Muhammed in Arabia in the sixth century A.D. was against the abject worship of idols, totems, and magical as taken by the Bedouins. The Prophet built up a cosmogony of the one God, of whom no idol could be made. He had been impressed by the concept of the big God of the Hebrews. He also believed in the deity, who is the father of Christ. Muhammadanism, then, appeared as Unitarian religion, with the belief in the unique Allah, with whom the Prophet would intercede on judgment day for worshippers for forgiveness of their possible sins, to ensure their ascent to heaven.

The dethronement of the family of the Prophet from Messiahhood, through the war of Kerbala led to the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussain, descendents of Muhammad. Islam became divided between those who believed in Prophethood by descent, the Shiahs, and those who believed in the election of the Caliph, the Sunnis. Later, differences of doctrinal belief and interpretations of the Quran, led to many schisms, and there arose many sects of Islam.

In fact, the religion, called Islam, which means peace, began to be used by local chieftains and kings as *Jehad*, holy war, against the infidels, presumably to convert them to the faith in Allah, but in fact for aggrandizement. The first Arab conqueror of the part of India called Sind, Abu-Bin-Kasim, came mainly as a conqueror. But Mahmud of Ghazni smashed several Hindu idols to convince the populace about the belief in one pure God of the Quran. After hum, Muhammad Ghori and hid general, Qutub-ud-Din Aibak, were inspired by similar passions. And the first mosque in Mehrauli, south of Delhi, was called 'Quwat-ul-Islam Masjid', the Might of Islam Mosque.

In actual practice, the Sultanates, which ruled from Delhi and the provinces, began to adapt themselves to the various indigenous cultures of the peoples. The State was not called Islamic. Specially did Alla-ud-Din Khilji proclaim his intent to pursue practical politics and not base his government on the Muslim faith.

Other Sultans did apply Qoranic jurisprudence in exercising justice, but tolerated Hindu manners and customs and rituals. Of course, throughout there was a partisan bias in favour of Islamic culture. But, in the early medieval periods, Baba Farid in Punjab, Nizammudin Aulia in Delhi, and Moin-ud-Din Chisti in Ajmer, and other Muslim mystics, absorbed certain Hindu rituals like the Kirtan dance to experience god through ecstasy, as a way of life.

The medieval saint, Kabir, could not say whether he was a Hindu or a Mussalman, and people of both faiths adored him. Guru Nanak, after Kabir, absorbed the vital truths of both Hinduism and Islam and founded a new reformist faith of love, which came to be known as Sikhism, meaning faith of the disciples. Later, this new religion of compassion had to contend with the hatred of the Mughal authorities. And the quietis peity began to combine Piri (Guruship) with Miri (militant leadership) for battle against oppression, as the joint principles of the new faith of Sikhism. All the ten Gurus of Sikhism, however, remained compassionate, and were revered by Hindus and Muslims, alongwith the Sikhs.

The Emperor Akbar, finding himself in the middle of the contending sects of Islam, and the diatribes of the priests of one faith against the other, held a permanent seminar for many years to reconcile the contending faiths and to evolve a synthetic culture under Din-i-Ilahi, of which he announced himself the head. He and his own, and son's son, married Hindu wives. And for a time the mixed culture flourished and certain degrees of tolerance remained current. This mood was, however, dissolved by the puritan great grandson of Akbar, the Emperor Aurangzeb, who levied tax from non-Muslims. And though he extended the boundaries of the Mughal Empire, the heart of the kingdom was corroded by contempt for followers of other faiths than Islam. The synthetic culture of Akbar tended to disappear.

The Christian missionaries, who came to convert Akbar, did not succeed in achieving many converts, until the 19th century when the British John Company prevailed against its enemies, the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese and conquered the country by dividing the Nawabs and Rajas against each other.

Some of the reasons for the prevalence of the British, who were nominally Christians was the fact that they brought the cross alongwith the sword. And

the Christian missionaries were received by the lower caste Hindus as saviours.

The Muslims were equally sunk in superstitious worship of graves, apart from the permanent wars of Sunnis and Shiahs, and the suppression of women through polygamy, and easy talaqs, without the husband's liability to give maintenance to his divorced wife or wives.

Those among the Hindu intelligentsia who realized the decay of their faith, through orthodoxy, were men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chander Sen, Ishwar Chander Vidyasagar and the Dabendranath Tagore who initiated the Brahmo Samaj reform society. This movement tried to synthesise the noblest elements of ancient Hindu faith, with some of the learning of the European Renaissance. A similar reform movement called the Prathana Samaj began in Western India. The Arya Samaj began cleaning Hinduism of its darkest practices in northern India and asked for the revival of the old 'pure' Aryan culture.

The Aligarh movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmed, based on the woes of Muslims, described in the long poem *Mussadas* of Altaf Hussain Hali, sought to rationalize Islam and began a new education movement.

All these reformists ideologies were seeking to infuse the light of western knowledge to regenerate the surviving obscurantist faiths.

These reform movements also brought emphasis on man as an individual in the world, so that he could evolve into a higher specie. The emphasis on man had come in the west, after the prolonged wars of the Reformation against the Catholic Church fought by Protestants in Europe for five hundred years. There the struggles of reason against monopoly control of faith led to the separation of the Church from the State in regulating the civic life of human beings, without allegiance to any particular deity.

The French Revolution, which was influenced deeply by the enlightenment of the Renaissance, had conduced to the progressive emphasis on cultural expression in the arts, in the place of religions arts, within the political framework of the State. And modern secularism certainly derived its impact, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, all over the world, from the great upturning in France.

Our national struggle for political freedom from alien imperial rule, was influenced by the slogans of the French upturning: Freedom, Equality, Fraternity. As the national struggle began, self consciously, in Bengal, the intellectual content of the religious reforms initiated by the Brahmo Samaj percolated into the minds of the leadership. The new young of that time had not forgotten that Raja Ram Mohan Roy had hailed the French flag on his way

to Britain. Again, already in the early manifestos of the Indian National Congress, we see that there were men of various faiths at the helm, who implicitly accepted the primacy of political struggle, and of a synthetic secular culture, for the promotion of the freedom struggle.

Actually, however, from the necessity to unite the people of India in the mass struggle against foreign rule, the leaders of the national movement accepted the plural religious traditions, qua religious traditions, even of some of the faiths negated the equality of the status of human beings, through caste practices, denigration of women, and obscurantist religious rituals.

The concessions proved in the long run to be handicaps in the way of the unity of the secular culture. Sections of the big minority of Muslims, under the influence of opportunist urges for power, sided with imperialism. The nationalist Muslims were bereft. And, ultimately, a separate Islamic State called Pakistan had to be conceded by the national movement in more than half of Punjab and half of Bengal. Accepted by the Muslims of those areas as true inheritance in those areas of Islamic culture, soon the eastern region of Pakistan found itself being imposed upon by the ruthless dictatorship of the brothers-in-faith, possessed of power lust. The Bengali Muslims revolted and formed their own, as yet undefined, secular State. But the Islamic Pakistan State has gone on to deny human rights to its citizens, by practicing the Shariat Law, which punishes a thief by cutting has hand off, by stoning to death the proven adulterer, and by lashing the drunkard with seventy four strokes of the cane.

Our won secular State, with its enshrining of the fundamental human rights of equality of all citizens before the law, the claim to be livelihood and to freedom of worship, might have promoted a genuine comprehensive humanist culture, to ensure the emergence of the individual, integrated into bigger groups, thus merging into a nation, with the acceptance of a unity in diversity. But the hangovers of the isolations, of some of the minorities, and the fear of suppression of their faiths by the secular democracy, as also lust for extra loaves and fishes, disguised under the label of religion (though they are political and economic demands) have militated against the prevalence of ‘secular democracy with a socialist pattern’.

The Muslim minority, for instance, does not want a uniform civil code, which may ensure equal rights to women, for divorce and maintenance, but wants the Shariat culture to apply, in its garbled and misinterpreted forms. The Hindu chauvinists still practice caste discrimination and do not want any reservation of privileges in educational institutions and jobs for the scheduled castes and tribes. The Sikh fundamentalists demand a separate State called Khalistan, with manifesto of absorbing territories wherever Sikhs have

migrated. And they wish to revive a militant culture, based on the Akal Takht, Amritsar, as the source of inspiration in both religions and political spheres.

The main thrust of the Khalistani campaign is to dissociate Sikhism from any affiliation with Hinduism. The fundamentalists burnt Article 25 of the Indian Constitution deliberately. And one of their leaders, Bhindranwale, exhorted his flowers to 'kill five thousand Hindus to avenge the death of one Sikh', defending the holy cause.

That this attitude goes against the love preached by Guru Nanak as the core of the Sikh faith, is slurred over by the cry of 'Sikhism in danger' by possible absorption by the Hindu faith and other slogans of the political jargon.

The recent judgment of the Supreme Court in awarding alimony to Shah Bano, as from her husband Mohammed Ahmed Khan, who divorced her and denied maintenance, has brought the cultural conflict between secular democracy and Shariat culture based on the old Muslim personal law into spreading conflicts.

It seems to me that it is the failure of the secular democratic humanists to define the cultural implications of secularism, in the context of Indian developments, that is causing much of the disruption of our polity, through sectarian religious demands.

It is clear in retrospect, that whereas Western secularists were able to promote a new culture against the orthodox religious taboos of the Catholic Church by relying on the general mood of protest against the Church of Rome, the liberation of Indians, even of the intelligentsia, from the god-intoxicated ideologies has not taken place.

There was the need in our country for the assertion of human brotherhood (*insani biradari*), parallel to the solidarity urged by the various faiths. This did not happen, because of the concessions given to the narrow brotherhoods of the religions by the secular democrats. And the secularists have relied on the caste vote and unconsciously accepted many religious symbols in political life. The liberation of the contemporary Indian men and women from religion's tutelage did not happen even in the education system, in which denominational schools and colleges were accepted without question. The secularization of consciousness, which may have preceded the evolution of a humanist culture, based on the evolution of the individual, has not taken place.

In our literatures the Hindus have been beckoning the metaphysics of salvation of the Advaita, often, without reference to salvation, through mystic Salvationism, of Islam or by recognizing the martyrdom of Jesus against the

oppressive Roman State, or the sacrifices of the Sikh gurus on behalf of the Hindus.

In fact, we did not even tell the fundamentalists that their various fighting ideologies are not rooted in the teachings of other prophet, who said that all paths leads to God.

And the secular democrats with their concealed castes, fear or orthodoxy and subservience to the patriarchs, have not made secularism the process of gradual separation of politics from religion. Our creative arts have not been removed from the dominations of religious symbols to free expression.

If the processes of culture were essentially based on *Sanskriti,* the cultivation of the soil of the personality, then we have lost ourselves in the revival of surviving traditional cultures, without seeing the origins of the creative process. 'Creation is all' was the motto of our old civilizations. Throughout our history the folk, in our rural landscape, expressed themselves in alliance with the forces of nature, in appeasement of the terror around them. We have not noticed that rhythmic expression in words, images, in movements of dance, or in the echo of deep resonances of the body-soul, the biochemical process of regeneration of the nerves and tendons. The excess exuberance of the body-soul creates ecstasy, uplifting the human being above routine life.

The human predicament of pain, in toil, adversity and distress, seeks in the flow of sensibility, liberation from the pragmatic life into apprehension of other worlds. The sense of wonder is eternal. Death is conquered by life urges. The experience of joy, through the arts, is the conquest of the living death, through alliance with cosmic energies. The saints called the rhythm if the song, the permeation of other universe by the divine. The artist seeks release in the ever-expanding freedom of the body-soul, though the creative process.

In this modern definition of creative expression, the individual naturally seeks to be a part of others. Communication becomes a way of connection with the group.

This kind of integration of people, with each other, through the creative arts follows from eclectic humanism, which is more or less shared among those who believe in the here and now, in the midst of the realities of the world.

Therefore, unless we evolve a new philosophy of ever new creativeness, as the basis of the cultural process, we will not integrate. The old forms were intended to transcend the earthly realities, to bring the worshipper into touch with his own higher consciousness by introvert transcendence.

The creative arts, which inspire communication with others, seek connection with others through the cultivation of the inner life. The world is necessary, inspite of the pain evolution against adversities. The higher consciousness is

imminent. We cannot create any genuine cultures in poetry and the arts which may integrate us with each other, unless we shift the emphasis from personal salvation to shared emotions of uplift.

In the new humanism, which was pronounced by Rabindranath Tagore as a religion of man, the life force became important, as the emergent will which inspires expression from one to the other.

Mahatma Gandhi's descent from vedantic monism, of the illusory world to the Daridranaryan world of real human beings, brought his personal will to bear on achieving political social and human freedom, against the dictat of the caste order and the contradictions of the Imperial order. The humanism of Jawaharlal Nehru does not accept divine sanctions as Tagore and Gandhi often did, in their parallel conceptions of their particular faiths. But Nehru thought the world as contingent, and necessary, with the enlightened will evolving though his philosophy of 'live in action'.

The necessity then arises to define clearly secularism as a more comprehensive order of human relations than provided by the theodicies.

Man has to emerge as the centre of the Universe. All apprehension of his being is to follow from his struggle towards the evolution of a human order through personal and social relations. The sanctions of the faiths, built on fear of punishment from the gods, has to be given up. The predicament of men and women in the face of impositions brought by authority, including the patriarchs, feudal lords and orthodoxies, has to be resolved by confrontation of realities. This confrontation itself, involves extroversion of the enlightened will, and may dissolve despair and inspire growth, not through salvation but through love for other. The new humanism of 'love each other' goes astride the wars of religion, the contraries of ritual, and the obscurantism of existential anxieties of freedom. In the struggle for so many freedoms, genuine integration is possible.

Cultural humanism also involves of acceptance not only of the creative arts but the creative science as well.

Indeed, the mere extension of the culture of arts and the culture of sciences, through emphasis on development, will lead to dead ends. There is a need for a new comprehensive philosophy of man.

COMMUNALISM IN INDIA: RESEARCHABLE ISSUES AND APPROACHES

Iqbal Narain

I
Preliminary Observation

In this presentation I would be identifying some of the researchable issues and, along with them, plausible approaches to their study. I have deliberately added 'plausible approaches' because researchable issues would otherwise hang in a vacuum, if I do not suggest for your consideration how to deal with some of them that I am going to suggest in the specific context of communalism in India.

Though it has been pointed out, and correctly too that communalism in India is, in a manner of speaking, unique, we can also look at it as a global phenomenon. The form, the manifestations, the operating style may change from culture to culture, but we cannot take the position that it exits in India alone.

The ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, the racial issue in South Africa, the tension between whites and the blacks in the U.S.A. are, among others, some instances in point. Of course, the acuteness with which it is tending to threaten the basic parameters of policy in India is a unique phenomenon. I think it is also a challenge to our developmental framework, our philosophy of secularism, our heritage of non-violence and, above all, our democratic polity. But, even at the global level, though its ramifications differ, the problem does exist. I am, however, confining myself only the Indian context.

I personally think that the present challenge of communalism in India is a challenge to democracy, development with social justice and secularism and, therefore, the need for research is very much there. The work that has been done at CRRID is laudable in terms of breaking new ground for enabling us to think about the problem; because, unless the elite and the masses are seized of the gravity of the situation and start thinking about the pros and cons of what is happening in the country and what are its likely consequences for the democratic process, for the development process, for our goals of socio-economic justice, we can always be misguided. Thus research by Indians on crucial issue of this type is of significance. I am really happy that CRRID took the lead in showing us the path in that direction; and the researchable issues

that I am talking about also take note of the broad framework that CRRID has evolved.

Let me begin with the observation that quite often all the primordial movements, such as communal, regional, and linguistic ones, are described as sub-nationalistic. I am not very happy about the label 'sub-nationalistic ones, are described as it is quite often possible to develop a set of loyalties, where one can be loyal both to one's community and, at the same time, also to the nation. So long as there is a right ordering of loyalties, a phrase which was taught to me as a student of the intermediate class by way of definition of ideal citizenship. So long as we do not allow communalism or regionalism or linguism to get the better of nationalism, that is, the larger loyalty structure, I think the two can co-exist. But, if the national loyalty is sub-ordinated to, or is sacrificed at the alter of the primordial loyalties, then naturally a crisis arises.

Of course, we are on a very thin end of the edge here; one does not know when and to what extent these primordial loyalties can co-exist with an over-arching national loyalty structure and when they would become ends in themselves. The crisis arises the moment the primordial loyalties become ends in themselves, and it is then that the people begin to treat them as a case of sub-nationalism. The point which I am trying to submit for your consideration is that co-existence is possible, though not always, and for this co-existence we require at the political level the institutional framework of cultural federalism, particularly in a country like India which is characterized by cultural pluralism in good measure. Of course, much depends on the style of the assertion of primordial loyalties. If it is combined with terrorism, then naturally, it is an entirely different situation; one cannot talk even of possibilities of co-existence in such a context.

Again, when we talk of researchable issues in context of communalism, I think the theoretical and the empirical issues get mixed up. I am, therefore, not very much inclined to use the typology of theoretical and empirical issues, because one feeds into the other and there is also an obvious overlap between the two. I would, therefore, be much better if we plunged straightaway into the arena of researchable issues, instead of bothering ourselves whether they are theoretical or whether basically they have an empirical import, though some of them would be theoretical and others empirical, and this would become obvious as we move along.

Finally, I would like to say that the list of researchable issues as being made out here is just selective. The purpose is to illustrate what we are bargaining for. No one can hope to exhaust the list in such a short span of time, particularly when the topic is being handled by a man of limited capacity like me.

II

A Relational View of Communalism in India

In spite of the definition of the concept that has been elaborated by CRRID in the studies of communalism, I think we have still to concentrate in good measure on the concept of communalism in India, its form, role and operative style. This is a very broad rubric which I am suggesting for you study. I would myself try to spell out later some sub-themes which can be picked up from this broad rubric.

The point which I would like to place before you for consideration is that, perhaps, while discussing the concept of communalism, particularly in India, we can adopt a relational approach. To my way of thinking, it is essentially a relational concept. Once you take this position, you have to discern the pattern of relationship; and this pattern of relationship is not always uniform; it is asymmetrical. It is also dynamic, in the sense that at one point of time you find relationships existing with one phenomenon and, at others, with another and, at still others, with a combination of them-say polity, economy and society, all put together.

For example, when we try to look at the concept of communalism in a relational fashion, I think we have to talk about its relationship with polity. Here, when I am using the term 'polity', I would particularly like to emphasise *polity with political parties.* In fact, quite often we find that in regard to the phenomena of primordial loyalties, whether it is regionalism, communalism or linguism, it is the contradictions within the political parties which aggravate the situation, whether it is the Akali party or the Congress (I) or other political parties, which may really want to capitalize on a situation which is already inflamed, as in Punjab to-day.

It is, therefore, necessary that we try to relate communalism to polity, its sincere and honest efforts to resolve the issue, as also its failure, particularly in the context of the time factor, because a problem which may be within the reach of a solution at one point of time, may become insoluble at another point of time. We have specifically to relate it to the dynamics of political parties, in their relationship with each other, the contradictions within each political party and the quest of leadership within a political party to cash on a communal, regional or linguistic situation. So, in the relational panorama, I think relationship with polity, inclusive of political parties, is important.

Similarly, relationship with economy is again important, because always at the back of any movement, whether communal, regional or linguistic, it is there, though sometimes more and sometimes less. For example, when you talk about communal riots in Ahmedabad, you cannot isolate them from the sons

of the soil movement, and this may be true of elsewhere also. The point which I am trying to emphasise is that the economy in the broad sense of the levels of development, both agricultural and industrial, and in the sense of deprivation, real or psychological, that the people may harbor at the economic plane, have got to be noted and the phenomenon of communalism has got to be related to it, if we really want to understand how it captures, particularly the minds of the young and how they ultimately become terrorists.

Another dimension of relationship is with society. Here I would again like to stress 'society' inclusive of culture and religion. One cannot even think of relating communalism with society unless it is also related to culture/cultures and religion/religions obtaining in a society. There is lot of talk to-day of a divorce between religion and politics. Before a policy decision on this issue is taken, it will be useful to study the linkages between communalism, culture and religion in India. This, in fact, is a pre-requisite of any realistic appraisal of the situation either way.

Another aspect which is equally important is that you have also to talk about links not merely internal but also foreign, which the phenomenon of communalism might he having at a particular point of time, because the character and intensity of the communal phenomenon cannot be grasped unless we understand, not merely the pattern of its internal linkages, but, more importantly, of its foreign linkage. So, that is another relational aspect which you have to keep in mind.

Then, I think you have also to relate communalism to the phenomenon of nationalism, and that also both in the pre-independence era and the post-independence period. This is particularly true of India, because communalism did not arise here all of a sudden in the post-independence period, but its history goes far back to the pre-independence period, you have thus to go back into history here. As I shall have occasion to point out, one approach, therefore, is not enough; it has to be a mixed bag of approached to understand the phenomenon of communalism.

I also think it is equally important that, in order to understand the nature of communalism, you also relate it to its spread; and when I am talking of spread, I mean whether it is confined to one single territory or to different territories within the same country, or even across territories, cutting across different countries. This study of spread would naturally help us in understanding the extent and gravity of the phenomenon of communalism, as also its genesis, nature and support base.

Finally as I have said elsewhere also, you have to relate it to the time factor, because I have found that time factor in politics, though it has not been studied properly, is a very crucial factor, particularly in terms of enunciation

and implementation of policies which could contain communalism or give it a further fillip.

So, in substance, the point I am trying to make is this: if you want to undertake s study of the concept of communalism, with special reference to India, perhaps the best thing for you to do would be to adopt the relational approach. I have tried to identify some of the major rubrics under which the relationships could be studied.

Sub-themes

From the major theme identified here, quite a few sub-themes emerge. I would now like to turn briefly to these sub-themes which in themselves are important as topics for research.

One is *the politics of communalism.* I think it is a very significant topic in the sense that you will be able to relate it to other parameters of the political philosophy enshrined in the Constitution; for example, democracy and secularism. There are people who argue that democracy has accentuated the process of communalism, because we do require the communal vote as a vote process of communalism, because we do require the communal vote as a vote bank. Kerala is cited, among others, as a significant example. There are others who say that in a democracy it is the interest of the minorities which cannot be ignored. We were taught as students that in democracy we say your interest is as important as mine; we do not say 'my interest is as important as yours.' The difference lies in the position that 'you' are more important than 'me'. I think this is one of the basic premises which we have tended to forget.

I think, when you discuss the politics of communalism, you will have to discuss it at the philosophical level in the context of our concept of justice-social, political and economic-as also in relation to the concept of unity or, in other words, in relation to all that is given in the preamble to the Constitution. There is also the empirical plane. Here the role of the elite is important, particularly of the elite both in the ruling party as well as in the opposition parties. Then, the contradictions in the inter-party relationships and the intra-party relations are of crucial importance. Such examples can be multiplied.

Again, we can talk about *the sociology of communalism*. Here the cultural ramifications and the role of religion are important dimensions of study. The foci of study here may be an encounter between tradition and modernity as also between fundamentalism and liberalism.

Still another sub-theme is the *economics of communalism.* Here, as I mentioned earlier also, there can be a real feeling of deprivation; there can also be a psychological sense of deprivation, which may not be data-based or statistically true. But I think both are important, because communalism is both

a psychic as also c concrete phenomenon. Thus, while talking about the economics of communalism, you gave to take note of both these dimensions. In fact, I would prefer the political economy approach to be adopted here, because there is always an interaction between politics and economics in the context of communalism as also in the context of development per se.

III

Communal Tensions, Riots And Violence

I come to the second researchable theme, which perhaps is equally important. This relates to communal tensions, riots and violence. I think these can be clubbed together because, in a manner of speaking, horizontally, they seem to operate as part and parcel of a living and interactive continuum. At some point of time, they may also look like stages in the development of the same phenomenon. For example, if communal tensions are managed in a proper fashion at the right point of time, perhaps they may not lead to communal riots-perhaps they may not result in communal violence. These are all intangible imponderables of the situation. One cannot be categorical about them, because, quite often, all of them are taking place simultaneously and at others they are engineered on a fashion that the real target is somehow to have a communal riot. The recent movie, (that was banned for some time and which is now being shown) *New Delhi Times,* brings it out very clearly how quite often politicians themselves are interested in adding fuel to fire in the form of communal fury and nothing short of riots would satisfy them.

The point which I am trying to submit for your consideration is that communal tensions, riots and violence do deserve a study, all the more because earlier we used to say that only the British were responsible for it; during the pre-independence period, whenever this phenomenon was there, we thought that our duty as academics was over by placing the blame squarely on the British. I do not say that they had no hand in it, but perhaps even at that point of time a more comprehensive study of the phenomenon was necessary. But what is interesting for us to remember is that in the post-independence period the frequency of communal riots has not lessened; according to some estimates, they are more today than they were earlier.

Then, naturally, the question arises: is there a qualitative difference between communal tension, communal riots and communal violence in the pre-independence period and in the post-independence period? For the study of the phenomenon, again, I would like to suggest the political economy approach, not strictly in the Marxian sense or in the liberal democratic sense, but in a very simplistic sense of looking at the phenomenon in terms of interaction between politics and economy. I am particularly referring to this approach, because you cannot isolate economics from politics, either locally,

regionally or even nationally, in the study of the phenomenon, particularly in terms of qualitative differences, even of degree that may be there between the pre-independence situation and the post-independence scenario.

More importantly, in all the cases of communal tensions, riots and violence, ultimately it is the poor who suffer, whether they belong to one community or to the other. It is very interesting that the elite (who might have taken the lead in fomenting the trouble) are somehow missing when actual violence and riots break out and, ultimately, the real sufferers are the poor millions in the country. All this perhaps can be brought out with the help of the political economy approach in combination with whatever other methods and techniques that you may like to apply.

Sub-themes

By way of sub-themes, *communal riots* themselves can be a sub-theme of study. There are some studies of communal riots which have been undertaken in the post-independence period. Perhaps India is a continent by itself and thus, for example, a comparative study of communal riots in Moradabad and Ahmedabad would be interesting in bringing out the causes and consequences, as also similarities and dissimilarities, of the phenomenon.

I think still another sub-theme, which you can take up for study, relates to the *backlash of communal violence.* That is a very important aspect, because, particularly the ruling elite, while handling communalism in any part of India, for example, have to worry about its backlash in other parts of the country. For instance, the ruling elite, while trying either to placate the Muslims or to fulfill their just demands always run the danger of a Hindu backlash in Hindu-dominated areas. The phenomenon of Hindu Front in Kerala politics can be cited as an example, as also the expansion of Shiva Sena in other parts of India. The fact of the matter is that the elite have, not merely to handle the communal situation at a given place at a given point of time, but also to take note of its broader ramifications in terms of the backlash in other parts of the country. That perhaps adds to complications in managing of such a sensitive problem as communalism in India.

IV

Union-State Relations in the Context of Communalism

The third researchable area on which, to my way of thinking, hardly any work has been done- I will not be surprised if no work has been done- is the problem of Union- State relationship in the context of communalism. There have been studies of Union-State relations in the context of agricultural

development, industrial development, education, but I have not come across a full length study in the context of communalism.[13]

Here I think you have to adopt a mixed approach of study. One would be the political economy approach, about which I have been talking. With this perhaps you shall have to combine the parameters or the approach of cultural federalism. From the political economy point of view, you have to examine the argument that, if more autonomy is given to the states, it will mean greater development according to their own vision and that, in turn, may contain communal, regional and other types of tensions. Another point of study is whether the type of federalism that we have with a unitary bias has to continue as long as there is communalism in the country. One may also ask whether it follows from this premise that if the Central Government is to be strong, the State Governments have necessarily to be weak, or one can talk of a situation where both the Central and the State Governments can be strong and you can have autonomy and flexibility in good measure for the states without necessarily weakening the sense of accountability on their part.

Finally, if you have cultural federalism, with opportunities to different cultures to develop themselves as they like, will it help in containing communal forces, as the Soviet model postulates? That is why I am submitting for your consideration that perhaps a mix of political economy and the cultural federalism approaches may help in a probe into this theme.

Sub-themes

By way of sub-themes *cultural federalism and communal/ethnic identity,* again, is a very interesting topic. In fact, quite often the word 'nationality' is used even in the Indian context, sometimes to follow the Soviet model and, at others, to make, in the footsteps of the west, a distinction between nation and nationalities. We have not yet come to a conclusion on the issue which of the two models would suit our requirements or whether we should strike a new path. This issue itself can serve as a focus of study for the sub-theme.

Another sub-theme in the same context is *state autonomy, development and integration.* The question to be posed here is 'Do you hope to achieve more of development and integration through state autonomy or less of it? Of course, in the present-day acute situation of communalism in the Punjab, when it is combined with violence and terrorism, the Centre may have to intervene. But this at best can be a short-term measure. One could still ask whether from the long-term point of view, you would have a better situation of development and integration if the states enjoyed autonomy?

[13] Similarly, the question of the parliamentary versus the presidential form of government could also be examined in the context of centrifugal forces in general and communalism in particular.

Of course, autonomy does not mean that there cannot be any national planning. Even today, there is a strong school which whatever good policies the Central Government may evolve, if it does not receive the co-operation of the State Government in terms of implementation, they would not succeed. If that is true, why not give the State Governments more autonomy with accountability, so that responsibility for the implementation of a policy may be squarely pinned down to them and the present situation of the States blaming the Centre and the Centre accusing the States may be over.

V

Communal Identity, Secularism and National Integration

Another topic- in fact, it has already been talked about in several ways-but I am still postulating it for your consideration, is *communal identity, secularism and national integration.* In a way, this is a very broad umbrella and, in a manner of speaking, might cover quite a bit of what I have been talking about so far. But I think it is the crux of the whole problem because, to my way of thinking, if communal identities and national integration can cohere with each other without the former weakening the latter, the perspective changes. If communal identities and national integration become antithetical to each other, then it is another type of a situation that we are handling.

We have secularism with a difference. It is not the European model of secularism, which postulates the separation of the Church and the State. In our case, it is quality of all religions and equal opportunities to all religions to grow as they like; and the State accords equal treatment. So the time has come when we might have a second look at the philosophy of our secularism as well. All these reasons, perhaps, make it necessary to study the phenomenon of communal identity, secularism and national integration.

Here you find the historical approach as the starting point, because you shall have to go to the history of India in order to understand the formation of various communal identities, as also the growth of the concept of the secularism of the type that we have had in our country, and, finally, the dream or the vision of national integration that the fathers of the national movement cultivated and which ultimately got enshrined in our Constitution.

Of course, the historical approach by itself is not enough; it has got to be tempered by survey research methods; perhaps also by a review of the concept of secularism and an emphasis on education as an intervening variable, because till now we have thought that perhaps law as an instrument of social engineering is good enough to bring about the national integration of the country and to help the people cultivate the values enshrined in the preamble to the Constitution. But it is becoming more and more clear that the

law is not enough, it has got to be supplemented by several other factors, and the most important neglected sector has been education. We have not used education as an instrument for secularism, or for national integration, or for balancing the primordial loyalties with the over-arching national identity. I think it is high time that the importance of education, in that respect is realized, not merely in the formal sense but also in its informal and non-formal dimensions. In a way, I am happy that education is receiving more attention than it used to. But whether we will ultimately have the type of education needed for national integration, or it is going to be the same system of education with some new embroidery, remains an open question which the future alone will answer.

Sub-themes

By way of sub-themes, there are a host of them. I am only picking up a few at random. One can take up *the concept of secularism in India re-visited.* My own feeling is that it is time that we have a second look at the theory and practice of secularism in India. We should not hesitate to take the position that it has failed, if it has failed; if we want to modify if in some direction, we should be in a position to say that perhaps modification is desirable and also indicate the direction of the change. Of course, we will have to undertake an analysis of the direction change. Of course, we will have to undertake an analysis of the factors responsible for the success and failure of the concept at various points of time, at various places, and that would help us confirm whether it needs revision or not.

Education for national integration, as I mentioned earlier in another context, has been a neglected subject of study. We have to evolve a blueprint of education for national integration. In this blueprint, right from the family, through the neighborhood, the school, the college and the universities, we have to identify what role the educational system can play in terms of value-based education, but we are not concerning ourselves, with the basic question, 'what values are to be imparted through education and how can education impart these values?' Earlier we were taught that the imparting of values began and ended with the family and at best the school. We came to the university to question values, because the university was a place where it was not the cult of conformism for which we came, but, at least, to develop a questioning attitude. But now it is at the university level that we expect values to be cultivated-that means that the family structure has collapsed, at least as a cradle of values; the neighborhood does not impart values not do the schools. Then the basic question remains: can you rally impart values at the university level when there has been a value vacuum at the earlier stages? Or, somehow all these stages are also to be activated simultaneously with the college and university education.

As I indicated in passing earlier, *communalism and democracy* is, again, a very fascinating topic of study, which perhaps needs careful scrutiny. For example, if we take the position that the Muslim League at one place is non-communal and at another it becomes communal, depending on the requirements that it fulfils in the eyes of (if not for) the ruling party, this phenomenon is something to be examined seriously in the study of this topic. Again, if we want to use the various communities as vote banks, naturally we arouse communal consciousness in order to mobilize them as such and use them for purposes of political mobilization. Of course, there obtains a situation in the country today in which the value of the vote banks has gone down- even division in the vote banks has taken place. But even now vote banks count. I, therefore, think that this facet also deserves study. Such examples can be multiplied.

Another topic which has not attracted the type of attention at the hands of the scholars that it should is *communalism and media.* In fact, it is part and parcel of the broad rubric of education. I think it is very useful that media are put to deliberate use for fulfilling the vision of national integration. If the media fail in bringing about a harmonious partnership between the primordial loyalties on one hand and national integration on the other, the chances of reconciliation become all the more remote. In a third world country like ours, perhaps the media are failing, because, at the moment, they are catering predominantly to only one demand- the demand for the creation of a consumer society and that also to a far greater extent than we can afford in terms of our income.

If that is the only role left for the media, perhaps it is an incorrect way of looking at them. They have to participate in the nation-building process, and there they can play a critical role, not merely through newspaper, because these are only one of the means to reach the literate masses in the country, but also through radio and television, particularly through television, which is becoming more and more popular, not merely in the urban but also in the rural areas.

Finally, I come to a still more sensitive dimension, but I think, as academicians, we should be in a position to handle it- I mean the *communal factor and foreign policy,* which is a very important aspect of study. Here we can perhaps adopt the linkage framework for purposes of analysis, and the broad linkages that we have to identify are between domestic and foreign policy compulsions against the backdrop of the international political system, which includes both the super-powers as also the intermediate powers like France, West Germany and so on. If we conduct this type of linkage analysis, then, probably, we shall be in a position to place the communal factor or communalism as a phenomenon against a correct perspective.

Here too one can talk of several sub-themes. I am putting across for your consideration two of the very sensitive ones. One is *the ethnic factor in Sri Lanka-India relations* which, again, should be understood in terms of the linkages between the domestic and foreign compulsions. The other is the *communal factor in Indo-Pak relations.* That, too, is very important and can be understood against the backdrop of the international political system.

The research themes suggested by me are too broad and I have, therefore, drawn your attention to some sub-themes as well. The list still remains tentative and illustrative. Similarly, with regard to approaches, I have deliberately used the epithet 'plausible', because one cannot say that this is the only approach, which can yield results. There can be better approaches which you can delineate, or there can be a better mix of different approaches which you may be able to evolve for the various research themes and sub-themes. Finally, the framework with which I started, and with which I would like to conclude, is to my way of thinking, a framework of development and nation-building with as little of imbalance in development as possible, though I concede the point that the backlog of backwardness in India is so much that imbalance at some point of time in one region or the other, in regard to one community or the other, would be there, and that would give it a sense of deprivation, whether real or false.

METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE STUDY OF COMMUNALISM

Iqbal Narain

I have already mentioned in the previous presentation certain study areas in the context of communalism in India. I also indicated simultaneously my preference for plausible approaches. Taking the discussion further I am raising the question of the possibility or otherwise of an inter-disciplinary r multi-disciplinary approach to the study of communalism, particularly in India. The basic argument which I am trying to develop is simply this: that no single discipline in terms of a framework of enquiry, methods and even techniques can do justice to the phenomenon of communalism in India. We have, therefore, to be more than uni-disciplinary.

I

Preliminary Observations

First, there are three terms which are in vogue when we describe approaches other than the uni-disciplinary ones. One is 'trans-disciplinary' approach; another is 'inter-disciplinary' approach; and the third is 'multi-disciplinary' approach. The question naturally arises: if the uni-disciplinary approach is not enough, which of these three are we to prefer, and why?

I would like to begin with as simple a definition as possible of the three approaches. Let me confess at the outset that the task is not easy because there is a lot of literature available on the subject and, worse still, there is no unanimity among writers on the definitions that they have offered.

For our purposes of understanding, perhaps we can look at trans-disciplinary as an approach where you cut across faculties. The usual university system has science faculty, engineering faculty, medical faculty, social sciences faculty, humanities faculty and so on. If there is an approach which cuts across these faculties, or in the practice of which members of more than one faculty are involved, then it can perhaps be described as trans-disciplinary. Here, again, there is a further point of controversy- whether the trans-disciplinary approach is different from the faculty approaches, or is it a mix of the various approaches practiced in various faculties. There is no uniformity on this but, by and large, it is believed that a trans-disciplinary approach need not necessarily have components from all faculties, it may have some components from some faculties which are more akin and common than the other components;

components from some faculties may be missing altogether,; but there is an efforts to evolve a focus independent of the respective faculty foci. To what extent a practitioner succeeds in doing so is a different story altogether.

Inter-disciplinary means cutting across disciplines, may be within the same faculty, - that is to say, of a subject of study requires approaches and methods of more than one discipline, which may belong to one and the same faculty, this is known as inter-disciplinary. For example, if you require econometric tools for the study of development, as also anthropological insights in terms of culture, as also the use of survey research methods, all these may belong to the faculty of social sciences, but here you find more than one discipline is required in terms of pooling of approaches and methods and, therefore, it is known as inter-disciplinary. In the inter-disciplinary approach, again, the question is raised whether one and the same person can be inter-disciplinary, or whether we require a group to consist of scholars belonging to different disciplines but working together. When I am trying to become a historian, economist and sociologist at one and the same time, I am inter-disciplinary in orientation. Alternatively, inter-disciplinary orientation envisages a group one of whose members is an economist, another is a psychologist and a third a sociologist and so on, who are pooling their insights together. Both models have been advocated, though the second model is a group of social scientists professing various disciplines has been found to be more practicable than the other, where one and the same person is to become a philosopher, a sociologist, an economist and the like-all in one.

In the multi-disciplinary approach, you accept that more than one discipline and their methodological insights are necessary, but you do not necessarily insist on is a common focus. That is the only difference between multi-disciplinary on the one hand and inter-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary on the other. I would, therefore, prefer the use of the word ‘multi-disciplinary’ in the context of the study of communalism, though some of you might improve upon that phrase and try to think in terms of the inter-disciplinary or the trans-disciplinary approach. The only point I want to convey and emphasize is, as I stated earlier also, that no approach, method or technique is good enough as a single tool for the study of communalism in India, and that point takes me to a multi-disciplinary approach which may or may not have a common focus as emphasized by the inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches. So, for all practical purposes, what I am talking about is a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of communalism in India.

Secondly, in the sense in which I am using the term ‘methodology’, it has three distinct components, and I am trying to take note of all three of them. The first relates to frameworks of enquiry, inclusive of analytical theories, concepts and the like. The second deals with methods of study. The third relates to

techniques of study, particularly in terms of data processing, report writing, etc. These three constitute an integrated whole, and we cannot ignore either or any one of them. But here also I am largely concentrating on methods of study, because I am not advocating any particular approach of study and as such I cannot talk about a framework of enquiry and concepts. As far as techniques are concerned, they are more or less common: the use of computer, statistical techniques, machines, content analysis techniques and so on.

These do not always differ from problem to problem, but methods of study do differ and, therefore, I am largely concentrating on methods of study and not so much on the first component, i.e., the framework of enquiry or the third components, i.e., the framework of enquiry or the third component, i.e., techniques.

Thirdly, though I am not talking of any specific framework of enquiry and, therefore, of any concept or set of concepts, my preference for understanding the phenomenon of communalism in India is in terms of a developmental and nation-building framework. This, to my way of thinking, constitute the crying need of every Third world country, and, therefore, the basic question to which I would like each one of us to attempt an answer, through the investigation of communalism, is whether communalism is conducive to development or not, whether communalism is conducive to development or not, whether communalism is conducive to nation-building or not, and if not, what are the various ways through which we can contain it; if it cannot be contained altogether, then in what form and how should we direct it into positive channel?

So this is the basic research question that one has to keep in mind and if one follow this framework of enquiry, then naturally one will have to define what one means by 'development' and delimit the scope of the term, then operationalize development in the context of the study of the region where one is studying communalism and so on. For example, if one is studying it in the context of Punjab, one may like to define it in terms of culture and then oprationalize it in terms of the components of Punjabi culture. Then one may also take note of the urban-rural dichotomy and try to spell it out in the context of Punjab. One may also take note of agricultural development and also relate it to people's desire to transform agricultural development in to agro-industrial development and spell it out in terms of futuristic analyses and things of that sort.

Similarly, one will have to talk about the concept of nation-building – how it is different from the concept of state building or a nation; how it is different form national integration and then further, relate the study of communalism

to the concept of nation-building. Thereafter one may evolve a research design for study with the help of suitable concepts, research questions, hypotheses and so on. The quest may be, if the study is in the context of Punjab, to find out how autonomous is the politics of communalism in the state.

Then one may decide, as part of the research design, what methods of study, what techniques of data processing etc., one would like to try to apply. For example, if one is studying media and communalism in Punjab within the development - nation-building – framework, then perhaps one would like to adopt the survey research method and interview the editors about their editorial s and other lead articles, interview the readers of those papers, both among the elite and the masses, and try to find out the impact of what they read ion the newspapers on their psyche; to attempt to adopt the context analysis technique in order to find out how much of communalism is there in an overt or covert form and so on and so forth. So, the point I am making is that choice of methods or choice of techniques would depend on the specific problem one decides to pick up within the broad framework of communalism in India.

Having said this, the final preliminary observation that I would like to make is that researches in regard to communalism in India will have to be not merely analytical but also interventionist, that is to say, you would not merely try to understand the phenomenon of communalism in terms of the whys and hows and the resolution of communal tensions, but you would also think in terms of how we should participate in the process of dealing with communalism in order that, if you like it, communalism is boosted up; if you don't like it, it is contained.

II

Methodological Inputs

I would, therefore, like to discuss the methods which I call a profile of multi-disciplinary inputs. Here, as I said earlier, what I am trying to identify are the methodological inputs from various disciplines which can be usefully employed in the study of communalism in India. It is not necessary that each of these methodological inputs should necessarily be employed in every study. Some of them may be more useful in one type of study; some of them may be less useful in another type of study, but a broad familiarity with these methodological inputs would help in making a correct choice of the methods, when you decide upon the facets of communalism that you would like to study.

First, is what I call the *philosophical input;* if you want so to describe it differently, you can also call it the theoretical input. I have deliberately preferred the word 'philosophical' because it relates to philosophical formulations of any enquiry into the phenomena of communalism. Here what we have to make up our mind about is the choice of the subject of study, and in the light of that choice, determine what framework of enquiry we would like to pick up and the choice, determine what framework that we would like to use, and list further what methods we would like to employ and what techniques would yield the desired result. In actual practice, the choice is, by and large, of concepts and their operationalization. All these are basically philosophical questions and perhaps they will have to be asked in regard to any and every study of communalism that you may decide to undertake. So, in a manner of speaking, the philosophical input is the basic or the core input.

Then I come to the second – the *historical and anthropological inputs.* I am using the terms 'historical' and 'anthropological' together knowing fully well that there is a qualitative difference between the two. In historical, a chronological approach is adopted, while in anthropological you are more interested in the landmarks of development of a particular individual or institution. But, for our purposes, this clubbing together would help because, basically, we are going back to history either in a historical sense or in an anthropological sense, and here at least three methods can be usefully employed, though their choice would differ from subject to subject.

(i) One is the use of the *historical method.* You want to understand the genesis of a particular facet of the communal problem that you are studying. For example, you are studying Hindu-Muslim tensions in India. You want to know when, for the first time, they appeared on the surface, and why; what had been their earlier manifestations; how the problem was dealt with in the pre-independence period; what had been the situation in post-independent India, and so on. For all this, you would be going back to history and using the historical method. But the danger in the use of the historical method is that we should not begin to feel that history alone can explain the reality in terms of causes, that is to say, we should not use the historical method in terms of historicism, i.e., everything is historically determined, nor should we become deterministic or mono-causal, that is to say, we should not think that history is the only root-cause of everything that we are studying.

With these qualifications, if you go to history, history provides useful insights. In fact, Jawaharlal Nehru, in one of his letters to Mrs Indira Gandhi, talked about the historical method and made a very significant observation which was somewhat like this: 'History is a jealous mistress; and it wants to possess its devotee completely.' I would like to emphasize that this is precisely what we want to avoid – that we should not be possessed by history completely and

exclusively. We should make use of it and be clear in our minds, 'Thus far and no further; this is the limit that we can have in terms of historical insights about any phenomenon; we cannot go any further.' But the historical method is of great utility and it is interesting to note that, earlier, the historical method was being used only by historians; but now it is used by almost all social scientists with due caution on the lines which I have already mentioned above. In fact, though the behaviouralists stood for a divorce of history and politics, the two are, again, getting closer to each other, in the context of the use of the historical method in the period of the post-behavioural revolution.

(ii) The second is the *use of oral history*. This is largely an anthropological tool, but, again, it is now being used by other disciplines also. The difference between the historical method and the use of oral history is that the historical method, by and large, insists on evidence and that also documentary evidence. In oral history you may try, of course, to cross-check; you may succeed; you may not. Quite a few of the points gleaned through oral history turn out to be legends, folk-lores and things of that sort, but oral history has still been used to construct the scientific history of an event or an institution or a person and so on.

For example, if you talk to your grandparents, they will tell you stories of Hindu-Muslim amity; or, in Punjab, of Hindu-Sikh amity. You may have no way to verifying that, but the very fact that they are conveying a value which you want to cultivate on a continuous basis is helpful.

Often, quite a large number of such stories, if put together and if verified, may help you in structuring history for a period about which nothing is available. So, large and larger use of oral history is being made to supplement the historical method, and even if it is not reliable, it is thought to be useful, may be as a legend, or a folk-lore, or as stories which may ultimately turn out to be false or true, but at any rate are important in the context of the subject under study.

(iii) Another method which has been used is the *life-history method.* Here one tries to construct the life-history of a leader, or of an institution, in order to understand the various phases of the rise and fall through which it has passed. For example, when I was a member of the National Commission on the Status of Teachers in Colleges and Universities, I suggested to the Convener of the Commission that, 'Let us have a life-history of say, the Benaras Hindu University, which is one of the oldest universities and also a Central University, which has seen its best and its worst days, and may be one of the newer universities like Punjab University or the Rajasthan University. That would provide insights into the factors which are conducive to building a university, as also factors which lead to the ruin of a university.' So, the point I am trying

to make is that the life-history method for the study of institutions as success and failure stories and the factors gleaned from them for the success and failure of an institution are important.

There are quite a few life-histories which would be important, in the context of the study of communalism in Punjab. For example, you take an Arya Samaj educational institution in Punjab. Write out its history and you may develop insights into the phenomenon of communalism which otherwise you might not. You may also study an event in terms of a complete case study. It is another form of life-story if you like, though I have mentioned it elsewhere as a case study method. For example, an effort was made to delete the epithet 'Muslim' from the Aligarh Muslim University or delete the 'Hindu' from the Banaras Hindu University and the type of agitation which it led to in Aligarh and Banaras – I think a case study of that incident would provide an interesting insight into the communal phenomenon. As I have mentioned earlier, this is more an example of the case study method rather than of life-story. But, again, you know, what life-history illustrates is important.

For example, if you attempt a life-history of Jinnah and try to show how the nationalist Jinnah became a communal Jinnah, what factors were responsible for it, I think it will be interesting. The same is true of Gandhi. It is being said that, according to some writers, it was the quest of an all-India leadership on the part of Gandhi which ultimately drifted Jinnah away from him. I think that it is a proposition which can be tested through a study of the life-story of both Jinnah and Gandhi and seeing the type of interactions which have gone on between these two leaders.

So, these are, generally speaking, the three historical and anthropological methodological inputs which we can use with advantage.

Then, we come to *sociological inputs.* As far as the sociological inputs are concerned, I would like to mention, again, three methods. First, one can talk about the *survey research method.* For example, a communal riot has taken place, and immediately after the communal riot is over, one goes and interviews people around a common set of questions; one gets certain insights into the communal frenzy. Of course, a questionnaire will not be a proper tool in this type of situation because the respondents will not have enough patience with a long questionnaire; a few questions around which interview may be built would be better in this type of a situation.

The survey research method has a disadvantage and this disadvantage is that usually the respondents want to give, not what is real, but what is ideal in the form of answers. Suppose one were to ask them a question, 'Are you communal?, the response would be 'No' in 100 cases; but if you ask the question, 'Is your neighbour communal?', you will find that 50 per cent people

might tell you, 'Yes; my neighbor is communal'. The point I am trying to suggest is that, as far as perceptions about self are concerned, a person tries to project as good an image as possible; in terms of perceptions these may be true of himself. Even with regard to his neighbours, his own bias may be reflected. If the nieghbour is his friend, one will have one type of answers; if the neighbor is his enemy or has had bad relations with the respondent, one may have a different set of answers. So, this is the limitation. If we recognize this limitation and supplement the survey research method with others, and also cross-check our findings, perhaps it can still be used in the study of several facets of the communal problem.

Secondly, there is the *observation method* which can assume two forms: non-participant observation and participant observation. Here, suppose a riot is taking place, and you have the courage to plunge into a riot, you can see with your own eyes who are the rioters, who are fomenting the riots; you can perhaps also observe how they flee when a lathi charge by the police is to take place; you can perhaps also identify how the poor people of either community suffer, who were just onlookers on the spot. All this can be the result of your observation. Usually, the survey research method is combined with the observation method because what you observe with your own eyes can then serve as a corrective for the bias of your questionnaire or the interview schedule.

The third is the *case study method,* where one takes up a particular case for study from the beginning to the end in all details. One does not generalize but draws conclusions from that specific case. Take, for example, the Shah Bano case which is still fresh in memory. Supposing one were studying the Shah Bano case in the context of communalism or the evolution of a common civil code in India one can attempt a case study right from the day of marriage to the day of her going to the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court judgment, the divide among the orthodox and the unorthodox, the way Parliament intervened and now the promise of a uniform voluntary civil code and things of that sort. That is the case study method which would provide useful insights into a specific case which, of course, cannot admit of generalizations. You may not be in a position to compare, but if you have many cases and case studies, then comparison is possible; theory-building is also possible; but, by and large, a case stands by itself and, therefore, we do not attempt generalizations on that basis.

Then, we come to *economic inputs.* The economic factor is at the back of all communal tensions, riots and violence. The extent may differ; the degree may vary. Therefore, the need to know the economic inputs, either in term of available secondary data form Reserve Bank Bulletins, from the National Sample Survey Bulletins, or, if the data are not available, one van generate

data through field work. That would provide explanations for the understanding of the phenomenon. Again, from the economist's kit, there are several measurement techniques which are also connected with statistics, such as, factor analysis, from which one can find out which factors, even in terms of economic inputs, have been more important, among others, and so on. Thus, this category of inputs can be described as *economic-cum-statistical inputs,* because there is a lot of overlap between these two, and I will not take them separately.

Then there are *psychological inputs.* As far as communalism is concerned, deprivation is at the root of communalism, and this deprivation can be real or just a feeling. Psychology provides methods of measurement in terms of scales to know the extent and depth of deprivation. The submission is that measurement tools and scales as developed by psychologists are useful, particularly in the context of deprivation, real or fancied, which is at the core of communalism almost everywhere in India.

Then, there are the *political science inputs,* which we can broadly divide into two parts. One is the *comparative method* where there are two types of comparisons: intra-country comparisons and cross-cultural comparisons. For example, a comparative study of communal riots in Ahmedabad, in Moradabad and in Kanpur can throw up significant conclusions. If you want to compare them both in the pre-independence and in the post-independence periods, you can use the historical method together with it, and pick up one riot in Kanpur in the pre-independence period and another in the post-independence period. That would also provide you the opportunity to test what Professor Moonis Raza spoke of, the hand of the colonial powers in fomenting communal troubles, particularly among the Hindus and the Muslims.

You can also have cross-cultural comparisons. For example, if you are studying values of the communalists in India and Sri Lanka, then you can have a sample of the persons whom you consider communalist either in terms of leaders or in terms of followers and you may use the survey research method and compare their values, with due caution so that bias in their self-projection of image is not there. The comparative method is being used, I think, more cross-culturally than for intra-country comparisons, but I think in a country of the size of India it can be profitably used within the country also, as you can employ it in studies across countries.

Secondly, there are system roles, that is to say, how the system *per se* and the various parts of the system play a role in the context of a particular event. Let us, again, take the example of communal riots. In this context, one may like to study what has been the role of the political system, and then go on to its

components and ask: what had been the role of the various elite groups or of political parties, or of policies pursued by the government, and also of the time factor, because if a right policy is pursued by the government at the right time, it solves the problem, but if it is a case of delayed action, then the same policy may not give the desired dividends.

The basic thrust of my argument thus far has been that for the study of the communal problem in India, whether of the Sikhs, or the Muslims, or the Hindus, or of any others, no single discipline and methodological apparatus can be enough.

III

The Interventionist Kit

Then I come to the next point which I may call the interventionist kit. We have not merely to analyze the communal problem in order to understand it, but we would also like to intervene according to our perception of the communal problem. If you perceive terrorism and violence as properly envisaged activities, you want to participate in terms of a terrorist and a violent worker; if you do not think it to be correct, then you want to help the forces which are against terrorism and violence. Now what do you do? What are the tools and methods that you rely upon in order to bring about effective intervention according to your own vision, according to your own perception of the reality? I would like to identify only four points, but I know that there are several others which can be added on to the list from different experiences.

For example, *there is the role of education.* In fact, in the solution of every problem having a communal overtone, education can play some part, all the more because communalism and its various facets have a value- orientation. This value-orientation can either be influenced positively or negatively through education. It has been a pity, to my way of thinking, that till our present Prime Minister came into power, education was not being given its due. Now, of course, he is talking about education as an investment in development and nation-building, and form that angle, an effort is being made to re-fashion the national educational policy, though we have still to watch how it is implemented as much would depend upon the way it is implemented. But education can be an effective way of intervening in the process of communalization as well as de-communalization, depending upon the value-judgment regarding communalism in India.

For example, it had been suggested, as I mentioned earlier, that the word ‘Muslim’ should be dropped from Aligarh Muslim University and the word ‘Hindu’ from ‘Banaras Hindu University’. It led to an agitation in both the cities and Chagla’s efforts in this regard did not succeed. It would perhaps be much

more difficult to have a Hindu Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University or a Muslim Vice-Chancellor for Benaras Hindu University, but these are some of the steps through education – though of a symbolic nature – that can still be tried with some concrete results.

Similarly, take the type of text-books that are being used. I do not believe in engineering history for the sake of national integration, but certainly we should not allow distortions to be conveyed to the students, particularly when they have an impressionable mind and when they cannot discriminate falsehood from truth. In one text-book, as Prof Moonis Raza mentioned, he found three chapters: one dealing with the advent of the Aryans; another with the invasion of Muslims and the third with the impact of the British. These were the titles and perhaps the implication was that we had only one set of invaders, and they were Muslims and absolving the Aryans as also the British of this charge. Such small things do matter. For example, I was in China. They were trying to teach English in a compulsory fashion to the students. They would open the text-book with a quotation from Marx or Engles and tell the students that they had advocated the teaching of English and, therefore, they were beginning to expose the students to a language other than Chinese, which is English as desired by Marx and Engles also. This digression apart, the point I am trying to make is that this type of doctrinaire communal approach to text-books and syllabi need to be discouraged.

Similarly, we often find that teachers have a communal orientation. I can never forget a study which I was conducting on the management of primary schools under panchayati raj in Rajasthan where, in one of the schools, I found that in one corner of the school a student – perhaps the cleanest of the entire batch of students in the class and also the most intelligent among them – was sitting, but he was neglected not merely by the teacher but also by his class-mates. When all of them would fail to answer a question, and if this boy raised his hand, the signal would be picked up by the teacher perhaps more because we were outsiders whom he wanted to please than because he wanted to give any credit to that boy, and invariably this boy's answers were found to be correct. After the class was over, we were naturally drawn to that boy, and it turned out that he was a Scheduled Caste boy, and he had s sense of deprivation, a sense of neglect. He said, 'Not merely my class-mates, but also the teacher discriminates against me.' He wanted all of us to go to his house, which, too, we found to be satisfactory from the point of view of cleanliness, hygiene and things of that sort, looking at it from the point of view of that village.

The point I am trying to make is that we have a communal virus not merely in the text-books; we have it also in teachers, and from the teachers it passes on to the students. The same may be true of parents. In some homes, people may

be telling stories of the valour of Shivaji against the Muslims and this sort of thing becomes a part and parcel of social living. So, what I am trying to submit for your consideration is that education, whether formal, informal or non-formal, has a very critical role to play in the socialization of children in the right set of values. If we really want to fight communalism, education can be an important interventionist technique.

Similarly, there is *the role of media.* From whatever I know as an outsider, I can submit for your consideration that the media are a very powerful instrument, of change, particularly in a rural society of the type that we have in India, where illiteracy is rampant, and poverty is so glaringly obvious. Therefore, if the media, – I am using n a broad sense to include newspaper, radio, television and the like, all of them put together – were to launch a crusade against communalism and whoever is responsible for it, I think it would have a great impact. For example, how much of a row the stories fielded by Rajni on television created? She was trying to put her finger on some of the very sensitive spots which are part and parcel of our life; but we do not muster up enough courage to revolt against those happenings and so they are continuing.

You can very well imagine the effect, if evils like dowry, casteism, corruption and every form of communal tension or violence or riots are taken up by the media. The media can play a very powerful interventionist role, and I think there is a challenge here before us to write for the media. It is much easier to debunk the media, but how many of us honestly want to use the media to convey the right type of values to the people remains an open question. How many of us have taken up the pen on their behalf?

Then, there is *the role of voluntary agencies and movements.* These, again, can play a very significant interventionist role. I am, deliberately using the word 'voluntary' because there is a tendency in India – and I think it is a legacy of our colonial past – that we look to government for everything and we do not want to make any voluntary effort or movement and, therefore, perhaps the consumers; movement in India is so weak. The Pay, Commission's Report has not been implemented, but the price rise has taken place already. Whether it will be implemented and, if so, in what form, is anybody's guess. The point I am trying to make is that voluntary agencies and the movements that they take up have a significant role to play in regard to the curbing of anti-developmental, anti-nation-building tendencies in the country and the stronger these movements are, the stronger these voluntary agencies are, perhaps the better will be the future of democracy in our country.

It might surprise you that in western countries one of the bulwarks of democracy are the various movements that people have launched, or the

voluntary agencies have initiated in favor of what the huge mass of people consider to be desirable or in regard to which they would like to educate the vast mass of the people.

Finally, there is the *role of developmental politics and economics.* I am deliberately putting the two together, as it is not possible to talk of developmental politics without touching upon developmental economics; in fact, development subsumes both politics and economics. The point I am trying to make – I have made it elsewhere also and I would like to repeat it here – is that perhaps in the context of the Third World, the very definition of 'political science' needs to revised. We have to treat it as a science and an art of development. If we treat politics as a science and an art of development and nation-building, then naturally we would try to identify those components in the economics of the country which the political elite should promote, so that the cause of development can be furthered, so that nation-building takes place.

These are all illustrative examples, through which intervention can take place in the context of communalism and its resolution in India. These, of course, as stated earlier also, can be multiplied.

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INDEX

A

AICC
See All India Congress Committee
AISSI
See All India Sikh Students Federation
Abdul Nabi Mosque, 130
Adam Sena, 460
Administrative Expenditure, 172
Advani, L.K., 330
Aggression, 236
Agricultural Development, 192, 208, 525, 532
_____ Growth, 192, 194, 211
_____ Labourers, 198, 214-5
Agriculture, 127
Agro-Industrial Development, 532
Agwani, M.S., 293, 351
Ahmad, F.A., 130
Ahmadiyah Movement, 476
Ahmedabad, 406
_____ Riots, 1969, 232, 237, 243, 394, 404 491
Akal Takht, 287
Akali Dal, 53, 112-3, 145, 189, 279, 281-91
_____ Movement, 162, 305, 418
_____ Party, 44, 278-9, 304, 521
_____ Politics, 287
Aligarh Muslim University, 74, 125, 130, 202, 270, 272, 418, 535, 538
Aligarh's First Generation, 27
All India Congress Committee, 15, 18, 282
_____ Kisan Sabha, 1936, 453
_____ Muslim League, 67, 128, 130
_____ Sikh Students Federation, 391
Alla-ud-Din Khilji, 513
Amir Khusro, 397-8
Anand, M.R., 512
Anandpur Sahib Resolution, 112, 286
Anglo-Catholic, 416
Anjuman-e-Islam, 244
Ansari Muslims, 447n, 448n
Antagonism, 337, 452
Antagonistic Religious Group, 444
Anthromorphism, 507n
Anthropological Input, 533
Anti-Consolidation Movement, 454
_____ - Democratic, 365
_____ - Eviction Movement, 454
_____ - Harijan Riots, 240
_____ - Imperialism, 263-4, 270
_____ - Imperialist Movement, 136
_____ - Struggle, 417-7
_____ - Social Elements, 455
Arab Culture, 407
Arjun Dev, 311
Article 26 (B) of the Constitution, 266
Arya Samaj, 183, 280, 332, 337, 347, 350, 362, 416, 475, 489, 535
_____ Movement, 417
Aryan Culture, 514
Assimilationist, 113
Astrology, 124
Astronomy, 124
Authority Symbols, 483
Azad, A.K., 130
Azamgarh District, 430-6
_____ Town, 435, 452

B

BJP
See Bhartiya Janata Party, 400
Baba Kharak Singh, 283
Babri Masjid, 392, 456
_____ _____ - Ram Janma Bhoomi, 130
Bakht Khan, 306
Baluchistan, 170
Banerjee, Subrata, 382

Bankim Chandra, 163-4
Barnala, S.S., 8
Bata Resolution, 286
Begar Nazrana Movement, 454
Benaras Hindu University, 202, 418, 538
Bengal Renaissance, 125
_____ Rent Bill, 159
_____ Tenancy Amendment Bill, 18
Bhagat Singh, 149
Bhai Khan Singh, 474, 476
_____ Sahib Kapur Singh, 284
_____ Veer Singh, 152
Bhalla, G.S., 192, 208
Bharadwaj, Krishna, 510n
Bhartiya Janata Party, 285
Bhindranwale, 268, 288, 291, 390
Bhiwandi-Bombay Riots, 247
_____ Riots, 60-1, 152, 238
Bipan Chandra, 3, 140, 157, 361n
Bombay Municipal Corporation, 247
Border Security Force, 500
Bose, N.K., 87
Bourgeoisie, 507
Bourgeois Community, 384
Brahmand, 307
Brahminism, 347, 354
Brahmo-Samaj, 515
_____ _____ Reform Society, 514
Brass, Paul, 105-7, 114
British Colonialism, 54-5, 123, 141, 183
_____ Imperialist Rule, 227
_____ Rule, 22
Buch, M.N., 216
Buddhism, 326
Budh Singh, 471-2
Bureaucracy, 175-6

C

CPI
See Communist Party of India
CPI (M)
See Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CRRID, 389, 519-20
Capitalist Economy, 9, 405
Capitalism, 87, 266-7
Caste Conflicts, 235, 237
_____ Consciousness, 36
_____ Forces, 313-4
_____ Problem, 234
_____ System, 313
Casteism, 486
Catholic Protestant Conflict, 335
Catholicism, 349
Central Asian Soviet Republics, 265
_____ Forces, 493
_____ Sikh League, 281, 283
Centre-State Relations, 422
Chandigarh, 218, 222, 289, 415-6
Chaturvedi, T.N., 482
Chaudhury, J.P., 453n
Chavan, Y.B., 332
Chief Khalsa Dewan, 280-1, 283
Cinema, 408-16
Civil Community, 378
Civilization, 312, 420
Class Consciousness, 36, 269, 275-6, 300
Colonial Economy, 473
_____ India, 124
_____ Postures, 123
Colonialism, 10, 55-6, 160, 167-8, 178
Common Focus, 531
Communal Allegations, 461-2, 467
_____ Antagonism, 108, 338, 446
_____ Apprehensions, 462
_____ Approach, 9, 253
_____ Attitudes, 313, 357, 365, 388n, 490
_____ Bias, 175
_____ Carnage, 18
_____ Cleavages, 427
_____ Consciousness, 21-2, 29-30, 36, 87, 94-5, 113, 164, 265, 279, 528
_____ Configuration, 429
_____ Conflagration, 510

_____ Conflicts, 92, 95, 110-11, 173, 191, 198, 232, 236-7, 364, 366, 372-3, 394, 438
_____ Considerations, 41, 182
_____ Discriminations, 128, 365
_____ Distortion, 319, 328
_____ Disturbances, 387
_____ Electoral Politics, 181
_____ Electorate, 111, 183
_____ Employment, 444
_____ Ethos, 418
_____ Factors, 528
_____ Feelings, 467-8
_____ Fires, 454
_____ Forces, 36, 204, 207, 240, 259, 269, 277, 290, 525
_____ Frenzy, 427, 440, 536
_____ Groups, 220, 204, 206, 250, 437-8
_____ Growth, 457
_____ Harmony, 21, 77, 333, 367, 410
_____ Historiography, 102
_____ Identity, 45, 53, 195, 526
_____ Ideologies, 337
_____ Ideology, 3-4, 8, 64-7, 73, 75-9, 84, 86-7, 95, 97, 109, 143-6, 148, 151-2, 158, 163, 165, 180, 182, 185, 188, 190, 204-5, 300-3, 337, 347-9, 380-1, 419, 429-30, 433, 435, 438-40, 442-4, 448, 452, 459, 463, 467-9
_____ Incidents, 427-8
_____ Intellectuals, 141
_____ Interpretations, 169, 199
_____ Leaders, 144-8
_____ Leadership, 490
_____ Manifestation, 95
_____ Mobilization, 448
_____ Monoliths, 192, 195
_____ Nationalism, 18, 21
_____ Organizations, 253, 438, 457
_____ Orientation, 211, 539
_____ Overtone, 391, 452
_____ Parties, 42, 110, 112, 128, 142, 389
_____ Perception, 468
_____ Phenomenon, 123, 231
_____ Polarization, 63, 203, 205
_____ Politicians, 486
_____ Politics, 7, 19, 34-6, 41, 129, 151, 181, 187, 189-91, 203, 206, 287, 346, 366, 429, 449, 461, 469
_____ Prism, 448
_____ Problem, 83, 89, 95, 109, 123, 131, 137-9, 143-4, 177n, 198, 208-9, 215, 225, 232, 242, 403, 411, 536, 538
_____ Propaganda, 60-1, 63-4, 73-4, 190, 193, 366, 389, 451,461
_____ Publication, 385
_____ Relations, 103
_____ Reservations, 128
_____ Rioting, 19, 54, 56, 150, 177, 180, 391, 429-30, 435, 437-8, 440, 443, 453
_____ Riots, 95, 109-11, 129-30, 143, 150, 152, 168, 180, 191, 208, 225, 242, 247-9, 267-8, 271, 346, 387-9, 394, 417-9, 427-30, 435, 437-9, 452, 522-31, 535, 537
_____ _____, Ahmedabad, 232, 237, 243, 246, 521, 524, 537
_____ _____, Jabalpur, 1962, 232
_____ _____, Kanpur, 537
_____ _____, Mau Nath Bhanjan, 433, 436, 451
_____ _____, Meerut, 455-7, 459, 461, 463, 465, 467, 469
_____ _____, Moradabad, 221, 523-4, 537
_____ Separatism, 411
_____ Situation, 108, 198, 376, 379-80, 384, 398
_____ Slaughter, 19
_____ Slogans, 204
_____ Stereotypes, 191, 193-4, 196, 205, 335, 440, 442, 449, 454
_____ Tension, 15, 37, 86-87, 108, 150, 178, 195, 199, 204, 208, 216,

221, 225-7, 371, 389, 443, 456, 463, 465, 520, 532, 540
_____ Thinking, 435
_____ Trouble, 19, 220
_____ Understanding, 58
_____ Unrest, 174
_____ View Point, 9
_____ Violence, 56, 86, 106, 109-10, 113, 115, 181, 220, 232, 235, 238, 371, 376, 379, 386-7, 417, 427-9, 439, 450, 460-1, 482-3, 485, 487, 489, 491, 493, 495, 516, 522-4
_____ _____, Ahmedabad, 237
_____ _____, Bapunagar, 241-2
_____ Virus, 367, 539
Communalism, 3-4, 6-8, 11-5, 21-2, 25-9, 31, 35-47, 54-97, 107-10, 123, 125-6, 129-31, 140-53, 157-8, 160-8, 170-1, 173, 177-91, 200-207, 220, 225-53, 256-9, 263-76, 278-84, 286, 293-4, 311-30, 347-52, 361n, 367, 371-2, 381, 383, 385-7, 391, 393, 395-7, 399, 403-4, 408, 410, 412, 417, 419-24, 429, 438, 443, 449, 451-3, 456, 458-9, 463, 466, 469, 471, 473, 477-9, 481, 484-8, 490-1, 494-6, 500, 507, 508, 510, 514, 518-28
_____ and Media, 528
_____ Conformist, 77
_____ Causes of, 177
_____ Dimensions of, 76
_____ Definition of, 54
_____ Economics of, 522
_____ Institutionalisation of, 57
_____ Phenomenology, 14, 108, 522, 533
_____ Punjab, 148, 161-2, 174-5
_____ Social Roots of, 157
_____ Sociology of, 522
Communalist Forces, 129, 254, 256, 259
_____ Leaders, 18
_____ Logic, 125
Communalists, 4, 6, 12, 18, 38-40, 57-61, 76-7, 126, 150
Communalization, 26, 97, 100, 189, 228, 418, 510
_____ of Politics,495
Communication, 374-5
_____ Channels, 417
_____ Technology, 173
Communist Party of India, 130, 157, 172-3, 269-70, 276, 450
_____ Marxist, 129, 389
Community Identities, 45
_____ Interests, 78
Comparative Methods, 537
Consciousness Transformation, 139
Constitution, 232-3, 522, 526-7
Cultural Conflict, 516
_____ Federalism, 520, 525
Culture, 420, 512

D

DAV College, 479
Dal Khalsa, 288, 389
Damdami Taksal, 288, 291
Dandvate, Madhu, 129
Dar-Ul-Harb, 48, 326, 373
_____ Islam, 48, 77, 326, 373
_____ Moahida, 48
_____ Ulam, 355-6
Darbara Singh, 148
Dargah, 128
Dars-i-Nizam, 353
Deen Dayal Upadhyay Institute, 405
Delhi Development Act, 217
_____ _____, Authority, 200, 217
Democracy, 475
Democratic Rights, 225, 247, 351
_____ Unity, 393
Denominational Institution, 280, 352, 361-7, 479, 481
Deoband Madrasah, 355
_____ School, 47, 270
Desai, A.R., 89
_____, Morarji, 330

Dhamija, Ram, 371
Disabilities Removal Act, 474
Dogmatism, 41
Draughts, 171
Durkheim, Emile, 95
Dumont's Methodology, 89
Dutt, V.P., 251

E

East India Company, 90-1
Economic Development, 85, 110, 116, 179, 186, 292
_____ Inputs, 536
_____ Problem, 95, 421
_____ Stratification, 132
_____ Structure, 126
Education, 479
_____ for National Integration, 527
Educational Institutions, 380
_____ System, 527
Electoral Politics, 181, 453
Elliot, H.M., 317
Emmet, Danis, 478
Empirical Issues, 520
Engineer, A.A., 21, 110, 180n, 232, 392
Environment, 420
Ethnicity, 479
European Renaissance, 510

F

False Consciousness, 9-11, 161, 268
Fascist Movement, 88
Fatalism, 451
Fateh Singh, 285
Favourtism, 365
Fazlul, Haq, 17
Feudal Economy, 9
_____ Society, 507
Feudalism, 86, 178
Five Year Plans, 232
Foreign Policy, 251, 253-5, 259, 528
Francis, Robinson, 5
French Revolution, 515
Fundamentalism, 276, 290, 348, 392

G

Gandhi, Indira, 237-40
_____, Mahatma, 131, 134-7, 150-1, 229, 252, 258, 271, 281
Gandhian Approach, 138
_____ Ideology, 134-5
_____ Socialism, 129
Geocentricity, 124
Ghori, Muhammad, 513
Ghurye, G.S., 83
Golwalker, M.S., 308, 338
Government of India Act, 1935, 29
Goyal, D.R., 300
Green Revolution, 192, 194, 197-8, 211, 214-5
Grewal, J.S., 97, 235, 332, 335
Gujarat Samachar, 243
Gujarati Capitalism, 135
Guru Granth Sahib, 124
Gurukuls, 124

H

Hamza Alvi, 29
Hans, Surjit, 14, 471
Hari Begar Nazrana Movement, 453-4
Harijans, 235, 239-40
Hindi Cinema, 408
Hindu Chauvinist, 516
_____ - Christian Riots, 106
_____ Communal Attitude, 394
_____ _____ Forces, 239
_____ _____ Ideology, 12, 330
_____ _____ Leaders, 74, 148, 285
_____ _____ Organization, 28, 390
_____ Communal Parties, 389
_____ Communalism, 49-50, 69, 72, 75, 129, 160, 162, 274, 328, 330-32, 335, 342-3, 347, 391-3

_____ Communalists, 68, 72-5, 147-8, 168, 193, 202, 331, 341-2, 388n, 430, 443, 449, 452
_____ Community, 106, 321, 362
_____ Culture, 126, 320, 324, 340, 409-11, 413
_____ Dominated Areas, 524
_____ Imperialism, 320
_____ Intelligentsia, 514
_____ Leaders, 514
_____ Mahasabha, 49-50, 67, 141, 145, 147, 151, 253, 280, 303, 453n
_____ Militancy, 171, 174
_____ Muslim Amity, 534
_____ _____ Communalism, 170, 337
_____ _____ Conflicts, 130, 170, 325, 335
_____ _____ Confrontation, 54
_____ _____ Question, 83
_____ _____ Relationship, 83-6, 91, 372, 410
_____ _____ Society, 418
_____ _____ Struggle, 253, 255
_____ _____ Tensions, 534
_____ _____ Unity, 339
_____ Nationalism, 195
_____ Rashtra, 7, 59, 77, 442
_____ Religion, 343-4, 362
_____ Religious Group, 60, 179, 365, 430, 437
Hindu Sikh Amity, 534
_____ _____ Communalism, 161
_____ _____ Marriage, 419
_____ Sociologists, 93
_____ Solidarity Conference, 204
Hinduism, 48-51, 67, 73, 105, 130, 132, 284, 320, 347, 411,453, 516
Hindustan, 68
Historical Method, 534-5
Historiography, 97, 317, 336
Holi Quran, 125, 439
Human Mind, 9
Humanism, 517-8
Humanist Culture, 517

I

Identity, 490
Ideological Debility, 124
Imperialism, 126, 254, 276, 305, 417, 420-1
Incremental Communalists, 439
Indian Association, 478
_____ Capitalism, 109
_____ Civilization, 131-2
_____ Community, 134-5
_____ History, 97-8
_____ National Congress, 30, 34, 128-9, 133-5, 137, 142, 281
_____ National Movement, 140
_____ Nationalism, 101, 133, 164
_____ Nationalists, 140
_____ Political Science, 129
Indo-Gangetic Plains, 319
_____ Pakistan Sub Continent, 338
Industrial Employment, 433
_____ Society, 384
Intelligentsia, 419
Inter-Communal Collaboration, 105, 108, 114
_____ -Disciplinary Approach, 530
International Affairs, 255
_____ Politics, 170
_____ Relations, 255
Islamic Culture, 126, 513, 515
_____ Education, 355, 363
_____ Fundamentalism, 373
_____ Obscurantism, 392
Isolationism, 516
Ittehadul Muslemeen, 130

J

J&K, 129
Jagannath Temple, 15, 238
Jagivan Ram, 129, 343
Jagmani System, 86
Jain, Girilal, 401
Jakhar, Balram, 390

Jallianwala Bagh, 281, 283
_____ Massacre, 151
Jamaat-e-Islami, 249, 293-7, 300, 366, 385, 460, 465
_____ Hind, 296
Jamiat-e-Talaba, 298
_____ Ul-Ulma, 400
_____-i-Hind, 348, 356, 389
Jan Sangh, 330
Janata Party, 330
Jewish Religion, 346
Jinnah, M.A., 7-8, 15, 19, 27, 29-30, 47, 49, 125, 144-6, 270-1, 338
Job Opportunities, 188
Joshi, P.C., 177n
Judaism, 300
Jurisprudence, 498

K

Kabir, 127
Kairon, P.S., 285
Kaisth Samachar, 160
Kapur Singh, 273-4
Kattar Musalman, 327
_____ Sunni Musalman, 327
Khalistan, 6-7, 59-60, 89, 285
_____ Movement, 25
Khalistani Communalism, 37
Khalsa Tract Society, 478
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 270
_____ Dildar, 455
_____ S.H., 14, 16
Khilafat Movement, 25, 136, 258, 270, 281
Khoemeni Revolution, Iran, 396
Khushwant Singh, 284-5
Kidwai, Mohsina, 402
Kirti Kisan Party, 305
Kisan Sabha, 304
Kothari, Rajni, 11, 181n
Krishna, K.B., 347
Kuldip Kaur, 361

L

Lala Lajpat Rai, 140
Land Reforms, 192, 195, 211-2
_____ Movement Policy, 454
Law, 502
Le Carbousier, 201
Leadership, 494
Lenin, 267
Liberation Movement, 133-4, 137-8
_____ Theology, 229
Limaye, Madhu, 331
Linguistic Identity, 160
Local Self Government Act, 25
Lokmanya Tilak, 140, 144
Longowal, H.S., 288
Lucknow Pact, 144-5
_____ University, 148
Ludhiana Akhbar, 477

M

Macaulay, 473, 503
Macaulay's Education System, 124
Madan Mohan Malviya, 140
Madrasahs, 353-4, 359
Maharani Scindia, 129
Majhita, S.S., 162
Majlis-e-Amal, 450
Majumdar, R.C., 319, 321
Maktab Education, 360
Maktabs, 355
Malaya, 301
Malik, Harji, 391
Man & Development, 281
Mandal Commission Report, 203
Marxism, 9, 89
Master Akali Dal, 285, 287
_____ Tara Singh, 285-6
Mathematical Formulation, 124
Maudidi, 295-6
Maulana Azad, 30, 47-8, 147, 270
Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, 22-4, 29-30
Medieval History, 71
_____ India, 97-8, 100
Meenakshipuram Incident, 239
Messopotamia, 301-2

Militarization, 384
Militancy, 390
Mill, James, 98-9
Minority Communities, 364
Mishra, R.K., 417
Mobilization, 335, 437
Modern Democratic Institutions, 181
Modernism, 401
Modernization, 45-6, 104-5, 112, 123-7
Monotheism, 474-5
Morabadad Riots, 1980, 239
Muhammadanism, 513
Mufta-ul-uloom, 450
Mukherjee, D.P., 83-5, 87
Mukherjee, Partha, 281, 291
Multi-Disciplinary Approach, 530-1
_____ Linguistic, 354
_____ Religious, 354, 444
Muslim Bourgeoisie, 403
_____ Communal Ideology, 340
_____ Communalists, 68, 72, 147, 167-8, 193, 272, 340, 342, 344, 442
_____ Community, 326, 338, 357, 360, 362, 364, 392
_____ Culture, 411-3
_____ Hindu Relationship, 84
_____ History, 45
_____ League, 4, 17-9, 22, 24, 27-9, 44, 47, 49-50, 53, 128-9, 144-8, 164-5, 249, 269, 274, 283, 460, 527
_____ Literature, 408
_____ Minority Communalism, 274
_____ Organizations, 460
_____ Personal Law, 393
_____ Religious Education, 358
_____ _____ Society, 507
_____ Revivalism, 366
_____ Society, 418
_____ Stereotypes, 336, 342
_____ Sufis, 406
_____ Tyranny, 346
_____ Women's Rights Bill, 391
_____ Women's Protection Bill, 392-3

N

Nadwah, 357, 359
Naidu, Ratna, 58
Namboodripad, 129
Nankana Sahib, 127
Narain, Iqbal, 519, 530
Naroji, Dada Bhai, 140-1
National Building, 485, 532
_____ State, 31, 33, 42
National Council of Khalistan, 79
_____ Congress, 129
_____ Ethnic forces, 384
_____ Freedom, 355
_____ Integration, 229, 311-2, 315, 323, 512-3, 526
_____ Integration Council, 274
_____ Leadership, 125
_____ Liberation, 124
_____ Movement, 142-4, 148
_____ Sample Survey Bulletin, 212
Nationalism, 3, 9-10, 22, 24-6, 44, 48-9, 51, 134, 158, 178-9, 274, 303, 305-8, 345, 356, 358, 401, 421, 475, 477, 481n, 520
_____ Territorial, 24
Nationalists, 3, 6-7, 10, 12, 345-6
_____ Ideology, 34
_____ Party, 157
_____ Committee, 164
_____ _____ Report, 282
Nehru, J.L., 16, 20, 54, 122, 124, 131, 481
Nehruvian Socialism, 251, 253, 255, 258-9, 269, 534
Neo-Colonialism, 258, 421
Neo-Imperialist, 292
Nimaz-I-Isha, 125
Nizamuddin Aulia, 127
Non Aligned Movement, 259
Antagonistic Contradiction, 185n
_____ Communal Mobilizations, 453
_____ Cooperation Movement, 403

O

Objective Reality, 9-12
Obscurantism, 124, 126, 315, 418, 454, 507, 518
Observation Method, 536
Opportunism, 454
Opposition Parties, 484
Orthodox Hindus, 475

P

Pal, Bipin Chandra, 140
Pan-Indian Community, 106
Panchayat Samitis, 40
Parliamentary System, 484
Patroohialism, 124
Pay Commission, 496, 499
Peace Committees, 493
Philosophical Input, 532
Pithur Bhumi, 306
Planning Commission, 85, 199
Police Act, 502
Political Alienation, 459
_____ Education, 175
_____ Identity, 159
_____ Ideology, 84
_____ Institutions, 131, 289, 291-2
_____ Leadership, 86
_____ Mainstream, 129
_____ Mobilization, 34-5, 59, 207, 528
_____ Parties, 128
_____ Science inputs, 537
_____ Security, 393
_____ Oriented Religious Leadership, 128
_____ Press, 478
Politics, 472-3, 487, 500
Portugese, 301
Post Independence Period, 264, 524
Praja Socialist Party, 128
Pramod Kumar, 54, 163, 177, 264, 401, 427, 489
Prathana Samaj, 514
Primordial Groups, 104-5
Print Medias, 200
Propaganda, 490
Public Service Commission, 128
Punjab, 415, 417, 421, 423, 513
_____ Today, 521
_____ Problem, 12, 164, 239
Punjabi Society, 474
Puranic Theology, 51
Punjabi Migration, 488
_____ Society, 474
_____ Suba, 285

Q

Quwat-ul-Islam, 513

R

RSS
Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Singh
Racial Communities, 361
_____ Prejudices, 315
Racialism, 11, 157, 315, 323,346
Rajagopal, P.R., 428
Rajagopalachari, 283
Ram Janma Bhoomi, 130, 456, 466
_____ Babri Masjid, 174, 203
_____ Liberation Movement, 454
Randhir Singh, 185
Rangila Rasul, 196
Ranjit Singh, 475
Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, 30, 36-8, 50, 129, 239, 300-1, 304, 334, 338, 346, 385, 388n, 390, 392, 400, 405
Ravinder Kumar, 475
Raza, Moonis, 123
Reform Movements, 418, 474-5
Regionalism, 45, 520
Regionalization, 114-5
Religion, 472, 476, 485, 500
Religious Autonomy, 84
_____ Ceremonies, 508
_____ Communalism, 39, 113, 361
_____ Communities, 106-7, 371-4
_____ Conflicts, 313, 325, 471

_____ Consciousness, 21-2, 29-30, 264, 268
_____ Differences, 177
_____ Education, 508
_____ Fundamentalism, 113, 353, 442
_____ Fundamentalists, 59
_____ Groups, 4, 427, 438-9
_____ Identities, 45, 452
_____ Ideology, 102
_____ Institutions, 441, 507-8
_____ Intelligentsia, 134
_____ Intolerance, 312, 509
_____ Leaders, 453n
_____ Minorities, 50,103, 128, 234
_____ Monoliths, 204
_____ Organizations, 361
Religiosity, 348, 363, 367, 434, 443, 448, 463
Ribero, J.R., 248
Rigveda, 513
Roman Empire, 302
Round Table Conference, 144
_____ Second, 283
Rowlatt Act, 303, 477
_____ Satyagraha, 136
Roy, M.N., 306
Rudolph, L.T., 105-6
_____, S.H., 105-6
Rustomji, K.F., 170, 496

S

SGPC
Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee
Sant Akali Dal, 287
_____ Harchand Singh Longowal, 12
_____ Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, 12
_____ Nirankaris, 288
Sarkar,Jadunath, 334
Sarnikamgar Sabha, 64
Savarkar, V.D., 338
Sanyukt Vidhayak Dal (SVD), 129
Second World War, 88, 144
Secular Nationalism, 296
Secularism, 31-2, 38, 44, 48, 87, 90, 128, 141-3, 229, 236, 268, 271, 294, 357-8, 394, 401-2, 415-6, 507-9, 511-3, 517, 527
Secularization, 459, 507
Sen, Mohit, 263
Separatism, 367
Shah Bano Bill, 147
_____ Case, 391
_____ Commission, 501
Shakir, Moin, 103
Shariat, 47
Sharma, R.S., 343
Sheikh Abdullah, 47, 298
Shia-Sunni conflict, 327
Shiromani Akali Dal, 78-9, 184, 189
Shiv Sena, 188-9, 247-8
Sikh Communal Ideology, 12
Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, 112-3, 280-2
Sikh Communal Leaders, 147, 151
_____ Question, 12
_____ Communalism, 6, 12, 160, 162, 279, 347
_____ Communalists, 74, 146, 168, 338
_____ Community, 53, 283-4
_____ Faith, 516
_____ Gurudwara Act, 282
_____ Hindu Tensions, 130
_____ Muslim Struggle, 342
_____ Nationality, 291
_____ Personal Law, 290
_____ Sociologist, 93
_____ Student Federation, 288
Sikhism, 288, 347, 514
Singh Sabha, 279-80, 475, 478
_____ Movement, 183
Sinha, Sachidanand, 160
Sir Chhotu Ram, 161-2
Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, 25-6, 47, 124, 167
Smith, W.C., 55, 178
Smith, Wilfred, 397

Social Cohesiveness, 201
_____ Communication, 95
_____ Norm, 420
_____ Phenomenon, 58-9
_____ Progress, 126
_____ Realities, 267
_____ Roots, 157
_____ Stratification, 106
_____ Tensions, 83, 192, 199, 208, 346, 395
_____ Transformation, 92, 124, 126
Socialism, 272, 276
Socialist Community, 256
_____ Society, 507n
Socio-Cultural System, 382-3
_____ Economic Development, 64, 105, 233-4, 246, 290
Sons of the Soil, 488
Sood, Atul, 427n
South Africa, 134-5
Sri Ramakrishna Parmahansa, 269
Stereotypes, 489
Structural Transformation, 96
Subrahmaniyam, k., 31
Sufism, 355
Sunnis, 514
Superstitions, 315
Swami Dayanand, 475

T

T.V., 408-16
Tagore, R.N., 124, 405
Tahira Bai Case, 392
Terrorism, 422
Terrorists, 521
Thapar, Romila, 70, 330-1, 334
The Tribune, 145-6, 166-7, 478
Theocratic Principle, 127
Theologians, 125
Trade Union Movement, 158
Traditionalism, 87
Traditions, 477
Trans-Disciplinary Approach, 530-1

U

Unemployment, 157, 188, 449
Union-State Relations, 525
Unionist Party, 161-2
Unitarian Religion, 513
United Democratic Front, 203
Untouchables, 475
Untouchability, 234, 313
Urban Population, 199
Utilitarian, 90
Uttar Pradesh, 427-8, 430, 432, 434

V

Vajpayee, A.B., 330
Vedas, 475
Violence, 303, 395
Violent Behaviour, 457
Vishva Hindu Parishad, 28, 30, 73-7, 193, 348, 394, 415
Vimal, Vishalini, 427n

W

Wahhabi Movement, 62, 355
Wahhabis, 354-5
Wells, H.G., 307
Westernization, 125

Y

Yadav, Bhupindra, 427n, 507
Yadavacharya, B.S., 453n
Yogender Singh, 83

Z

Zakir Hussain, 130
Zamana, 478
Zamindari System, 127
Zafar, B.S., 306
Zionism, 300
Zoroastrianism, 513

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1. Agwani, M.S., Vice-Chancellor, JNU, New Delhi
2. Arjun Dev, Professor of Education, NCERT, New Delhi
3. Banerjee, Subrata, Editor of "Science and People", New Delhi
4. Bhalla, G.S., Member, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi
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About the Editor

Pramod Kumar is a Senior Faculty Member at Centre for Research in Rural & Industrial Development, Chandigarh. Dr. Pramod Kumar has been working in the area of Violence and Communalism for more than a decade or so. He was awarded prestigious Homi Bhabha Fellowship to work on 'Causation, Content and Form of Communalism in India' in the year 1988. His publication include *Polluting Sacred Faith*; and *Punjab Crisis*: C*ontext and Trends*, et. al.

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