

# Manthan

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Legacy of JP

Concept of Indian Secularism  
and its Relevance

Indian Labour Movement—III

Modern Trends in Indian Painting

etc., etc.



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# Manthan

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JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S death has left a vacuum in the national life. Today we miss him; but we are going to miss him more and more as time passes. He belongs to that category of great men, who cannot be replaced. In fact, after Mahatma Gandhi, he was more or less like a second Gandhi. He was above party politics; hence the whole nation claimed him. He stood for truth and justice, hence he was considered the conscience keeper of the nation. He kept himself always open to conviction; hence he had an ever fading freshness. He was a perpetual seeker of truth. He was the embodiment of gentleness and non-violence. And within his gentle exterior, he possessed a will of steel, which made him an uncompromising crusader for a better humanity.

#### Pilgrim in Search of Truth

What made JP similar to Gandhiji was his incessant struggle to discover truth and his utter detachment to power. JP's continuous search for truth took him to varying and sometimes conflicting stances. And this made him appear inconsistent and even confused. But behind all his changes and transformations were two basic motives — his thirst for the freedom of his motherland and his anxiety to create a just and humanitarian social order. As a young boy JP went to America to prosecute his studies because he did not want to be contaminated by the atmosphere of British aided educational institutions in India. He was attracted to the Marxist philosophy while in America, because he was in search of a philosophy and methodology that would liberate India. Marxism appealed to him, because it liberated Russia. But JP was not prepared to swallow everything that Marxism stood for, because he was essentially and basically a nationalist. On his return

P. Parameswaran

## Legacy of JP



from America, his quest for freedom took him to Gandhiji. JP became a student of Gandhiji's philosophy and methodology, though he was hesitant to accept them in their totality. He criticised Gandhiji in bitter terms, but that never prevented him from touching the feet of Gandhiji whenever they met. On being teased by friends like Minoo Masani for this, he used to reply that he had been brought up like a good Hindu to show respect to his elders and he saw no reason why he should not continue to do so.

While still remaining a Marxian, JP began to come under the growing influence of Gandhiji, but still he was not ready to give up his attachment to Marxism till long after Gandhiji's death. It was only in 1953, during the time of his 21 days fast in Poona that JP finally bid good-bye to his Marxian faith.

In his long pilgrimage in search of truth, he started as a materialist but ended as a spiritualist in the real sense of the term. He started as a Marxist and ended as a Hindu. This was possible because he was a genuine seeker of truth and had an open mind. In all his life, he never considered any one his enemy because of the views one held. This is illustrated by his attitude towards the RSS. Even so long back in 1953, when RSS was treated as an untouchable by all the so-called progressive parties and people. JP advised his partymen — he was the leader of the Socialist Party at that time — not to treat them so. He said:- "Towards the frustrated youths of the RSS, we may well have a sympathetic attitude. The young boys and girls who belong to the RSS are all drawn from the lower middle classes. They are a disciplined lot.... Let us not treat these youngmen as untouchables."<sup>2</sup> Even this attitude underwent appreciable change as time passed, and as he came into closer

touch with the RSS. The Bihar draught relief work brought him face to face with the Sangh. It made him an admirer of the RSS until at last on November 3, 1978, JP said: "RSS is a revolutionary organisation. No other organisation in the country comes anywhere near it. It alone has the capacity to transform society, abolish casteism and wipe tears from the eyes of the poor. I am not saying this to flatter you. I believe you have a historic role to play."

### Transformation

JP's quest for truth and his intense desire to rebuild India ultimately brought him Gandhism. After a prolonged inner struggle, he gave up Marxism since he found it an intellectually unconvincing philosophy and an ineffective instrument for social transformation. In 1953, JP wrote: "For many years, I have worshipped at the shrine of the Goddess of dialectical materialism — which seemed to me intellectually more satisfying than any other philosophy. But while the main quest for philosophy remains unsatisfied, it has become patent to me that materialism of any sort robs man of the means to become truly human. In a material civilisation, man has no rational incentives to be good. It may be that, in the kingdom of dialectical materialism fear makes men conform, and the party takes the place of God. But when the God himself turns vicious, to be vicious becomes a universal code. I feel convinced therefore that man must go beyond the material to find the incentive to goodness. As a corollary I feel further that the task of social reconstruction cannot succeed under the inspiration of a materialist philosophy."<sup>2</sup>

JP himself has explained the transformation of his life thus:- "I have often been accused of changing my views and my fields of

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### Disillusionment

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activity. I claim that through all the apparent changes, I have been pursuing a single goal, seeking the answer to a single question: how to make India independent and help to establish a social, economic and political democracy. This search has taken me to several ideologies and political paths, until I have arrived at the conclusion that Gandhiji holds the answer; not a mindless application of Gandhiji's ideas, but their dynamic and revolutionary adaptation."<sup>3</sup>

### Disillusionment with Communism

JP's disillusionment with communism is worth studying. Originally he was fascinated by Karl Marx, because he believed that "the greatest contribution that Marx made to social science was that he gave us a method not only to study and understand society but also to enable us to change it."<sup>4</sup> His admiration for Marx continued for quite some time, but Marxism as applied in Soviet Russia, particularly by Stalin did not meet with his approval. He considered it un-Marxian. The refusal of Indian communists to join the freedom struggle waged by the Congress also came in for his sharp criticism. "I just could not understand how it was necessary for the communists to leave the Congress and fight the Congress which was fighting for the freedom of our country."<sup>5</sup> The domestic and foreign policies of the Communist Russia under Stalin and their decisive impact on the communist movement in India as well as other countries also had a telling effect on JP's attitude towards communism. He puts it succinctly in lines:- "The communists behave as they do because neither in India nor in any part of the world are they free agents. They have to trim their sails to suit the winds that blow from the Kremlin. It is ultimately Russian policy, domestic and foreign, which determines the policies,

even the very ideological bases of the communist movement throughout the world. Any dispute within the Russian Communist Party rents the communist parties throughout the world. If there are purges in Russia there are purges elsewhere. It is wrong to believe, as people sometimes do, that it is only Russian foreign policy that rules the communist world movement. Russian foreign policy is merely an expression of Russia's domestic policy; so in the end it is the character of the Russian state and Russian social system which determine the character of the communist movement the world over. Russia has passed since the revolution through varied and quickly changing situations. All these shifts in Russian policy have found expression in the international communist movement investing it with an incoherent, crazy pattern and divorcing the policies of national communist parties from all objectivity."<sup>6</sup>

The absolute curtailment of all individual freedom in Russia was intolerable for JP. "There may be socialism in Russia, but there is no individual freedom, no freedom to criticise the government or the party, and fear of the government has gone so far that even in the family, the husband is frightened to talk frankly to his wife, and son to father, because no one knows who is a spy among them."<sup>7</sup> According to JP, "The communist model strikes at the very root of man by denying the primacy of his spirit and by deliberately suppressing it. By glorifying power and authority, as represented by the party and the state, and by making everyone and everything subservient to them, it makes of society a vast prison-house for the human spirit."<sup>8</sup> Moreover he was totally opposed to the communist concept of "the state as the sole agent of social reconstruction, because in that case, we get nothing but a regimented society in which the state is all-powerful and

popular initiative is extinct and the individual is made a cog in a vast inhuman machine."<sup>9</sup>

#### What Attracted him to Gandhiji

After having identified the factors that made communism unacceptable to JP, it will be instructive to find out why and how Gandhism appealed to him. Even while he was a confirmed socialist — the most authentic spokesman of the socialist movement in India, JP never believed in a purely materialistic socialism. As early as 1948, he wrote: "It is too often believed that all would be well only if there were no exploitation in society and everyone was well-fed and clothed and housed. But a society of well-fed and clothed and housed brutes is a far cry from socialism."<sup>10</sup> The concept of a value-based socialism inevitably led JP to certain ethical norms. Said he: "Therefore, if the aim of our party is not only to produce well-fed, well-clothed and well-housed animals but also to produce good men, then all our political work must be inspired by certain ethical values."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, he wrote in his article on 'Socialism and Sarvodaya': "The first aspect of Gandhism that must interest the socialist is its moral and ethical basis, its insistence on value."<sup>12</sup> JP found that Gandhism, with its stress on human values, "offered a corrective that the socialist world overlook only at the cost of the very substance of their creed." He contrasted Gandhism with Russian Stalinism, which "has reduced it (socialist philosophy) to a crank Machiavellian code of conduct, utterly devoid of any sense of right or wrong, good or evil." In it, the end justified the means, but according to JP, "The greatest thing Mahatma Gandhiji taught us was that means are ends, that evil means can never lead to good ends and that fair ends require fair means."

The second aspect that attracted JP to Gandhism was Gandhiji's technique of non-violent *Satyagraha*. JP wrote: "Before Gandhiji the only means that suppressed and exploited had with which to fight against their oppressor were violent.... In Gandhiji's method of civil disobedience and *Satyagraha* the suppressed and exploited have found a new technique that carries the struggle forward beyond the usual peaceful limits and give full expression to the urge for social justice and social change."<sup>13</sup> JP discredited the popular idea that a violent revolution is swift and sure. According to him, it is neither and hence he rejected the violent way. To him, "Experience of non-violent revolution suggests that it is the quickest method. And because this movement does not use force and depends on persuasion, and also because it works from below, there is a greater likelihood of its achieving its ends."<sup>14</sup>

There was another reason for JP being attracted to Gandhism "It was Gandhiji's insistence on decentralisation — economic and political." JP did not agree with those leftists who propagated that decentralisation is anti-diluvian, nor did he share the belief that economic decentralisation means the rejection of modern science and technology. He strongly advocated the need for decentralisation of industry in a backward economy like India's where production must be labour intensive instead of capital intensive. According to him, political decentralisation did not mean a weak state of absence of a planned life. In short, JP accepted Gandhi because, according to him, "far from being a reactionary, Gandhiji was an exceptionally original social revolutionary and he has made contributions to social thought and the methodology of social change that are indispensable to human progress and civilisation."<sup>15</sup>

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### The Pattern

During his long years of struggle for the achievement of India's freedom and for its rebuilding, JP has given a good deal of thought as to the pattern India should evolve and the method she should adopt for it. Even though there were many developed countries in the world, JP did not believe that there was anyone of them which India could copy as a model. He was very well conversant with the two main categories of advanced countries — the affluent west and the communist. He conceded that there was much in both the western and eastern models that is of abiding value and that the developing countries should accept and assimilate. "But there are in both models essential characteristics that should be rejected. In the western model, the ruling ethic is that of individualism and competition, it being assumed that in the process the weaker will be driven to the wall. There is also an excessive emphasis on the satisfaction of material needs and their consequent multiplication, leading to serious imbalances.... The drive towards urbanisation, resulting in the monster of the megalopolis, has destroyed the community, divorced urban from the rural and forcibly alienated man from nature. The result of all that is a distorted growth of man and society. On the other hand, the communist model also presents a distorted picture of human and social development. It strikes at the very root of man, by denying the primacy of his spirit and by deliberately suppressing it."<sup>16</sup>

After giving due weight to the experiences of these two models of development, JP came to the conclusion that "the new countries should, therefore, while rejecting both these models, must take from them what is of value and conducive to a balanced spiritual and material growth of man and society."

For India, JP believed, Gandhiji provided the ideas and inspiration for building up such a new model of development. "Gandhiji's political, economic and other ideas are parts of an integrated philosophy of life," says JP. Of course, he did not have the opportunity to put his ideas into practice, because at the threshold of his most creative period, his life was abruptly cut short. But JP believed that the essentials of his philosophy do offer a basis for discussion; and a dynamic understanding of them might even help one to relate them to contemporary society.

According to JP, the supreme consideration for Gandhiji was man. Having placed man at the centre of the society, Gandhiji tried to solve the intricate problem of their inter-relationship, which neither the individualism of the west nor the collectivism of the east could solve. "Gandhiji tried to resolve it by introducing a moral solvent, by assigning mutual moral responsibilities to both. While the well-being of the individual was a social aim, the well-being of society too was to be assured. In Gandhiji's concept of society, both were interdependent. Neither society was to grow at the cost of the individual, nor the individual at the cost of the members of the society.... Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member." Gandhiji's idea of the individual and the society is contained in a famous passage which reads thus:—"It (the world society of men) will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual, always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to push for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but even humble sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units."

The question that faced JP while considering the problem of rebuilding India was what shape the political, economic and social institutions of the future should take. What will be the pattern we evolve in order to embody the lofty ideas described above? He was firmly convinced that "every institution of society grows out of its own peculiar soil and is nourished and nurtured by its own unique climate and environment. He was clear that no borrowed institution can thrive unless it is properly acclimated and integrated. He knew that during India's long history her institutions have acquired a certain character which is uniquely Indian."

JP was also aware of the fact that "all our present political and administrative institutions are foreign transplantations. In planting these (or their precursors) on Indian soil, the British paid no regard whatever to India's own political patterns, ancient or contemporary. After the end of the British rule, the fathers of the Indian Constitution, including the politicians and experts, again paid no heed to the traditions and deep-flowing springs of Indian life. The result, to say the least, has not been happy."<sup>17</sup> When the Constitution of free India was framed, the founding fathers never consulted Gandhiji, nor did Gandhiji take any living interest in it, so much so the village panchayats, which according to Gandhiji were to be the main springs of India's democracy found no place in the Indian Constitution.

Based on Gandhiji's concept of Gramraj, which is also the primary basis of ancient Indian polity, JP had tried to sketch his ideas of the political set up of independent India in an article which he wrote with the title, 'Building up from the village.' He posed the question, "How the atomised village of today, which has no collective

will of its own, can be integrated into a real self-governing community and make a stable foundation of Indian polity is the most important question of national reconstruction." The set up he visualised was thus: "The primary political institution is naturally the primary community, the village with its appropriate political organs, including a council. The village council will deal with all local matters and would possess the maximum power and initiative in regard to them. It would be natural for a number of these villages or municipal councils to be integrated together in an area council covering a large or small area as the circumstances might dictate. These area councils will be concerned with the local problems of their area and will be fully competent to deal with them. There may again be integrated in a district council and so on till we reach the national parliament, which will be the integration of the state assemblies."<sup>18</sup> In one of his writings 'Gandhi and the Politics of Decentralisation', JP approvingly refers to Gandhiji's picture of ever-widening, never ascending circles of communities, and quotes from his speech at the Round Table Conference. According to Gandhiji, "700,000 villages of India will be organised according to the will of their citizens, all of them voting. These villages, each having one vote, will elect their district administrations. The district administrations will elect provincial administrations which in turn will elect a president who will be the national chief executive."<sup>19</sup> Summing up his impressions of Gandhiji's view in the matter, JP considers that his political structure would have been based on organised communities, rather than the amorphous mass of desperate individual voters. It also seemed to him certain that in his decentralised and self-regulated order, there would have been no place for power-seeking political parties, though enough

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place for different schools of political thought.

Political decentralisation to be really effective presupposes economic decentralisation as well. Gandhiji had visualised village self-government where each village is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants. JP's conception was of a village economy with an agro-industrial base, which considers development of villages as agro-industrial committees in which there is a rational distribution of labour between agriculture and industry. This naturally led him to the complicated question of science and technology. JP believed that the immense potentialities of science and technology should be brought to bear upon the economic development of the vast numbers of villages in India. Technology to him was a means and not an end. It should be made to subserve "a definite human and social purpose and not become a new goal on whose altar man should be sacrificed. Technology should be such that it provides productive employment to the humblest member of society, and bars the centralisation of economic structure and concentration of economic power. Technology should be such that work becomes a source of creative joy and development of human personality. Any technology which turns man into a cog does not place man at the centre nor consider him as an end. We believe that decentralisation, far from retarding technology, should give it great impetus. Nuclear energy, for instance, representing the highest development of science, is ideally suited to a decentralised technology."<sup>20</sup>

It is needless to add that JP was an ardent advocate of rural industrialisation. He realized that "in India no amount of urban industrialisation is going to benefit appre-

ciably the economic conditions in the countryside." He also cautioned that rural industrialisation should not be confused with setting up a few large industries in rural areas. "It must mean", he clarified, "an even spread of industries throughout the countryside all over the country. Nor should it be limited to mean what at present are termed as 'rural industries' or to only agricultural industries. There can be and should be infinite variety of industries established in rural areas."<sup>21</sup>

### Key to Change — the People

It has been seen that JP's quest for method of social transformation led him from communism to socialism and thence to Gandhism to *Sarvodaya*. It was his intense desire to transform this vast Indian community which was stagnant from centuries on end into a modern society based on democracy and social and economic justice. Once he defined the picture of the society he had in mind. He said: "It is a democratic society where everyone is a worker and all men are equal including women; where there are equal opportunities for all and wages do not differ so much as to create distinctions of class; where all wealth is owned by the community; where progress is planned, where labour is joyful and life is richer, fuller and beautiful."<sup>22</sup>

While his goal remained more or less the same, the problem that haunted JP was how to bring about such an order of society. It was his quest that distinguished him from many other contemporary leaders. JP differed from most of them, because they seemed to believe that power was the answer to this question. But JP rejected the view held by such people that they must capture the state in order to be able to serve society and bring about the social transformation they desire. He also did not endorse the



view that political parties could be depended upon to play a useful role in this regard, because they are busy either with the exercise or enjoyment of power or with the winning of power. They make the people more inert and dependent. On the other hand, JP believed that what really needs to be done was to help the people to stand on their own legs and to do for themselves all that they possibly can with the available resources.

JP was not satisfied by the mass-mobilisation programme indulged in by various political parties for agitational and demonstrational purposes, because he felt that these again made people look up towards the government for improving their lot. What he wanted was to educate the people to give up their prejudices and to work cooperatively together. This could be done, according to him, only by voluntary workers going to the people where they are, live with them and patiently teach and help them to do what needs to be done. He very deeply felt that this task of national reconstruction can brook no delay. He says:— "For this a vast army of voluntary workers is needed. Gandhiji wanted such a worker for every village — 600,000 *lok sevaks*. Is it not possible," JP feelingfully asks, "to get six lakh patriotic voluntary workers in a population of 40 crores? Are there not enough patriotic men and women in the country to recognise the need of the hour and come forward to offer their services to the country."<sup>23</sup>

JP was acutely conscious of the need for such village workers — the activists — who are driven by idealism and a sense of mission, without whom no plans however grandiose are going to succeed. Paid employees of the state or of any other organisation cannot normally have these qualities of idealism and the sense of mission.

Education and mobilisation of the people, particularly in the rural areas were essential not only for the arduous task of rural reconstruction and implementation of the various plans. Even the successful day-to-day management of the democratic process in the country called for a vigilant people's movement. Nobody was more conscious of the drawbacks of the parliamentary system as it functioned in India than JP but he realized that people were beginning to lose faith even in that. He feared that the result of such a loss of faith will be the emergence of dictatorship. To prevent this calamity, he wanted a vigilant people's movement to get the right sort of representatives elected, to bring the erring ones to book and to see that the democratic processes run from election to election. For this he wanted some sort of an institutionalised arrangement of the honest men, with substantial representation for the youths and the students. He could not spell out the exact shape of such an arrangement, though he has mentioned polling booths and constituency committees of people to supervise the electoral process. What emerges unmistakably from all these utterances of JP is his firm conviction that neither the power of the state nor the various political parties can be trusted to bring about any basic changes in the community, only the organised strength of dedicated people, fired by idealism and a sense of mission could achieve this much needed transformation.

The last phase of JP's active public life was devoted to the movement for Total Revolution. The sure and steady erosion of the democratic system, the sudden and appalling collapse of all moral and ethical values, the deterioration in the law and order situation, the mounting discontent of the people with the prevailing political and economic conditions — all these led JP

to the conclusion that the country needs a total revolution.

### Total Revolution

JP's Total Revolution was a desired result. JP toured the country explaining his countrywide high hopes and shook the people themselves, imposition of a new country in an instant. With the instrument at the decline in the Total Revolution, tragic developments in Government instrument for turned out for seekers. Hop-

Has JP's vision totally failed to the nation?

Given proper JP's concept Pandit Deen Dayal Humanism of the superficial and contradictory than real would appear and also deny the past — But this is not use of violence order situation, the mounting discontent of the people with the prevailing political and economic conditions — all these led JP

to the conclusion that the time had already come for an all out attempt to try to save the country. Hence he gave the call for Total Revolution.

### Total Revolution and Integral Humanism

JP's Total Revolution did not yield the desired results. In spite of his failing health, JP toured the entire country, patiently explaining his concept. It gave rise to a countrywide mass movement, which raised high hopes and expectations. Naturally, it shook the powers that be and to sustain themselves, they took recourse to the imposition of Emergency. This led the country in an entirely unexpected direction. With the installation of the Janata Government at the Centre and many States, and the decline in JP's health, the movement of Total Revolution came to a halt. More tragic developments followed; the Janata Government instead of functioning as an instrument for the desired transformation, turned out to be a battling ground for power seekers. Hopes were totally belied.

Has JP's vision of Total Revolution, then, totally failed? Or, has it anything to offer to the nation for the future?

Given proper understanding and goodwill, JP's concept of Total Revolution and Pandit Deendayalji's philosophy of Integral Humanism can supplement each other. To the superficial eye, the two are irreconcilable and contradictory, but this is more apparent than real. The word "Total Revolution", would appear to justify the use of violence and also demand a complete rupture with the past — with all its values and ideals. But this is not true. JP never conceived the use of violence; in fact he was at considerable pains to explain that "it has to be peacefully brought about without impairing the democratic structure of society and

affecting the democratic way of life of the people." JP did not imply by the word "Total Revolution", destruction of the fundamental values of our social structure. What he meant was the all-round transformation of the society, in every sphere of life, but it did not amount to a break with the past and a fresh start. Unlike the communists, JP was a believer in the moral and spiritual values cherished by India. He wanted the super structure to be transformed by eradicating all the evils that have cropped up from time to time but never advocated the abolition of our cultural values. It is true that JP did not speak with his accent on culture, as Deendayalji did, but he was so utterly Gandhian that he cannot do without moral, ethical and spiritual values. Integral Humanism is essentially a restatement of the eternal Bharatiya values to suit the modern requirements. But it is untrue if any one suggests that its stress is solely on the cultural content. Consistent with our cultural values, it too stresses the need to build up a social structure just, modern and well-integrated. Herein lies the complementary role of Total Revolution and Integral Humanism.

JP tried to impart a sense of urgency to the question of all-round transformation. Integral Humanism will gain by incorporating this sense of urgency. The crying maladies of the society call for urgent remedies. Deendayalji was an advocate of change, and not a traditionalist. *Status quoism* was against his grain. He had unequivocally stated, "we shall remove those traditions which obstruct this process (of national unity and development). If today the society is gripped with evils like untouchability, which lead men to treat other human beings as lower than themselves, we shall have to end such evils."<sup>24</sup> Imbued with the sense of urgency which JP tried to impart, Integral Humanism will be a most

effective philosophy to guide the much needed social transformation.

In the matter of the concept of Man as an integral being, consisting, broadly speaking, of material and spiritual dimensions, both JP and Deendayalji are at one. Of course, Deendayalji elaborated the concept and placed it on a sound philosophical footing in accordance with the Vedantic thought. Their concept of the mutuality of interest and harmony of relationship between the individual and the society, was unexceptionally identical. JP's statement "willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member," sounds almost like an echo of what Deendayalji had stated earlier, "we do not accept the view that there is any permanent inevitable conflict among the multi-dimensional personality of an individual and different institutions of the society."<sup>25</sup>

A valid question may here be raised whether Deendayalji would have approved of JP's

method of mass struggle as a means of bringing about social change. While it is well-known that Deendayalji was all for people's agitations to remedy specific grievances, and he himself led many such agitations, it may be doubted whether he would have approved of a countrywide mass struggle for an all-round transformation of the society. Mass agitations like 'mischief' when afoot have a way of getting out of control and 'taking what course thou wilt' rather than the desired one. Left to himself, he would have been more cautious and would have preferred a mass movement well-manageable under the firm guidance of well-organised and disciplined activists, but that does not mean he would have waited indefinitely. It is almost certain that had he been alive, he would have joined hands with JP and strengthened the movement he launched.

Whatever it is, the unfulfilled missions of JP and Deendayalji would be better served by their respective votaries coming nearer, understanding each other better and playing a truly complementary role.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. *Politics in India*, p. 166.
2. *Freedom First*, 1952.
3. Foreword to *Total Revolution* VI
4. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 129.
5. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 130.
6. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 3, p. 166.
7. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 134.
8. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 199.
9. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 98.
10. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 96.
11. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 97.
12. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 147.
13. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 147.
14. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 229.
15. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 146.
16. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 199.
17. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 3, p. 85.
18. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 3, p. 92.

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19. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 225.
20. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 3, p. 82.
21. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 3, p. 103-104.
22. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 94.
23. *Total Revolution*, Vol. 1, p. 165.
24. *Integral Approach*, p. 76.
25. *Integral Approach*, p. 40.



H. M. Patel

## Concept of Indian Secularism and Its Relevance\*

ACCORDING TO THE Oxford English Dictionary secularism is described as meaning "sceptical of religious truth or opposed to religious education". In this sense the Indian people can scarcely be termed as secular. They are, generally speaking, devoted to their respective faiths and religious practices, and are far from being opposed to religious instruction. There is however another sense in which the word secularism is used. As defined in Webster's Dictionary, secularism is "a view of life or of any particular matter based on the premise that religion and religious considerations should be ignored or purposely excluded". A variant of the usage of this expression is in the sense of, to quote, "a system of social ethics based upon a doctrine that ethical standards and conduct should be determined exclusively with reference to the present life and social well-being without reference to religion". Then again, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'secular' means "non-spiritual, having no concern with religious or spiritual matters .... anything which is distinct, opposed to or not connected with religion, or ecclesiastical things, temporal as opposed to spiritual or ecclesiastical". Bearing these definitions in mind, it would be appropriate to define a secular State as a State "which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion". India fulfils all the requirements of this definition and can therefore be said to be a secular State in this sense. Secularism is very much a reality in India.

In my belief, secularism does not, however, require that religion should be ignored. It is not necessary that one should be irreligious. All that it requires is that in one's



actions, one does not allow one's religious beliefs or bias *per se* to influence one in any way whatsoever. The paradox is that the average Indian cannot strictly be called secular in this sense even though he is agreeable to his Government adopting secularism as a fundamental policy. The average Indian is secular to the extent that though religious-minded, he is tolerant and accommodating of faiths and beliefs other than his own.

### Secularism — A Universal Concept

It is essential that right at the outset we examine the significance of the title of this talk "Concept of Indian Secularism and its Relevance", which is the first in the Zakir Husain Memorial series of talks entitled "Indian Secularism: A Myth or Reality". The definition of secularism makes it clear that there cannot be any such thing as Indian, or for that matter European or African secularism. The concept of secularism is essentially a universal concept which may be adopted by any country or any people who do not discriminate between one citizen and another on the ground of religious faith, who guarantee freedom in the practice of religion and who formulate or support policies which are not influenced by religious considerations. In India, the concept of secularism or the secularist way of thought has, through historical circumstances, acquired special significance. Right from the day this country became Independent it accepted the concept of secularism in its classic sense as a fundamental and essential concept in its Constitution and as a way of life. Indeed, many feel that we may perhaps have gone a little too far in forbidding the imparting of religious instruction in educational institutions which are wholly financed by the State. Since religious instruction in schools, whatever the religion, would be concerned in the main with the

philosophy, morality, or ethics underlying the teachings of any religion, by its policy of forbidding religious instruction in educational institutions wholly financed by the State, the Government has unwittingly contributed, to no small extent, to the progressive falling off of moral standards.

Although the freedom struggle which led to Independence on August 15, 1947 had been inspired throughout by a secular attitude and outlook, it must be admitted that religion in a sense had played a major part in our freedom struggle. Every effort was made by some of our foreign rulers, as by religious fanatics, to create communal discord whenever and wherever possible. During the final phases of the freedom struggle, communal frenzy was deliberately provoked to an extraordinary degree leading to violence and indeed brutality. It was of course responsible for the final acceptance of the partition of the country. And even after the goal of partition was achieved, the fanatics succeeded in bringing about an unprecedentedly massive transfer of population. Against this background of such experience, the founding fathers of our Constitution felt that a country in which so many religions were practised by its citizens, and which wished to live and develop as a democracy in which every citizen was equal before the law, must necessarily accept also, as its basic principle of administration, the concept of secularism requiring that religion or religious considerations should not be allowed in any way whatever to interfere with the policies and actions of Government. In India certainly, the principle of secularism has been accepted in this sense, and it is true to say that it has been given effect to in that sense by every successive Government of our country since Independence.

Because of this historical background of the



acceptance by India of the concept of secularism, there is some justification for distinguishing the secularism accepted by us as a distinctive Indian secularism. Without secularism, it was realised only too clearly that the unity and integrity of the country would be impossible. Thus for India, the adoption of secularism as a major aspect of its policy is vital for its very existence. It was hoped that after the country had been partitioned, all those who remained in the country, or chose so to remain, would do their utmost to merge with the mainstream of national life and to refrain from allowing religion alone to dominate or determine their outlook and actions. And yet, or perhaps because of that, for political purposes, charges continue to be made by almost every political party of this country against every other that it pays scant respect to secularism and in reality worships at the altar of communalism.

#### Secularism and Communalism

It will clear the confusion that is thus created if we analyse for a moment this expression 'communalism' and why it has become such a word of opprobrium. Quite literally the word is used to signify exclusive or disproportionate interest in the welfare and progress of one's own community or co-religionists. If we refer again to Webster's Dictionary, we find that this expression is defined as "a system or principle of communal organisations in which rival minority groups are devoted to their own interests rather than to those of the whole society". Another possible meaning may be "strong loyalty and adherence to one's community and its values, sometimes appearing in excess, and with nationally divisive effects". Unquestionably, communalism is among the most serious of our problems. The average Indian's loyalty to his caste and community is intense, and constitutes a

constant undermining factor for India's secularism. In an undeveloped economy, and a poor country, economic pressures are also ever present to convert caste and community loyalties into dangerous communal rivalries. And this may easily lead to communal violence.

In India, unfortunately, minorities, and in particular the Muslims and Sikh minorities, are inclined to suspect any policy they do not like or approve of, to be in some way or other due to communalist tendencies on the part of the authorities! Even a proposal to regulate the adoption of children, even orphans or abandoned and unwanted children, has been opposed as being in some way harmful to Muslims — and this in spite of the fact that the proposed legislation was only permissive and did not require a Muslim to adopt a child if he did not wish to do so. If the legislation had been allowed to go through, it would have helped in transforming the lives of literally hundreds of thousands of orphans and other waifs and strays, not wanted for some reason or the other. Living in a parliamentary democracy, of which one of the basic tenets is the rule of law; that is the law shall not differentiate between one citizen and another, it is sad but true that Muslims have consistently opposed the enactments of a common civil law in India that would be binding equally on all its citizens, whatever be their caste or creed. Anyone who adopts this attitude must realise that he is in effect opposing secularism.

Recently, when a Member of Parliament introduced a Private Member's Bill entitled "Freedom of Religion" Bill, the Roman Catholic community in particular, encouraged perhaps by the political parties in opposition, organised a countrywide campaign to condemn the Bill, even though Government pointed out repeatedly that

the Bill was a Private Member's Bill: that it was the right — a very jealously preserved right — of individual Members of Parliament, to bring up for consideration a Bill on practically any subject they chose: that the Government had no reason to formally determine its attitude towards the Bill, and would have needed to do so only if and when this bill succeeded in the ballot for listing among the bills to be taken up for consideration. And finally that on the face of it, the Bill would be unacceptable unless it was radically amended, since it would have to fit into and not fall foul of the provision in the Constitution which assured the citizens of this country the right not only to practise any religion they profess but also to propagate it. The Catholics made no attempt whatsoever to state precisely what it was in the Bill they found objectionable. The operative parts of the Bill required that conversion would not be permitted and would be punishable if it was effected by fraud, force or inducement. It was claimed that the expressions — force, fraud or inducement — were so drafted as to make the fundamental right to profess and propagate one's religion, meaningless. No attempt was made to show how the expressions force, fraud or inducement, as defined in the proposed Bill, would nullify the right to propagate one's religion. Nor, of course, was any effort made to indicate how they would modify the proposed definition of these expressions so that only conversions effected through fraud, force or inducement would be prevented and none others. I am assuming of course that none of these critics from the Archbishop downwards would advocate conversion through fraud, force or inducement! The significant point finally to note is the ease with which it became possible to organise such a powerful campaign against what in effect was an imaginary wrong for it indicated clearly that few in this country have a genuine or

realistic understanding of the expression 'secularism'.

#### Theocratic State — A Stick to Beat the RSS With

And now there has been introduced into the controversy the expression 'theocracy'. It is suggested that there is one organisation the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, of which the objective is a theocratic State. A theocratic State may be defined as a Government which allows its public policies to be determined by the principles and precepts of a religion. No political party in this country has ever urged the establishment of a theocratic State. Even in the most rabid exhibition of anti-secularism, there has never been a suggestion that India should become a theocratic State. The spirit of tolerance has penetrated too deeply into the average Indian psyche for India to ever seriously consider even the possibility of departing from the concept of secularism. And yet because it has been politically expedient to attack the RSS, any stick is felt to be good for the purpose.

It is because of this tendency to use such charges of communalism and the like as a useful, and indeed powerful, political weapon against political opponents that secularism becomes highly relevant for India. Although, as we have seen, our Constitution lays special emphasis on it, and the principle of secularism is undoubtedly generally accepted, we are still not clear in our minds as to whose responsibility it is or should be to see that secularism is honoured in practice. This must clearly be the responsibility of the Government. But no Government can discharge a duty of this nature adequately without the wholehearted support of the people. But at present it is taken for granted that the people for this purpose means the majority community.

And yet clearly that cannot be sufficient. The minority communities also have a role to play. In the United Kingdom, and indeed in all European countries, where the State does not eschew religion, and in fact, in almost every Western State there is a religion which is formally recognised as a State religion, the State is nevertheless considered secular. This is so because in all these countries the attitude of the people generally prevents the actions and the policies of their Governments from being influenced by religious considerations or biases. In so far as India is concerned, although 82 per cent of the population is Hindu, that majority community has not sought to make Hinduism a State religion. On the contrary, the country's Constitution specifically provides against there being a State religion, and assures to every citizen the right to practise his religion and even to propagate it. And in spite of this, it is evident that in our country where every successive Government has always firmly subscribed to the concept of secularism, it has not been possible to make secularism a reality because secularism has not yet been accepted by all its citizens, that is, the majority as well as the minority communities. Our problem, in effect, is precisely this, how to make all our countrymen accept a secular attitude as the only correct attitude to adopt in dealing with all our problems — social as well as political.

#### Minorities and the Majorities

To obtain a clear idea of the spirit underlying our understanding of this concept, it is necessary to look at the various relevant provisions in our Constitution. There is the right to freedom of religion. Not only is the right to practise one's religion assured, but also the right to propagate it (Article 25). Every religion is assured also of the right to

manage its own affairs, establish its own religious as well as educational institutions for imparting religious instruction (Article 26). Article 28 prohibits the giving of religious instruction in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds. This prohibition, however, does not apply to educational institutions of religious minorities. These may give religious instruction to their students even if they are receiving aid out of State funds and so long as they do not insist upon imparting religious instruction to students who are minors without their own consent or the consent of their guardians. Article 30 permits all minorities, whether based on religion or language to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. What is more, the State cannot discriminate in the grant of aid on the ground that the institution is manned by a minority, whether religious or linguistic. The Constitution has thus given the fullest possible protection to the religions of the minorities as also to their religious and educational institutions. In the process, they have for all practical purposes deprived the children of the majority community, facilities for imparting religious instruction, or even education in ethics or morality. It is the opinion of many wise people that this has had very unfortunate consequences. The point to note is that what was considered essential for the minorities was apparently considered to be of no consequence for the majority! Successive Governments in India have always sought to ensure completely fair treatment to the minority communities. There can be no question but that the authorities in India have been secular in their outlook and attitude towards all minorities. Nevertheless such is the misfortune of the country that the largest minority, the Muslims, do not feel that they are being treated on a par with all others. However unreasonable this view may appear to the Government and to the majority

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community, it must be admitted that such a feeling exists.

Besides the Muslims who constitute a little over 11 per cent of the population — and who formed just about 10 per cent of the population a decade earlier — there are other minorities, the Christians, the Sikhs, the Buddhists, the Parsis, the Jains and others. Except for the Muslims, none of these other religious minorities appear to have any sense of insecurity or of being unfairly treated; none at any rate has ever voiced any grievance on the score of a non-secular attitude being displayed towards it by the majority community. The Muslims who claim to have genuine grievances against the majority community and the Government, State and Central, have unfortunately never set out these grievances in precise terms. They have certainly not attempted to indicate clearly what they would like to be done. In other words they have no concrete solution to offer. It becomes incumbent, therefore, upon all of us to give sustained thought to this problem of winning the confidence of the Muslim minority.

In a plural society, the unity and integrity of a country can be ensured through a steady process of assimilation and integration. This process should be at the cultural and social levels, without affecting the individual's religious beliefs. If assimilation is not found to be feasible for any reason, the only alternative is to take steps to ensure the unity and integrity of the country through a conscious decision on the part of all concerned, the majority as also the minorities, to live amicably together, respecting, and indeed protecting, each other's religious and cultural values and practices. In India both processes are at work in respect of all the minorities. It is suggested that because Islam is a world

religion, Muslims find themselves torn between two loyalties, loyalty to their country, and loyalty to their religion to which people of many countries claim adherence. Christianity like Islam is also a world religion. This has never created any problem for Christians, of whatever denomination they may be, in acting as loyal citizens of the country of which they are citizens. There should be no reason for Indian Muslims to feel differently or experience any difficulty in doing likewise. It is for the Muslims to resist the efforts which it is well-known continue to be made, to sow seeds of dissatisfaction in their minds.

#### Away from the Mainstream

Secular India makes it possible for Indian Muslims to live in amity and cooperation as equals with the non-Muslim majority. Not only is all this assured through constitutional provisions, but the country's democratic system gives the Indian Muslim every opportunity of growing and developing. In spite of all these facts, it cannot be disputed that Muslims remain unconvinced and in justification of their distrust point to the occurrence of communal riots every now and again in different parts of the country, to their relatively smaller representation in all Government services, including the police and the armed forces, to their relative backwardness in education and to their poverty. It cannot be asserted that any deliberate hurdles are placed in their path and yet backwardness among them persists. If we analyse this further, we discover that for some reason or the other many Muslims in the country choose to cut themselves off from the mainstream of social change and progress, they persist with *Madrasah* education to the neglect of general education for their children, they discourage female education and generally pursue methods which cannot but act as a



hindrance in their march towards social advancement. It is time the Muslims did some searching of the heart and sought honestly for a policy, a course of action which would take them forward in step with the rest of their fellow citizens.

It is indeed necessary for all concerned to analyse in depth what concerted and sustained steps should be taken to help Muslims effectively and to ensure the community's rapid progress. The question that must be asked is why it is that the Muslims themselves are unable to see that they are pursuing a course which can only lead to widening the gap between themselves and the more advanced sections of Indian society. The Muslims must be encouraged by historical circumstances and events that inhibit them and to realise that they too can enjoy all the social advantages of other communities and take their rightful place in our society. We must never forget to acknowledge that the partition of the country had the most serious psychological effect on the Muslims left behind. For one thing, apart from the Muslims residing in the areas which became Pakistan, large number of Muslims from other parts of India also chose to migrate to Pakistan and these happened in the main to be the most advanced members of the community who had held high positions in civil and military services, in academic institutions and who had been successful in trade and industry. This meant that a major qualitative depletion in the strength of the community was created immediately on partition and this constituted a serious problem not only for the Muslims who remained behind but also for the country as a whole. Left with a fraction of its former imaginative and able leadership, and with no similarly able leadership thrown up the Indian Muslims unfortunately

were unable for several years after partition to join the mainstream of national activities. The majority community in turn neglected to compensate for the lacunae and considered this minority community's inactivity as suggestive of indifference to the country and its problems.

#### Politicians Fanning Flame of Communalism

It is now 30 years since Independence and by now we ought to have found a satisfactory solution. If we have failed to do so, and the majority community and this minority community are still unable to repose faith in each other, it is surely incumbent on all of us to make still greater efforts to find out why this is the case. We are people of one country and have to live and work together for the greater prosperity of our country and ourselves. Still greater measures of tolerance and understanding are called for. In my view, there is nothing more important than a secular attitude to help this process. All concerned must sincerely accept the need for such an attitude towards each other and in the solution of our common problems. Communal incidents should not be made the occasion for mutual recriminations and exchange of diatribe but rather such incidents should be handled firmly and expeditiously, and all who are involved, whatever be their status, should be dealt with severely and in a salutary manner so that everyone may know that justice will be visited upon all who disrupt the peace regardless of caste or creed. Most communal incidents are not planned but originate from some small or trivial incident, which, if not dealt with immediately, escalates rapidly, because of the underlying mutual distrust, and the tendency to jump to the conclusion, without inquiry, that a communal riot has started. Rumour and panic take a firm hold in such a situation and before one realises what is

happening, a major disturbance is underway. If we could only succeed in removing distrust and implant in our people instead a genuine secular feeling and attitude, there would be much less readiness to jump to conclusions and discredit the other community. Secularism is something that requires to be sedulously nourished. Instead of fanning the flame of communalism, which our political leaders in particular have no hesitation in doing and that too in the name of secularism, they must, with a greater sense of responsibility towards the weaker sections of our society, see that positive measures are taken to reduce and eliminate tension and distrust. Secularism is vital for India's development. This is accepted by all right-thinking people and every citizen feel he enjoys the rights and privileges of citizenship, no less than any other, regard-

less of his religious faith. What has not yet happened is that secularism has not yet come to be equated with nationalism: which it must if it is to acquire the necessary emotional appeal. India has chosen the course of secularism — the only moral course open to it and despite the many minor lapses in the past in its attempts to steer true to this course, it has, by and large, progressed successfully. It will however, now depend upon the foresight and statesmanship of those who lead the country in future as to whether we can hold this course long enough to steer clear of the murky shallows of communalism into the clear bright waters of a truly egalitarian and secular society.

*(Former Union Home Minister, New Delhi.)*

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\*Paper presented at the Zakir Husain Memorial Annual Lecture on August 30, 1979 in New Delhi.



D. Raja Ganesan

## A Perspective on Religion and Economic Development\*

### Past Trends

ON THE relationship between the spheres of economics and religion there are three major schools of opinion deriving respectively from Hegel, Max Weber and Karl Marx.<sup>1</sup>

Of the three, the view deriving from Max Weber has been widely accepted in the social sciences as it is closest to the prevailing philosophy of the social sciences. Weber concedes at once the "interdependence and independent variability" of ideas and material conditions. Starting from this postulate he made an inquiry into why certain countries in Europe were economically well-developed and others were not. Weber raised the central problem of "whether men's conceptions of the cosmic universe, including those of divinity, and men's religious interests within such a conceptual framework could influence or shape their concrete actions and social relationships, particularly in the mundane field of economic action."<sup>2</sup> He extended his study to the religions of India and arrived at the conclusion that religion is a *critical factor* in catalysing economic growth — at a given point in time.

As he proceeded he classified the major world religions as other-worldly and inner-worldly. He classified the alternative roads to salvation provided by religions as ascetic mastery of the world and passive resignation to it.<sup>3</sup>

Max Weber's thesis about the relationship between religion and economic growth can be stated as follows:

The religious orientation of inner-worldly asceticism, when it permeates a culture, with its emphasis on self-reliance and the prosperous transformation of the mundane

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environment as a 'salvation-indicator' fosters the spirit of entrepreneurship which is a critical input for economic growth.<sup>4</sup> Obversely other-worldly orientation in the religion of a culture is an inhibition against economic growth.

Kurt Samuelson has questioned the original formulation of the invariable relationship between inner-worldly asceticism and economic growth on the basis of an examination of the historical development of Calvinism — Weber's point of departure. He points out that the single common factor in the exhortations of the most important Puritan writers and preachers is to subordinate all economic activity to Christian morality; that economic success as a 'salvation-indicator' did not have its genesis on the religious side but among the entrepreneurs who sought religious justification for their conduct.<sup>5</sup>

The same taxonomy of religions was put forward by Albert Schweitzer as 'world and life-affirming' and 'world and life-negating'. He argued that Indian thought—Hindu and Buddhist—was world and life-negating.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Radhakrishnan answered the criticism by pointing out that such dichotomisation is not faithful to facts; that the difference is only a question of relative emphasis, often within the life cycle of the same individual; also that the quest for individual perfection and worldly action need not be antithetical.<sup>7</sup>

Weber's original purpose in undertaking this line of inquiry was to contribute a corrective against the argument of the influence of economic changes on religion. When his work is viewed from this perspective the dichotomy loses much of its sharpness. Attributing a 'monocausal' model of economic growth to his thesis is going beyond the warrant of his framework.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, the thesis underwent further distortions, the dichotomy was magnified and the controversy intensified to a polemical level. "...many writers work with a mythical version of what Weber actually said..."<sup>9</sup> What was put forward as a cultural source for a critical input in economic growth became the basis for an exclusive alibi for the economic backwardness of Asia. Religion became the chief villain in 'Asian Drama'.

David C. McClelland first put forward the same hypothesis.<sup>10</sup> But on the basis of a study during a training programme in economic motivation for Indian entrepreneurs he has concluded that traditional religious orientation need not be an obstacle to economic development.<sup>11</sup>

Robert N. Sellah, from a study of Weber, called for changes in the structure of Asian societies, towards that of the industrialised West.<sup>12</sup> But the Japanese social anthropologist Prof. Chie Nakane, comparing Britain and Japan — both of them economically developed — concludes economic development does not change the social structure very much.<sup>13</sup>

K. William Kapp too follows Weber and concludes that "a lasting solution to the problem of economic development in the case of India can be found only by a gradual but systematic transformation of India's system, her world outlook, and levels of personal aspirations."<sup>14</sup> But Milton Singer has pointed out that "Kapp does not demonstrate that such consequence follow logically, psychologically or culturally.... We do not have the empirical studies that begin to give us definite and quantitative information (on these aspects)".<sup>15</sup>

Again Milton Singer found in his studies in India that Hindu religious ethic and

entrepreneurship were not incompatible after all. He points out that Weber based his thesis on the 'religious texts' of India and not in the 'context' of how religion is interpreted and lived. Weber had correlated his knowledge of the religious texts with the relative backwardness of India at the time of his study.<sup>16</sup>

Gunnar Myrdal, Nobel Laureate in Economics, emphasises the incongruence and inapplicability of Western theories, models and concepts in the study of the economic problems of South Asia.<sup>17</sup> He also recognises the importance of people's value attitudes in economic development.<sup>18</sup> He acknowledges that the basic doctrines of the old religions in the region — Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism — are not necessarily inimical to modernisation, the prelude to economic growth.<sup>19</sup> He even concedes that some beliefs and practices — like the ritual of washing — may be a pragmatic accommodation to the environment, in accord with the rational considerations or just harmless.<sup>20</sup> He also confesses to a 'scanty and uncertain knowledge' of the value — attitudes of the people in the absence of empirical inquiries.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless he characterises popular religion here as a force of inertia and irrationality.<sup>22</sup>

He points to a 'Beam in Our Eyes' in ignoring the socio-cultural matrix of the religion in the context of its economic growth.<sup>23</sup> But the empirical studies made in India and the incontrovertible historical fact that the people of every religion have had alternating periods of economic growth and stagnation,<sup>24</sup> indicate that no religion need be incompatible with economic growth. The burst of industrial revolution may have been, after all, the culmination of a cumulative process, precipitated in a particular place at a particular point in

time by a rare and accidental conjunction of circumstances.<sup>25</sup> Maybe, the religious orientation of that place and time made just a marginal contribution.

Thus there seems to be a bigger beam in our eyes — assuming *a priori* incompatibility between some religions and economic growth. Yet another assumption is that there is only one royal road to economic growth. In my humble opinion, an economic growth model that takes into account the respective socio-cultural milieux of the various regions and harnesses the dormant cultural motivation thereof towards economic development — with the least possible conflict and dissonance, deserves another Nobel Prize.

The empirical untenability of naive interpretations of the social consequences of religious orientation is revealed in the context of the population problem also. Buddhism and Hinduism are the two major other-worldly religions according to Max Weber's taxonomy. But Buddhistic China and India were the first countries to suffer from demographic pressures.

A study of the literature on the relationship between religion and economic development suggests that *religious reforms* may have accelerated economic growth in the past.<sup>26</sup> & <sup>27</sup> If this is so, the period of the Buddha and Adi Sankara should have been followed up by economic growth. For, in the historical context of their societies, they may be perceived as reformers of religion. McClelland has reported an indirect technique for verifying such an hypothesis about the past through a study of the drawings of the respective periods found in archaeological specimens.<sup>28</sup> I take this opportunity to appeal for encouragement for research on these lines.

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Thus any religion *per se* may not after all be an obstacle to economic growth. On the other hand reform of religion may accelerate economic growth. Naïve interpretation of the economic effects of religious doctrines is empirically untenable.

This is not an argument in blind defence of all religious doctrines. Only that economic considerations should not be put forward as an excuse for irreligion. Religion has *per force* to be flexible so as to accommodate the progress of history and the exigencies of social change. For example, the path of devotion (Bhakti) as against the path of contemplation and ritualistic observance seems to preponderate under conditions of rapid economic growth. Milton Singer has reported a downgrading of ritual observance with a concurrent upgrading of devotional faith in India recently — during a phase of rapid economic growth. This was not objected to in spite of the fact that the devotional path is not viewed with much favour traditionally among the group he studied.<sup>29</sup> But when devotion to God (Bhakti) increases without an improvement in morality, which is the more essential aspect of religion, it is time for religion to call for restraint and self-examination — as our Swamigal has recently done at home. For, stability of society, which hinges on morality, is more important for the welfare of its members than economic prosperity. In relation to economic growth, the function of religion is to guard against the debilitating social consequences of economic growth. The basic functional identity of all religions in the socio-economic sphere consists in guarding against the temptations of affluence.

There seems to be a dialectic of release and restraint in the relationship between religion and society in rhythm with economic growth and stagnation.<sup>30</sup>

If the hypothesis on the positive relationship between religious reforms and economic growth is established, those of us who are interested in the relationship between religion and society must dedicate ourselves to research on the socio-religious implications of techno-economic changes, religious reform and cultural renaissance.

In this direction our objective should be to see to it that in this dialectic the pendulum does not swing too far on the side of economic ambition and affluence and, to change to a metaphor from Max Weber, the spirit of religious asceticism does not escape from the cage for ever.

#### Religion and Current Problems of Mankind

Anthropologists have concluded that the quest for religion is deep in the nature of man.<sup>31</sup> Human existence is meant for something better than faster and faster cycles of production, transport, distribution and consumption. The current problems of mankind have been engendered by the progressive secularisation of the polity, economic relations and culture, displacement of religion by ideologies as the guiding principle for mankind.<sup>32</sup> The failure of ideologies<sup>33</sup> and the eventual disjunction of the realms: the polity promises equality, the economy demands discipline, efficiency and differential allocation of rewards on this basis whereas culture encourages morally unrestrained exploration of experience.<sup>34</sup>

This paper is confined to the problems related to the sphere of economic life. The major psycho-social problems are the institutionalisation of envy and the attendant revolution of rising expectations,<sup>35</sup> identity crisis<sup>36</sup>, absurdity (perceiving existence as

futile and meaningless)<sup>37</sup> and mal-orientation to death — limitless demand, insatiability, refusal to go away from this world unsatisfied.<sup>38</sup>

Bell who has discussed these problems together advocates return to religion.<sup>39</sup> He has made the recommendation in the context of western societies. Inasmuch as these are engendered by industrialisation, they are in the horizon of the east also which is closely following the west in economic development.

I humbly suggest some of the solutions for these problems that Hinduism and the Protestant Ethic — offer. Inasmuch as these are existential problems that recur in periods of rapid social change — may be, with increasing intensity as the material civilisation advances — every religion must be having eternally valid answers. At this juncture I also take the opportunity to suggest a multireligious seminar on the theme suggested by R.H. Jawney about forty years ago<sup>40</sup>: "an examination of the spiritual problems concealed behind the economic mechanisms of our society .... (and) a philosophical discussion of the contribution which religion can make towards their solution."

The institutionalisation of envy, the revolution of rising expectations and alienation can be solved by returning to the original meaning of the term 'calling': as an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel and does feel towards the content of his professional activity no matter in what it consists....<sup>41</sup> Or, to the attitude of *Nishkama Karma* advocated in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Such an attitude is not a product of nature but involves a long and arduous process of

education.<sup>42</sup> Hence there is a strong need for intensive 'field work' on the part of respective religious institutions.

For the problem of identity crisis in the west, Bell advocates the acceptance of the authority of revelation, continuity of tradition and the mutual redemption of 'fathers and sons'.<sup>43</sup>

In India, 'the problem of identity crisis may be examined in the light of the *Mahavakyas* of the *Upanishads*. Of course the attitude that engenders identity crisis and the attitude behind the *Mahavakyas* are polar opposites, facing in different directions, in the orientation of consciousness to existence. Identity crisis is a socio-historical problem arising in the context of the multiplicity of conflicting social roles that a person has to play without a principle of functional integration at the level of empirical psychology. The *Mahavakyas* have an eternal and transcendent significance. The gap seems to be hopelessly big and the solution to the problem practically useless. Nevertheless an exercise to begin with at the theoretical level may be made.

In orientation to death the *ashrama* scheme of life advocated in Hinduism is in perfect harmony with the ebb and flow of the *elan vital* in the body. To one who voluntarily renounces the world and spends the last phases of life in meditating on the meaning of existence death comes — to borrow a metaphor from Kalidasa — 'as a welcome guest'.<sup>44</sup> Surrender to the Lord's will and His Grace can help the people of the west avoid mal-orientation to death.

Albert Camus, the modern philosopher who explored the concept of absurdity in some depth, points out that absurdity is likely to strike the common man when he just looks back on the monotony of his routine

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and the purposelessness of his existence. This is a manifest consequence of subordinating basic human needs to economic mechanisms. He also admits that the doctrine of *Maya* is one resolution for the problem.<sup>45</sup>

The concept of *Maya* and its ethical corollary of 'remaining in the world, but not of it' can thus contribute a solution to the problem of meaning (in the Weberian sense of the term) in response to which religion arose amidst men.<sup>46</sup>

The leap of faith into the arms of Christ — the solution that Kierkegaard, the progenitor of the concept of the absurd, advocated may redeem the west from the abyss of absurdity.

Thus all religions are compatible with a legitimate level of economic growth. The current problems of mankind which is going through an unprecedented phase of economic growth are due to according primacy for economic needs over the total needs of man. Many of those problems that have been engendered by the economic mechanism can be solved by a return to religion.

### Religion in the Future

In the past, the primary sector of the economy was predominant. Man was playing a game against nature in his daily work. In the present the secondary sector is predominant and mankind is playing a game against machines for fulfilling its physical wants. In the future where man will be completely freed of the toil for physical necessities, mankind will be playing game between persons which is the model occupation of the tertiary sector.<sup>47</sup>

The key to an understanding of social

change all over the world is through industrialisation and technological developments. The post-industrial society that is just emerging from the horizon in the west will be characterised by the stupendous vastness and the maddening rapidity of changes. Change will be its only enduring feature.<sup>48</sup> Man will badly need a stable anchorage which religion alone can give.

The process of secularisation has desiccated human consciousness of its religious elements. This symbolised by Nietzsche's proclamations at the beginning of this century 'God is dead' and 'live dangerously.'

A void is created in human consciousness in the place of God.<sup>49</sup> 'Everything is permitted'<sup>50</sup> and freed of physical necessities, with unprecedented power over his material environment, man is running the risk of losing his mooring in the universe, becoming a civilised nomad, 'a useless passion' agitated by aimless restlessness towards self-destruction as the century draws to a close. This tendency is conspicuous among the younger generation.

The solution that many thinkers advocate for those problems and trends is a return to the shelter of God.

### Summary

1. Religion and economic growth need not be incompatible.
2. Religious reform and economic growth may be positively related.
3. Every religion has a solution to each one of the current problems of mankind engendered by economic mechanisms.



4. Entering the future without religion is dangerous for mankind.

### Suggestions

1. Research on the positive relationship between religious reform and economic growth may be initiated.
2. A multireligious seminar on the pro-

blems of modern man and the solutions that various religions can offer may be conducted.

3. Study and fieldwork in the area of the relationship between religion and society may be organised.

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17. Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, New York: Pantheon, 1968, pp. 16-17.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 78.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-24.
24. Vikas Mishra, *Hinduism and Economic Growth*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 41-43. Of course Mishra has concluded that religion is a 'fair weather friend'. He also poses the question: Is it not too much to expect that religion will always turn the external conditions to the advantage of the economy. And this is precisely that Weber went about. Mishra has also concluded that in early times the institutions and attitudes of Hinduism generally helped rather than hindered economic growth and welfare,

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50. *Ibid.*

but under the impact of western industrialisation they acted as brakes on economic growth. He acknowledges that there has been some adjustment to present-day needs but judges that it lags behind the needs. He advocates an intelligent attack on the harmful institutions and attitudes (pp. 205-385). But the findings of McClelland (1971) and of Milton Singer (1972) question the validity of prescriptions based on observation relating to abstract doctrines and aggregate units.

25. Kurt Samuelson, *loc. cit.* Chapter III.
26. & 27. David C. McClelland, *loc. cit.*, pp. 411-413.
28. David C. McClelland, *loc. cit.*, pp. 126-127 also Atkinson (Ed.) *Motives in Fantasy, Action and Society*, New Delhi: The Affiliated East-Press Pvt. Ltd. 1960, pp. 249-260.
29. Milton, Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernises*, *loc. cit.*, p. 157.
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33. *Ibid.*, p. 41-42.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 32-33.
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38. Sal Bellow quoted in Daniel Bell, *Ibid.*, p. 50.
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42. *Ibid.* p. 62.
43. Daniel Bell, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.
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50. *Ibid.* pp. 13-14.



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## Indian Labour Movement—III

### Fifth Phase

#### Indian National Trade Union Congress

THE INDIAN NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONGRESS (INTUC) was established in 1947 with the support and active cooperation of the national leaders. Due to the long incarceration of the national leaders, the AITUC had a majority of the communists. Industrial relations were on the decline in the country, the number of strikes had increased and it appeared that the plans for national uplift could not make any progress. It was considered quite essential that the working class should take up constructive work for the fulfilment of the national ideals.

The veteran leaders of the Indian National Congress felt that it would be impossible for the country to make progress, if the working class resorted to destructive activities such as strikes. In the present economic condition of the country, it is far from practical to bring immediately revolutionary changes in the working conditions, structure of the wages of the employees and such other problems. To develop the democratic system, and to lead the labour movement to Gandhian thought and control the leaders of the Indian National Congress decided to organise a powerful central organisation of labour to be based upon independent thinking. So, the Hindustan Majdoor Sewak Sangh called a meeting of the leaders of the trade unions at Delhi on the 3rd and 4th May, 1947 under the Presidency of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Two hundred representatives took part in it.

The meeting resolved to organise a central trade union organisation under the name 'Indian National Trade Union Congress' (INTUC). Soon after its establishment, the trade unions holding Gandhian thought

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and ideals, got themselves affiliated to the INTUC. The opposition criticised this organisation as controlled and supported by the Government. Shri Suresh Chandra Banerji was elected as the First President, and Shri Khandubhai Desai as the General Secretary of the INTUC. In 1948, Shri Harihar Nath Shastri was elected its President. He was afterwards elected as its General Secretary and he held that important office till his accidental death in December, 1953.

The foundation of the INTUC on May 3, 1947 was a result of the historical necessity felt by the prominent labour leaders, who believed that a well-organised labour movement was not only an activity for economic, political or social uplift, but was also essential in bringing about a socialistic pattern of society to strengthen the nation. There was a need in the field of Indian working class to arouse a new power which would create confidence in the security, justice and freedom for the working class. Thus the establishment of the INTUC was the fulfilment of the call of the times. Since then, this organisation has been making progress in guiding the Indian working class. The INTUC has succeeded in many directions and materially assisted the economic progress of the country. The constitution, as given below, gives us an idea of the object and procedure of this Central organisation:-

1. (i) To establish an order of society which is free from hinderances in the way of an all-round development of its individual members, which fosters the growth of human personality in all its aspects, and goes to the utmost limit in progressively eliminating social, political or economic exploitation and inequality, the profit motive in the economic

activity and organisation of society and the anti-social concentration of power in any form;

- (ii) To place industry under national ownership and control in suitable form in order to realise the aforesaid objective in the quickest time;
  - (iii) To organise society in such a manner as to ensure full employment and the best utilisation of its manpower and other resources;
  - (iv) To secure increasing association of the workers in the administration of industry and their full participation in its control;
  - (v) To promote generally the social, civic and political interests of the working class.
2. (i) To secure an effective and complete organisation of all categories of workers, including agricultural labour;
  - (ii) To guide and coordinate the activities of the affiliated organisations;
  - (iii) To assist in the formation of Trade Unions;
  - (iv) To promote the organisation of workers of each industry on a nation-wide basis;
  - (v) To assist in the formation of regional or provincial branches or federations.
3. (i) To secure speedy improvement of conditions of work and life and of the status of the workers in industry and society;

- (ii) To obtain for the workers various measures of social security including adequate provisions in respect of accidents, maternity sickness, old age and unemployment;
  - (iii) To secure a living wage for every worker in normal employment and to bring about a progressive improvement in the workers standard of life;
  - (iv) To regulate hours and other conditions of work in keeping with the requirements of the workers in the matter of health, recreation and cultural development;
  - (v) To secure suitable legislative enactments for ameliorating the condition of the workers and to ensure the proper enforcement of legislation for the protection and uplift of labour.
4. (i) To establish just industrial relations;
  - (ii) To secure redressal of grievances, without stoppages of work, by means of negotiation and conciliation and failing these by arbitration or adjudication;
  - (iii) Where adjudication is not applied, and arbitration is not available for the redressal of grievances, to have recourse to other legitimate methods, including strikes or any suitable form of *satyagraha*;
  - (iv) To make the necessary arrangements for the efficient conduct and satisfactory and speedy conclusion of authorised strikes or *satyagraha*.
  5. (i) To foster the spirit of solidarity,

service, brotherhood, cooperation and mutual help among the workers;

- (ii) To develop in the workers a sense of responsibility towards industry and the community.
- (iii) To raise the workers' standard of efficiency and discipline.

The means to be adopted for the furtherance of the objects mentioned above shall be peaceful and consistent with truth. As regards the membership, the INTUC has been making steady progress since its inception. At the beginning 35 trade unions with a membership of 1,57,000 were affiliated to it. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association with more than 60,000 members was the first to get itself affiliated to it. The strength of the INTUC during the past few years is shown below year-wise:-

Year	Membership
1960	14,00,579
1961	16,63,893
1962	16,36,458
1963	17,22,621
1964	17,76,161
1965	18,86,625
1968	19,04,499
1969	19,82,116
1971	21,76,420
1974	23,80,115
1978	32,48,354

The INTUC has its branches in all the States of the Indian Union. It has also been encouraging the formation of Industrial Federations. The INTUC has under its control the Federations noted below:-

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2. Indian National Defence Workers Federation.
3. Indian National Electricity Workers Federation.
4. Indian National Mine Workers Federation.
5. National Federation of Petroleum Workers.
6. Indian National Chemical Workers Federation.
7. Indian National Port & Dock Workers Federation.
8. Indian National Iron & Steel Workers Federation.
9. Indian National Paper Mills Workers Federation.
10. Indian National Plantation Workers Federation.
11. Indian National Press Workers Federation.
12. Indian National Textile Workers Federation.
13. Indian National Sugar Mills Workers Federation.
14. Indian National Transport Workers Federation.
15. National Federation of Indian Railwaymen.
16. All India Life Insurance Employees Association.
17. All India Cantonment Board Employees Federation.
18. All India Bank Employees Federation.
19. Indian National Food and Drinks Workers Federation.
20. Indian National Municipal and Local bodies Workers Federation.
21. Indian National Building and Construction Workers Federation.
22. Indian National Rural Labour Federation.
23. Indian National Commercial and Salaried Employees Federation.
24. All India Confederation of Bank Officers Organisation.

25. Federation of National P&T Organisation.

To propagate its views, and to acquaint the people with its nation-wide activities, the Central and Provincial offices of the INTUC have been publishing the following periodicals:-

*The Indian Worker* from the Central Office, the daily *Jagaran* and the weekly *Majdoor Sandesh* from its M.P. branch, Indore; *The Uzhaippalar Ulagam* a Tamil fortnightly from Coimbatore, the Bangali fortnightly *Shramik* from Silchar (Assam), *The Mazdoor Ahvan*, Hindi-cum-Marathi fortnightly from Nagpur. *The Khan Mazdoor* from Dhanbad, the Marathi weekly *Kamagar* from Bombay, the Assamese weekly *Mazdoor* from Dibrugarh, Assam, the Bengali fortnightly *Vartman Bharat* from Hooghli, the Gujarati bimonthly *Majdoor Patrika* from Baroda, English-Hindi fortnightly *The Bharatiya Rail Shramik* from Calcutta, the Gujarat weekly *Shramjivi* from Rajkot, the Hindi monthly *Majdoor Samachar* from Kanpur and the Hindi weekly *Karma* from Patna. Besides, a research centre has been established in the Central office, which is doing useful work in the interest of the working class.

The INTUC has a firm belief in truth and non-violence. It also believes in deciding industrial disputes by negotiations, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication. It counsels strike, when all these methods fail. The INTUC is a founder-member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. It has also got the cooperation of the ICFTU and the International Labour Organisation in a number of ways. This is the most representative labour organisation of the country and regularly participates in the activities of the International Labour Organisation.

An industrial truce conference was convened in December, 1947 to consider the question of deficient production after the acquisition of Independence. It was attended by the representative of the Government, management and the trade unions. The conference passed a resolution, to stress the need for increase in the industrial production, which was possible to be achieved only through full cooperation and friendly relations between the management and the labour. The management should obtain suitable cooperation of the workers and pay them proper wages, and create suitable working conditions for them. The workers should put forth greater perseverance to increase the National Income, only after which it was possible for them to have steady rise in their standard of living. A solution to all the difficulties could be found by adopting some measures for mutual exchange of views by means of which evil effects on production could be done away with.<sup>109</sup>

To achieve these ends, the conference recommended that:-

1. The Government machinery to solve mutual disputes should be fully utilised and where it does not exist, it should be created without delay.
2. A system should be devised on central, provincial and regional levels to study the working conditions of the employees and determination of fair wages to them, as well as to devise ways and means for the cooperation of the workers in industrial production.
3. To remove day-to-day disputes and differences of opinions, a works committee should be established with the representatives of management and elected representatives of the working class.

4. To raise the standard of living of the workers, the problem of the housing of the industrial labour should be considered without delay, the expenditure on this account being met proportionately by the Government, the management and the labour. The contribution of the labourers should be in the form of reasonable house rent.<sup>110</sup>

The next year government set up a committee to consider the question of bonus and to make recommendations. The members of the Committee, representing labour were Messrs Khandubhai Desai, Asoka Mehta, and V.B. Karnik. The Committee could not make any unanimous recommendations. Later on, many of the industries adopted a procedure for payment of bonus, in accordance with the principles laid down in a judgment of the labour appellate tribunal.

#### The Hind Mazdoor Sabha

After leaving the National Congress, the leaders professing socialistic ideas, established the socialist party. They then felt the need for a central labour organisation, befitting their trend of thought. Consequently, they founded a separate organisation known as the 'Hind Mazdoor Panchayat'. After the merger of Indian Federation of Labour into this organisation its name was changed to 'Hind Mazdoor Sabha' which began to function in 1948. In its early stages, Shri Asoka Mehta established the organisation by his efforts in the capacity of General Secretary.

The aims and objects of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha shall be:-

- (i) To promote the economic, political, social and cultural interests of the Indian working class;

(ii) To guide and coordinate the activities of affiliated organisations and assist them in their work;

(iii) To watch, safeguard and promote the interests, rights and privileges of workers in all matters relating to their employment;

(iv) To promote the formation of:-

(a) Federations of unions from the same industry or occupation and;

(b) National unions of workers employed in the same industry or occupation;

(v) To secure and maintain for the workers:-

- (a) Freedom of Speech,
- (b) Freedom of Association,
- (c) Freedom of Assembly,
- (d) Freedom of Press,
- (e) Right to work or maintenance,
- (f) Right to social security, and
- (g) Right to strike.

(vi) To organise for and promote the establishment of a democratic, socialist society in India;

(vii) To promote the formation of cooperative societies and to foster workers education,

(viii) To cooperate with other organisations in the country and outside having similar aims and objects.

In the promotion and realisation of these aims and objects, the Sabha shall employ all legitimate, peaceful and democratic methods.

The Hind Mazdoor Sabha is active in opening its branches in almost all States of the Indian Union. In some of the States, its membership has considerably increased. The following table throws light on the progress of the HMS:-

<i>Year</i>	<i>Membership</i>
1954-55	2,11,315
1955-56	2,03,798
1956-57	2,33,990
1957-58	1,92,948
1958-59	2,41,636
1959-60	2,86,202

The HMS has favoured the principles of collective bargaining and criticised the principle of compulsory adjudication. It has fully expounded its thoughts on collective bargaining, viz., that 'collective bargaining is quite essential under a democratic government. Without the right of strike, collective bargaining cannot be effective. To declare strike illegal, therefore, amounts to a refusal of democratic rights.

The Hind Mazdoor Sabha, has been taking part in the Indian Labour Conference, in its standing committee and other committees. It publishes a periodical, the 'Hind Mazdoor', to acquaint the working class with its activities. In the international field the HMS has been affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

#### The United Trade Union Congress

A party of the labour leaders held the view that the trade unions should keep themselves aloof from politics. It was not satisfied with the establishment of the HMS. So the leaders subscribing to the view that they should keep away from politics, brought

into being the United Trade Union Congress in 1949.

The following are its aims and objects:-

1. Founding of a socialist society in India.
2. To establish the state of farmers and labourers.
3. Nationalisation and socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.
4. To protect the rights and interests of the employees in social, cultural, economic and political matter and to bring about improvement in their status.
5. To secure and maintain for the workers: freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of press, right to work and maintenance, to social security and right to strike.
6. To bring about unity among the trade union movement.

To achieve these ends, the United Trade Union Congress (UTUC) shall employ all legitimate, peaceful and democratic methods and will take to strike as last resort.

The following table shows the progress of the UTUC:-

Year	Membership
1952-53	1,28,242
1953-54	1,63,997
1954-55	1,95,242
1955-56	1,59,109
1957-58	82,001
1958-59	90,629
1959-60	1,10,034

Thus after the formation of these separate central trade union organisations, the strength of AITUC was sufficiently reduced, and five years after the twenty-third session, the twenty-fourth session of the AITUC was held at Calcutta from May 27 to 30, 1954. The branches of the AITUC exist in almost all the States of the Indian Union, and those in West Bengal, Kerala, Bombay, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab are considered to be in good condition. In other States the AITUC organisation is weak. The following table shows the progress of the AITUC:-

Year	Membership
1952-53	2,10,914
1954-55	3,06,963
1955-56	4,22,851
1957-58	5,37,567
1958-59	5,07,654
1959-60	5,08,962

The membership in the year 1975 was 25,89,791.

To train the workers in the trade union movement, the AITUC conducted in 1953 at Nagpur, a training class for two weeks. The AITUC had its Silver Jubilee Session at Ernakulam in 1957. This Session was attended by the fraternal delegates of World Federation of Trade Unions, the Central Council of Trade Unions of USSR, All China Federation of Trade Unions, the Revolutionary Trade Union movement of Czechoslovakia, the Central Council of Trade Unions of Rumania and others.

To give a comparative view the membership of the four central labour organisations viz., the INTUC, the HMS and the UTUC in early stage is shown in the table given below. The figures given, have been

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AITUC  
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dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation.

	1956		1957	
	Unions	Membership	Unions	Membership
INTUC	617	9,17,740	672	9,34,385
AITUC	558	4,22,851	N.A.	N.A.
HMS	119	2,03,798	138	2,33,990
UTUC	237	1,59,109	N.A.	N.A.
1958				
INTUC	727	9,10,221	886	10,23,371
AITUC	807	5,37,567	814	5,07,654
HMS	151	1,92,942	185	2,41,636
UTUC	182	82,001	172	90,629

Note: NA = Not Available

After the end of the Second World War, the difference of opinion between the communist and non-communist countries grew, resulting in the dis-affiliation of the non-communist trade unions, from the World Federation of Trade Unions. In 1949 was founded the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. In India, the AITUC continued to be affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions as before, while the Hind Majdoor Sabha and the Indian National Trade Union Congress, got themselves affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

In January, 1950, the Indian Constitution was adopted. The Preamble to the Constitution affirms the resolve of the people of India to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief and worship; equality of status and of opportunity, and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the

Article 23 of the Constitution prohibits traffic in human beings and *begar* and other similar forms of forced labour and Article 24 lays down that no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

Part IV of the Constitution lays down certain "Directive Principles of State Policy". These principles are fundamental in the governance of the country, and it is the duty of the State to apply them in making laws and to promote the welfare of the people. Article 39, 41, 42 and 43 of this part refer to labour policy and are reproduced below:-

Article 39, lays down certain principles of policy to be followed by the state. The state shall in particular, direct its policy towards securing:-

- That the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.



- (b) That the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good;
- (c) That the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment;
- (d) That there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women;
- (e) That the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;
- (f) That childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

*Article 41*, relates to right to work, to education, and to public assistance in certain cases. It lays down that the state

shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education, and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.

*Article 42*, lays down that the state shall make provision for securing just and human conditions of work and for maternity relief.

*Article 43* relates to living wage, etc., for the workers. It lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organisation in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities and, in particular, the state shall endeavour to promote cottage industries to an individual on cooperative basis in rural areas.

(To be concluded)

#### REFERENCES

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### The Elevating Concept of State

OF ALL THE remarkable constitutional and legal concepts that were evolved by the ancient Indian polity, the most outstanding one was that of the State with its all-embracing and ennobling character. As stated earlier, Niti Vakyamrit begins the chapter on State with the classic words:-

अथ धर्माय कलाय राज्याय नमः ।

thus bowing "first to the State which is the source of all life and spirit." Again, the Mahabharata takes the concept still further and makes it all-pervasive when it recites :-

सर्वे स्यामा राजधर्मेषु दृष्टा

सर्वा दीक्षा राजधर्मेषु युक्ताः ।

सर्वा विद्या राजधर्मेषु बोक्ताः

सर्वे लोका राजधर्मे प्रविष्टाः ॥

Mahabharata, Santi Parva,  
63.28.29

"In the politics of the State are realised all the forms of renunciation. In the political State are united all the sacraments. Politics combines all knowledge; in the concept of the State are centred the very heavens and all the worlds."

The political thinkers of ancient India held fast to the principle that the State alone was an indispensable institution in the orderly existence and progress of society. Even the Buddhist canonical texts affirmed this proposition most solemnly as the Jataka declared (VI.39) that "a country without Government cannot exist."

अराजकं नाम रद्धं पावेतुं न संकता ।

Jataka, VI. p. 39.

The concept of State was indeed elevating because it rescued human existence from

Nagendra Singh

## State in Ancient India

anarchy to beneficial social pursuits for a successful life. Again, those who nurtured the tree of State and took to political life as a profession could reap a rich harvest of all the three fruits of life; *dharma*, *artha* or wealth and *kama* (fulfilment of desires) although *moksha* or salvation was to be denied to them. That was the position according to the original verse of the famous Ausanasa Arthashastra now lost. This verse runs:-

नमोस्त राज्यक्षाय षट्सुष्पाय प्रवासिने ।  
सामादि चार पन्थाय त्रिवर्गं कतदायिने ॥

It appears, however, from later ancient texts that those who entered politics but did not accept office or position of vantage could certainly claim the fourth fruit of *moksha* as well which was more often the result of religious pursuits than political. In short, political life and worship of the State could yield all the four highest fruits which life could bear when it blossomed. This would indeed particularly relate to the efforts of the great selfless political leaders who worked for neither office nor profit but for the service of mankind like in modern times Mahatma Gandhi and Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan who headed political movements but refrained from enjoying the fruits thereof. In one sense, the whole of Krishna's teachings in the Geeta could be moulded to apply to a full political life with indulgence in every form of human activity and yet attaining salvation because of motives which were selfless and detachment which was complete in respect of those pursuits. The State in ancient India was thus to be served by souls dedicated to serve humanity and accepting Krishna's philosophy of *Karma Yoga* to discard the fruits *ab initio*. This indeed is an unparalleled approach to the gigantic fruits displayed by the State to eat which all participate only to get destroy-

ed but successive generations do start fresh again to tread the same forbidden path. In this phenomenon of the Wheel of Life, let it be emphasized, the ancient concept was that those alone could live eternally who forgot the fruit in the service of man. They alone could claim salvation who were motivated by considerations of humanity.

न खलु कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवं ।  
कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनामाति नाशनम् ॥

("I seek no kingdoms nor heavenly pleasures nor personal salvation since to relieve humanity from its manifold pains and distresses is the supreme objective of mankind.")

Such was the supreme and unforgettable ingredient of the ancient concept of State which warned man not to be lost in the pleasures provided by the power of the State.

#### The Ennobling Concept of Sovereignty of Law.

Closely intertwined with the concept of the State was the highly developed concept of sovereignty of law which in ancient Indian polity was at once ennobling. If there was no existence of *dharma* (law) with its essential element of *danda* (authority), the innate avarice of man would lead to *matsanyaya*—the weak being devoured by the strong. Thus woven into the concept of State was the vital ingredient of sovereignty of law and both *danda* and *dharma* had the sanction of Divinity behind them. The conclusion was at once laudable :-

यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः ।

"Where there is law, there is victory". This indeed was also a rich inheritance from the past for the well-being of the present and the future."

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### The Subtle Supremacy of the Vedic Samitis and Sabhas Enshrining the Profound Consultative-cum-legislative Aspect.

The Vedas symbolise the highest source of law and life of the hoary past of this country. The position given to the *samiti* as representing "the whole people" is of unique importance to this study. The *samiti* was the national assembly of the community and the king was a part and parcel of it as the Rigveda pronounces "like a true king going to the *samiti*"

"राजा न सत्यः समितेरियानः ।"

Jaiswal, p. 13

Consultation with the *samiti* was of the very essence and this concept was carried further by the existence of *sabha*, a larger and most distinguished popular body. Thus consultation held a paramount position and decision-making and law-making were all subject to the overall basic requirement of consultation. The constitutional organism of the *sabha* and the *samiti* as sister institutions of the Vedic age led to the inviolability of the State and to its greatness. The concept of these two institutions which evolved and got elaborated in centuries of Indian history furnishes another achievement of the political life of ancient India which influenced the present generation to readily accept in modern times the concept of Parliamentary Democracy and to inscribe it in the Republican Constitution of 1950 as the ultimate safeguard of the Indian citizen today. The reason being that it was the fruit of a rich inheritance and hence not alien but a plant true to the soil. India could, therefore, rightly claim to be not only the largest and the most populous democracy in the world today but also one of the most ancient.

### The Concept of Rajan and the Mighty Executive Power of the Mantrins.

Equally remarkable was the concept of the executive power which was developed by the Magadhan imperialism and the Gupta empire. The council of ministers or *mantrins* of the Gupta period and the *ratnins* of the Vedic age symbolise the essential wheel of the State mechanism which executes decisions and enforces law and order. The elaborate functioning of the council of *mantrins* is another outstanding feature of the age illustrating a constitutional concept which though harsh is necessary and beneficial to the overall existence of mankind.

In this context the concept of the King as the head of the State and also of the executive and the judicial wheels was at once attractive, ameliorating, protective and helpful in addition to being picturesque. As has been pointed out earlier, it was subordinated to the supremacy of *dharma* and directed towards the service of the State. As stated earlier, the concept admitted of the removal of the king who had fallen from grace having abused power or failed to discharge his onerous duties. On the other hand it encouraged mighty empires which nurtured and patronized art, culture and learning and left the most colourful record of life and literature to be enjoyed by the generation of the present age.

### The Egalitarian Concept of Republics.

The concept of *gana rajya* or of *Virat* was also bewildering and intriguing taking into consideration the various types of Republican forms that had come to exist in ancient India. There could be a republic with a *rajan* or king or without the king but with a president as the head or even without a proper head as illustrated by the confederal constitutions. Not only the

president was elected but the generals were appointed as a result of a regular election to fight battles. The republics do indeed constitute a unique and remarkable chapter in the constitutional history of the country wherein were evolved unprecedented forms and procedures for the efficient functioning of assemblies which were the repository of sovereign power.

The concept of Buddhist State conjures up the magic of republican constitutions and indeed Lord Buddha praised and developed affection for this type of government which he accepted for his *sanghas* and religious orders. Buddha was known to be an admirer of the republics run by the Lichchavis as the ideal form of government where the people lived happily and enjoyed life. The methods adopted, the culture represented, the mild and sublime nature of administration established, the just balance of the judiciary expounded, make one feel proud of a past which could harbour the republics and allow them to flourish with great dignity and strength. The concept of the republic is thus one of the outstanding achievements of the age.

#### The Just Balance of the Judiciary

The concept of law, adjudication and imparting of justice was so highly developed in the ancient Indian polity as to constitute a veritable pillar of the ancient civilization. To give details of the adjudicatory machinery or the precise formulation of the law or of the instances where the judge had to move in accordance with his own conscience (॥ श्रिय आत्मनः ॥) and sense of judicial propriety, would be to repeat what has already been stated before. In conclusion, it would appear appropriate to highlight the overall sense of the just balance of the judiciary which permeated the body

politic of the State. Sir Winston Churchill in his oft-quoted observation has said : "The mood and temper of the public with regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the ancient civilizations of any country" (Address given to the National College of the State Judiciary, Nevada, p. 68). Though it may be true that capital punishment was prescribed in the ancient legal system, there is clear evidence of the fact that on the death penalty many different views were strongly held. Thus in Santi Parva of the Mahabharata, Prince Satyawana in the discussion on the capital penalty says :

"Destruction of the individual by the king can never be a virtuous act. By killing the wrong-doer the king kills a large number of innocent persons, wife, father, mother and children. A wicked person is seen to imbibe good conduct from a pious person. Good children spring from wicked persons. The extermination of the wicked is not in consonance with eternal law."

Chapter 13, Santi Parva, Mahabharata.

The principle of *ahimsa* enunciated in our ancient philosophy and highlighted by the outstanding preachings of Lord Buddha became so basic to our culture that it found very clear expression, centuries later, in all the observations of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. In the *Harizon* of March 19, 1937, Mahatma Gandhi observed as follows :

"I do regard death sentence as contrary to *ahimsa*. Only he takes life who gives it. All punishment is repugnant to *ahimsa*. Under a state governed according to the principles of *ahimsa*, therefore, a murderer would be sent to a penitentiary and there given every chance of reforming



himself. All crime is a kind of disease and should be treated as such."

On the concept of reforming a criminal and not merely penalising him and thus in certain terms questioning the legal requirement of a death sentence, Justice Krishna Iyer made certain pertinent observations in criminal appeal No. 12 of 1979 (Dalbir Singh and others *versus* State of Punjab) when he observed as follows:-

"Without academic aura and maukish sentimentalism the court has to rise to principled pragmatism in the choice of the penal strategy provided by the Penal Code. The level of culture is *not* an irrelevant factor in the punitive exercise. So we must be forewarned against deeply embedded sadism in some sectors of the community, demanding retributive death penalty disguised as criminal justice — a trigger-happy pathology curable only by human rights literacy. But the dignity of man, a sublime value of our Constitution and the heart of penological humanisation, may find expression through culturisation of the judicial art of interpretation and choice from alternatives. If the court reads the text of s.302 Penal Code, enlightened by the fundamental right to life which the Father of Nation and the founding fathers of the Constitution made manifest, the judicial oath to uphold the Constitution will unfold profound implications beyond lip service to Form VIII of the Third Schedule and this lofty obligation and cultural-constitutional behest validated our exploration of the meaning of meanings wrapped in the uncharted either/or of the text of s. 302 I.P.C. It is right to state, to set the record straight, that this court has in *Rajendra Prasad's* case, exposed the disutility and counter-culture of an obsolescent obsession with

crime as distinguished from crime-doer and the sentencing distortion that develops almost into a paranoid preoccupation with death dealing severity as the saviour of society in the land of the Buddha and the Mahatma and in a world where humanity has protested against barbaric executions by State agencies even with forensic 'rites', Courts read the Code, not in judicial cloisters but in the light of societal ethos. Nor does the humanism of our Constitution holistically viewed subscribe to the hysterical assumption or facile illusion that a crime-free society will dawn if hangman and firing squads were kept feverishly busy!"

The aforesaid observations of a Judge of the Supreme Court are only in conformity with the stand taken by the ancient Indian polity in the administration of justice.

It was not merely a political leader like Mahatma Gandhi nor a Judge like Justice Krishna Iyer but it was also the philosopher-President of the Republic of India in 1965 who took up cudgels against the concept of death penalty in criminal law. Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan who has perhaps been the most outstanding exponent of our ancient civilization in modern times, was also wedded to the same approach as was displayed by Santi Parva in Mahabharata. He was conscientiously opposed to the legal necessity of the death sentence in criminal jurisprudence. It is, perhaps, a well-known fact of history today that he hesitated in affirming death sentences confirmed by the Supreme Court in all the cases that were referred to him. Dr Radhakrishnan succeeded in persuading the Home Minister to agree to convert the recommendation from death penalty to life imprisonment in several cases. Here we get a glimpse of the just balance and the need to see the other side of the picture which the ancient Indian

polity so deeply fostered as to create an everlasting impact on the generations who followed in the wake of this civilization. What greater tribute can be paid to the everlasting glory of those concepts which were evolved in ancient India to live to

influence the life and culture of a nation today.

*(Vice-President, International Court of Justice, The Hague, Switzerland.)*



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## Modern Trends in Indian Painting

MODERN ART in India is in as much a transitional stage as her economic and industrial development. The transition from traditional to modern dates back to quite a few decades. In fact, India has been passing through the labours of modernisation since the attainment of Independence in 1947. The term modernisation evidently implies westernisation. Today, Indians take pride in their knowledge of English and American literature as also in their ignorance of indigenous literature and culture. In every field, whether it is art, architecture, science or technology, Indians always look towards the West for inspiration. Inspiration perhaps is a wrong word, for Indians literally ape their western counterparts. In this general process, art could hardly escape contagion.

It is a matter of common knowledge that this process of modernisation in art began towards the end of the 19th century. This was a time when the sinews of the British Raj were strong and the Indian was not considered worthy of owning his country. The programme of alienating Indians from their own soil had already been launched. As a part of this programme, the British government had set up art schools with the intention of brainwashing Indians with Victorian and Edwardian concepts of art. This was followed by the introduction of cheap third-rate European prints in Indian markets. Fascination for exotic things has always been characteristic of Indians. A universal craze for these prints tolled the death-knell of traditional schools of painting. There was neither patronage nor demand for traditional painting. Indian artists were compelled to give up their traditional and hereditary occupations in favour of more remunerative jobs.

### Bengal School Movement

When the national revivalist movement

began towards the end of the 19th century, a few painters of Bengal formed a group under the initiative of E.B. Havell. This movement is known as the Bengal school movement in the history of Indian art. These painters tried to revive the old classical spirit by adapting past idioms to the contemporary scene. Their art is characterised by Hindu deities and legendary figures with sinuous bodies and elongated fingers floating in soft colours. Prominent painters of Bengal School were Abanindranath Tagore, Asit Kumar Haldar, S.N. Gupta and Nandal Bose. Another painter of outstanding stature was Raja Ravi Varma whose depiction of Hindu gods and goddesses has left a lasting impression on the minds of the people.

In spite of the efforts of these painters to revive and retain the indigenous spirit in painting nothing substantial could be achieved. There was a set of younger painters who were completely swept by the wave of westernism. These painters were the products of art schools. They imitated the Impressionists such as Van Gogh, Cezanne, Gauguin and others. At this time, there arrived on the art scene of India a young woman painter of mixed Indo-Hungarian descent. Amrita Shergil, hailed universally as the precursor of modern art in India, had the privilege of studying art in Europe. She had been trained in Paris and had imbibed the best of western art. After landing in India, she tried to fuse Indian sensibility with western idiom. She painted everyday life of Indians in western style. Her bold experiments made a lasting contribution in the field of art. She, in fact, blazed a new trail for others to follow.

A major step towards modern art was taken sometime between 1923 and 1928 by Gaganendranath, a brother of Abanindranath. He experimented with

Cubism and produced works filled with blending geometrical shapes. His paintings are on the same lines as the works of Braque and Picasso.

In pre-Independence era, a number of painters were turning out canvases in academic and impressionistic styles. They were actually the products of art schools, who had no knowledge of indigenous traditions of art. Some painters did portraits of Maharajas and members of aristocracy vignettes of Indian life such as bazar scenes, fisher-folk, pig-sticking, roadside sights etc. These paintings were generally purchased by the British officers posted in India.

In this context, mention may be made of Jamini Roy, the Bengali painter with a bold and dynamic style. His source of inspiration was not European prints but the folk art of Bengal — the Kalighat paintings, the Jadu-patua scroll paintings of the Santals etc. He did not consciously import a style from the West as some of the painters were to do in successive centuries, but his treatment of form and figure is certainly a major contribution to modern idiom. He did in water colours what M.F. Husain was to do in oils later on.

#### Western Inspiration Persist

In post-Independence era, the system of education did not change. In art schools, students continue to be trained in the same old concept of art; they are still taught the history of western art, not the history of Indian art. Since 1947, there has been greater commerce of ideas and thoughts with the western world. A boom of art books and magazines from Europe, Great Britain and the USA has acquainted Indian artists with the fast changing trends in western art. Impressionism, post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Fauvism,

Cubism, Constructivism, Art Nouveau, Surrealism, Abstract or non-representational painting — all these developments in western art have influenced Indian artists to a very large extent. There has been a generation of gifted painters who preferred to stick to indigenous themes. To this generation belong outstanding names such as K.K. Hebber, George Keyt, N.S. Bendre, Sailoz Mukerji, K.C. Aryan, Laxman Pai, M.F. Husain, Satish Gujral and others. But now since old conventional schools of art have lost ground, most of these painters have switched over to the modern medium. Even the modern works of some of these seem to have been inspired by indigenous sources. The mesh wire metal paintings or assemblages introduced for the first time in India in 1962 by K.C. Aryan have a striking affinity with traditional Indian bronzes which, in fact, inspired the artist.

In the past two or three decades, art activity has increased manifold. There is a larger number of painters in the arena; most of them are working in western style. For the most part, this art is experimental and eclectic. The human figure, birds, animals, the beauties of nature — all have vanished leaving a large room for non-figurative, non-objective abstractions. Oils and water colours have been replaced by acrylic paints. In some cases, paint has been completely discarded in favour of burnt wood, sand, wax, rags and scraps of discarded metal and paper. Paintings are no longer two-dimensional works, but have acquired the third and fourth dimensions as well. The western craze for Kinetic art, Op art, Pop art, Junk art has overtaken the Indian artist also.

The works of younger set of painters are more pronouncedly modern, though they display neither conviction nor understanding. These artists are always looking towards

the west for inspiration or imitation. They are in a way completely cut off from Indian soil and are blind to the beauties of traditional Indian art. They feel they have no link whatsoever with it. Their attitude towards indigenous arts is one of condescension. Ironically enough, much of their awareness of modern is little more than shallow curiosity and gossip, stimulated by the irresistible drive of modern publicity and can hardly be taken as a proof of insight and participation.

Indian artist today has entered or is aspiring to enter the international arena. International exhibitions are held in New Delhi in the name of Triennale on more or less the same pattern as the Biennales of Sao Paulo, Venice, Paris, Tokyo, Cracow, Montreal, Bratislava, Saigon, etc. These have provided the Indian artists additional incentive to continue to paint in modern idioms. The travel and study grants given by foreign agencies, such as Rockefeller, Ford, British Council, Alliance Francaise etc., and governments also provide attractive opportunities to them. They are gripped by the new craze of being looked upon as international painters rather than as Indian painters. They think the only way to enter the international world is to ape the occidental civilisation which dominates it. This growing tendency towards internationalism in art threatens to eschew even the least identification with one's own style. In order to lend an "international veneer" to their works, they imitate the western paintings. Strong influence of Mexican art can be discerned in the murals of a modern painter, while another artist tries to combine the cubism of Picasso with stray Indian motifs such as the lotus, the parrot or the peacock.

The present phase of modern art in India is mainly pluralistic and eclectic. There has been a definite ideological shift from



conventional and academic to the modern. Indian artist has dabbled in a variety of styles — abstract, representational, non-objective, decorative, Op and Pop. Most of these works, though unmistakably modern in mood, are derivative.

Some contemporaries, however, have tried to prove that their works in modern style are of indigenous inspiration. In order to re-establish link with the soil and lend a touch of Indianness to their non-objective, Op and Pop paintings, they have started adding *tantrik mandalas, yantras, mantras*, sexual symbolism of Shiva and Shakti (or *Purusha* and *Parkriti*), Hindu alphabets, mythological figures, etc. These borrowed symbols are completely shorn of their symbolic significance, nor do they have any meaning for the onlooker. For the modern Indian artist, perhaps this has appeared to him to be the only way to distinguish his works from western art in the international art market.

#### Progress From Within

A.K. Coomaraswamy was right when he observed more than sixty years ago — "each race contributes something essential to the world's civilisation in the course of its own self-expression.... The essential contribution of India is simply her Indianness; her great humiliation would be to substitute or to have substituted for this own character (*Syabhava*) a cosmopolitan veneer, for then, indeed, she must come before the world empty-handed." This grim prophecy of a great modern sage has come true. India has indeed come before the world empty-handed. It is a matter of shame indeed that Indians should turn their back on indigenous art and culture which spread all over the world with its tradition of more

than 5000 years and substitute for its character a cosmopolitan veneer. Indians have overthrown almost all older styles of art without finding a new form.

Amrita Shergil had guided the young modern artists of India in the following words in 1930s :

"It is a significant fact that modern painting and sculpture have innumerable points of contact with the Eastern art of the good periods. Great art everywhere has the same roots and the comprehension of one brings in its wake the true appreciation of the other. Were our artists to seek inspiration from modern western art, just as the moderns discovered a new means of self-expression through the study of eastern sculpture and painting, not only would they infuse new life into Indian painting, but it would help them really to understand the underlying principles of the ancient art of their own country. I like to hope that the day is not far off when impelled from an urge from within... a new and more vital movement will come into being."

Modern art in India is neither the product of a long series of revolutionary discoveries as in the West nor the expression of the spirit of its time as all genuine art is and should be. Unless a complete integration between past and present is achieved, it cannot reveal its full potential. What is needed is not a revival of the past nor a blind imitation of western trends. The new style can emerge only out of a revolutionary crisis of the spirit, for all vital progress springs from within.

(R-156, *Greater Kalash-I*  
New Delhi-110048).

## INDIA

AT THE beginning of the quarter, in early September, Mr Charan Singh was still in command in New Delhi even though — instead of facing and winning the confidence of Parliament — he had shied away from it and ordered its dissolution. Many voices were raised against this queer or questionable turn in national politics. Some blamed Mr Charan Singh, while some others questioned the propriety of Presidential discretion. But amid the instant upsurge of feeling, people generally forgot that Mrs Gandhi's Machiavellian politics had played a substantial role in initially bringing Mr Charan Singh to power and in eventually pushing him to desperation or worse. Soon, however, the lights (of fame or notoriety?) turned on Mrs Gandhi from another direction, namely, from the findings of Justice Gupta in the Maruti Commission Report. The Gupta Commission of Inquiry into the Maruti affairs was appointed by the Janata Government in May 1977. The Charan Singh Government seemed to be sitting pretty over Justice Gupta's report, when its hands were forced by the Janata leader Chandra Shekhar's move to disclose it (on 7 September) in instalments. Even before the publication of the report, there was a widespread awareness of Mr Sanjay Gandhi's bogus business pretensions and his mafia-like style in all his dealings and operations. The Maruti probe report emphatically confirmed all this by demonstrating that Mr Gandhi's widely advertised small car project was a total fraud. The crowning disclosure was that the extraordinary general meeting of the company on 31st March 1972 (which reportedly elected Mr Sanjay Gandhi as Maruti's Managing Director) was indeed "never held". But what makes the Gupta Commission report a document of shocking political dimension is the portion — a very large

S. C. Gangal

## India and the World

A Quarterly Review

portion indeed — which reveals the extent to which Mrs Gandhi's position and the authority of her Government were blatantly misused to favour Mr Sanjay Gandhi's false and fraudulent deals. In the words of Justice Gupta "even matters connected with the country's defence interest were subordinated to the interest of Maruti". And not only the usually pliable bureaucrats in the Prime Minister's Secretariat, but as many as a dozen Chief Ministers and Union Ministers (including present Union Ministers C. Subramanian and T.A. Pai) vied with one another in subserving Mr Gandhi's shady interests — and all this because the "source (of Sanjay's power) was the authority of the Prime Minister."

The disclosures and findings of the Maruti Commission, when put alongside the earlier findings of the Shah Commission, add up to a massive record of abuse of power by Mrs Gandhi and her son. But in a large country with a vast illiterate population the lack of communication tends to provide a cover to many offenders and deviants in politics and in other fields alike. Taking advantage of this unfortunate situation, Mrs Gandhi has lately been going around the country and telling gullible, ignorant audiences in the countryside that the various Commissions of Inquiry have not been able to produce a shred of evidence against herself and her son in respect of their actions during or before the Emergency. Surely the Maruti disclosures came as a rude shock to the educated and informed people in the towns and cities. But did the shock adequately register in the villages where the bulk of India lives, still steeped in ignorance and illiteracy? Suffice it to add that this practice of exploiting the ignorance of the average villager has assumed wider dimensions in recent months — since Mr Charan Singh's accession to power. And in view of the anticipated advantages from it, many others

may well join in the race in the weeks ahead till election time in January.

Indeed, the proximity of the mid-term poll (in January 1980) loomed large on the political horizon during the last three months. During the few weeks, in particular, political practice and behaviour have tended to degenerate into sheer rhetoric and gimmickry, and more recently even in mutual smear campaigns and character assassination. The promulgation of a new preventive detention ordinance (on 5th October) is a case in point. Ostensibly the ordinance, formally known as 'The Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supply of Essential Commodities' is intended to prevent hoarding, black marketing and profiteering and to ensure the normal supply of essential commodities such as wheat, sugar, vanaspathi, edible oils etc. This may seem to be an unquestionable objective or premise. And yet the ordinance or the "Pernicious Ordinance" (as a leading newspaper editorial put it) is open to serious objections on several grounds: First, the practice of rule by draconian ordinances offends against the basic tenets of democratic government is blatantly contrary to the spirit of the popular verdict implicit in the 1977 election. Secondly, there is the fact that not only public opinion in general in the country but also twenty out of twenty-two States, in a Chief Ministers' conference shortly before the promulgation of the ordinance, had categorically rejected such a move. Thirdly, the ordinance acquires a particularly ominous aspect on account of its timing, i.e., just a few weeks before a highly controversial and contentious parliamentary election. And last, but not least, the question may be asked whether a 'caretaker' or purely transitional administration, bereft of popular backing could justifiably arm itself with vast powers in a matter touching the fundamental freedoms

of the people to the President to the installation of Mr Charan Singh's Government. The set new executive spirit of the Government sweeping first time hated Ministers — by its three following price of 17th August September steps to a consummation (by and (iv) the mid-November after having According for reservation services) to on the abandoned ports pointing to wide the country. Apparently executive matters will come little evidence of a general — a particular Gandhian ever, it is that they

of the people. Moreover, it is surely contrary to the Presidential directive (at the time of the installation of the 'caretaker' Government on 22nd August) which enjoined upon Mr Charan Singh and his administration that they would refrain from actions "which set new policy" or suggest innovative executive decisions. But contrary to the spirit of this stipulation, the Charan Singh Government has not only armed itself with sweeping powers of detention — for the first time after the abandonment of the hated MISA — but it has also taken a series of important policy/executive decisions — by ordinance or otherwise — during its three months in office, notably the following: (i) the decision to enhance the price of petroleum products with effect from 17th August; (ii) Sugar price control (on 10 September) without adequate preparatory steps to ensure the flow of supply to the consumer; (iii) the ban on company donations (by ordinance) on 25th September; and (iv) the grant of bonus to railwaymen in mid-November (not long before elections) after having kept it in abeyance earlier. According to reports, an ordinance for reservation of posts (in government services) to the backward classes was also on the cards. However, it was thankfully abandoned on account of intelligence reports pointing to the possibility of its leading to widespread agitation and violence in the country.

Apparently, the ordinances and other executive powers are being used to deal with matters which promise quick returns in the coming elections. At the same time, there is little evidence of sincere concern for basic matters or norms. Political leaders in general — and those in the Government in particular — swear by the villages and the Gandhian programmes and values. However, it is too well-known to need stressing that they vie with one another to hug the

attractions and 'modern' comforts of urban life. For one thing, the villages are symbols of simplicity and austerity. But there is nothing the Charan Singh Government (and for that matter the predecessor Government either) have done to substantially reduce the State expenditure on the life, comforts and travel for the Ministers and other high functionaries. Corruption in public life or in the services is another problem of frightening proportions. But it has apparently been put on the shelf. Some moves in these twin directions — however belated — could be initiated following the passing away of Jayaprakash Narayan. And they would have been well-taken as sincere or meaningful tributes to the departed leader. But floral offerings and verbal homage were about all that our politicians had to offer. And in utter disregard of the national tragedy and the sobriety and self-introspection it calls for, the public leaders are preoccupied, even more intensely than before, with the dirty politics of defection and denigration.

## THE WORLD

In the external or international sphere, the period under review opened with the largest-ever summit of the non-aligned nations at Havana (Cuba) from 3rd to 9th September. External Affairs' Minister, S.N. Mishra led the Indian delegation to the summit. The summit was attended by over 90 member-nations, including six newly-admitted members, viz., Pakistan, Iran, Rhodesia (Patriotic Front), Bolivia, Grenada and Surinam. However, as against six new admissions, there was the unfortunate case of withdrawal of membership by one of the founder-members, Burma.

Perhaps the most controversial and crucial summit, the Havana meet was confronted with three contentious or explosive issues

which tended to blow up its unity and solidarity. These were (i) The issue of the proposed expulsion of Egypt (a founder-member) from the movement under pressure from the Arab group of nations. The latter's contention was that Egypt had bartered away vital Arab interests to the Americans and Israel under last year's Camp David agreement. (ii) There was the highly controversial issue of whether to allot the vacant Kampuchean seat to the present Soviet and Vietnam-backed Heng Samarin regime or to the ousted Pol Pot regime, now operating in Peking. And thirdly, there was the larger problem arising from the host country Cuba's efforts to so give a marked pro-Soviet tilt to the non-aligned movement.

In this situation, India and Yugoslavia played conciliatory roles and helped reduce the prevailing tiffs and tensions, especially on the questions of projected pro-Soviet tilt and Kampuchean representation. On the question of Arab move to expel Egypt, the decisive counterweight was supplied by the Sub-Saharan African members. In the event, the Kampuchean seat was left vacant and the Egyptian issue was also held in abeyance. On both, the decision has been, deferred until the Non-aligned Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi sometime in 1981 — this leaves enough time for feelings and antagonisms to cool down. Maybe by then the two issues just pass off by the efflux of time and the possible change in positions and circumstances. On the question of pro-Soviet tilt, India and Yugoslavia were able to persuade Cuba to abandon its insistence on calling the non-aligned nations as the "natural allies" of the socialist countries. At several other places, the rabidly anti-Western phraseology (in the communiqué), originally suggested by Cuba, was softened. Thus, the final communiqué seemed practically as balanced and consensual as in the past. Yet the spirit of

consensus was more apparent than real. If one carefully reads between the lines, the impression cannot be missed that the so-called radicals, led by Cuba, had an edge over the traditionalists and moderates. Thus, while Egypt was not expelled her treaty with Israel (under US auspices) came in for open condemnation. Also the attack on "imperialist States, in particular the United States" for seeking "to consolidate their military position in the (West Asian) region" was indicative of the Cuban-led 'anti-imperialist' or leftward thrust of the movement. Similarly, though there was unmistakable condemnation (and rightly so) of Western military assistance or interventionist policy in general, there was no mention of the presence of Cuban troops and their intervention in several places in Africa. As it is, there are three perceptible threats to the survival, and solidarity of the non-aligned movement. First, there have always been threats and pressures emanating from the West, headed by the United States. Time was when former Secretary of State Dulles had characterised non-alignment as "immoral". That extreme posture has long been abandoned by the United States. Yet it is apparent that an organised movement of independent nations, outside the Western orbit, could hardly fit in with the political and economic goals of America's global strategy. Secondly, the Soviet Union has an unmistakable and a somewhat ominous presence in the non-aligned movement through Cuban-led radical members, who worked at Havana (and also at Colombo in June) to give a pro-Soviet tilt to the movement. And, thirdly China has been working hard to wrest the leadership in Africa and Asia by diverting attention from non-alignment and by promoting the rival 'third world' movement. Above all, non-aligned unity is liable to serious erosion from bilateral disputes or conflicts among its members such as between Ethiopia and



Somalia, Egypt and Syria and Tanzania and Uganda. Very largely, perhaps, the woes of non-alignment are attributable to a leadership crisis or gap. While leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and the late President Nasser have passed away, and President Tito's powers are declining on account of his age, a matching new leadership is not emerging anywhere.

The non-aligned meet was in far-away Cuba. Nearer home, the period under review was marked by important developments in neighbouring Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. In Pakistan, a national election was due to be held in November. But, on 16th October President Zia-ul Haq announced the cancellation of elections. Political activity was banned and a rigid censorship (somewhat relaxed earlier) on the press was reinforced. In a typical army style, President Zia declared that henceforward "martial law will be as it should be."

As between India and Pakistan, the going is good, thanks to the former (Janata) Government's policy of fostering good relations with immediate neighbours. But a military regime is essentially an unstable phenomenon. There are also marked signs

of political euphoria or instability in Afghanistan and Iran. In the former, there has been a succession of coups and violence during the last one year. And in the latter, some kind of a mob-rule seems to be emerging. There are also uneasy possibilities (at the time of this writing) of a military confrontation between Iran and the United States, following a siege of the American embassy and its personnel in Teheran. In another neighbouring area, i.e., Southeast Asia, there has been a continuing situation of tension and conflict since Vietnamese action in Kampuchea (last year) followed by Chinese invasion of Vietnam in February this year. In this scenario of instability all around, the need for stability and strong leadership in India is heightened considerably. A transition for a make shift government (such as the present one) is grossly incapable of providing this sort of leadership. The 'caretaker' phenomenon must therefore be replaced by a stable, popular government at the earliest. As such, all eyes are turned on the January election and on the hope that the poll will throw up a straight and stable government, and not an uneasy or wobbly coalition.

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## Book Review

**British — The Magnificent Exploiters of India** by *Prof. Surinder Nath Gupta*. (S. Chand & Co. New Delhi, 1979, pp. 176); Rs. 60.

During the post-Independence period, there are very few books which would match with Professor Surinder Nath Gupta's masterly and penetrating survey of both the range and depth of economic exploitation of India during the British era. In no country, are the economic effects of imperialism so well delineated as in the case of India. That is why Lenin quoted the example of India in Asia and Argentina in South America as outstanding portrayals of economic bondage. Before the advent of foreign imperialism, India exported foodgrains to other parts of Asia and was known as "agricultural mother of Asia." In the industrial sphere, the Indian commodities enjoyed high reputation in European markets. Europeans tried unsuccessfully to imitate the Indian muslin and other textile products. Thomas Munro, who served the British company for most of his life, and who was Governor of Madras, had used an Indian shawl for seven years, and found very little difference in it after that long use. About imitation shawls produced in Europe, he said before the Committee of the House of Commons in 1813: "I have never seen an European shawl that I would use, even if it were given to me as a present." No wonder Sir Edward Baines as late as 1835 wrote: "The Indians have in all ages maintained an unapproached and almost incredible perfection in their fabrics of cotton. Some of their muslins might be thought the work of fairies or insects rather than of men."

Another example of Indian industrial prowess may be discerned from the opinion of Captain Presgrave of the Sagar Mint who said in 1829 that Indian bar iron was of "most excellent quality" which "cannot be surpassed by the best Swedish iron" — the best in Europe at that time. Franklin questioned "whether any other furnace would compete with the Indian furnace." The reply was in negative. It was only in 1825 that a British manufacturer "took out a patent for converting iron into steel"; before that England was entirely dependent on imports. In 1794 Dr. Scott, M.D., sent to the President of the London Royal Society a specimen of steel (alongwith many other things) which "appears to admit of a harder temper than anything we are acquainted with."

From the very dawn of history till India became a victim of Western domination, India was known as, to quote Hegel, "a Land of Desire". Most of the nations in Europe and Asia "directed their wishes and longings to gaining access to treasures of India." The very discovery of America and the greater part of Australasia by Europeans, was an offshoot of the intense desire to reach India. Bjorn Landstrom, who studied the story of 3,000 years of bold voyages and great explorers from the early Egyptians to the dawn of the discovery of America, in his book, "The Quest for India", writes: "The routes and means were many, but the goal was always the same; to reach the fabled land of India, a country overflow-

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ing with precious fabrics."

Many Westerners have seen India before as a land of agricultural riches and truth. The "pre-British" richest agricultural but also a land of trade and role in the ancient world. It exported luxury like and other commodities (discovered sugar is "ghee, drug a Roman complaint drain our and fifty computed century "

The British exploitation from 1757 to 1947. downrightness and non-participative phase of more per combined the conv cultural agricultural only the practices India not but in eff

ing with fabulous riches of gold, silver, precious gems, exotic foods, spices and fabrics."

Many Western writers prone to err that India before her bondage was only an agricultural country enjoying a low standard of living. There is nothing farther from the truth. The overwhelming evidence is that "pre-British India was not only one of the richest agricultural countries in the world but also a great industrial workshop. The trade and commerce of India played a vital role in the economic history both of the ancient world and the medieval times. India exported to the West, not only goods of luxury like jewels, perfumes, spices, silks and other textile products; but also commodities of daily consumption like 'sugar' (discovered in India, the Greek name for sugar is "sukhara", derived from Sanskrit), ghee, drugs, vegetable oils and rice. Pliny, a Roman writer of early second century A.D. complained that "in no year does India drain our empire of less than five hundred and fifty millions of sesterces", which was computed in about middle of the 19th century "at about £1,400,000 a year."

The British economic and commercial exploitation falls into three phases, from 1757 to 1812, 1812 to 1914 and 1914 to 1947. The first phase was marked by downright robbery in which both officials and non-officials of the East India Company participated on a lavish scale. The second phase of economic imperialism was even more pernicious than the first phase, since it combined the looting of the first phase with the conversion of India to a purely agricultural country, from manufacturing-cum-agricultural country. During this phase, not only the British imperialism but the colonial practices of other European powers drained India not only of its economic resources but in effect converted the whole sub-conti-

nent into a vast market for their finished products. The author has given a solid factual framework. In 1917, the Secretary of State, J. Chamberlain noted that "India will not remain and ought not to remain content to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the rest of the British Empire", which indirectly admits India to be so, atleast before 1917.

The third phase of Indian exploitation coincided with intensification of Indian struggle for freedom under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. That India achieved liberation was more due to a happy confluence between a favourable international situation after 1945 and sacrifices made by the Indian people.

The author's studious and cogitative studies and widespread research has yielded many interesting and thought-provoking conclusions. That British connection had benign aspect, was an illusion nourished by many Indian historians. This study should prove a corrective to lop-sided thinking of many Indian and Western scholars, who still display slavish mentality by praising administrative achievements of their previous rulers. It is interesting to recall that when the British left India in 1947, only three Indians commanded Brigades when the Indian army was two million strong!

For the British, India was "in total returns, the most profitable of imperial possessions" and "a place to make money in, a human cattle farm". For the Indians, the British rule was, to use Mahatma Gandhi's words, a "Satanic rule" and "a Curse." Indians passed their verdict on the British rule when they declared that it "not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually."

Strangely enough, even the doyen of imperialists, Winston Churchill, seemed to agree with India when he said that "Our rule in India is wrong and has always been wrong for India." He told this when he was interviewed by Wheeler-Bennett in 1954.

N.K.

**Pakistan's Islamic Bomb**, by Major-General D.K. Palit and P.K.S. Namboodiri, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 150, price : Rs. 30.

The projected 'Islamic' (nuclear) bomb—reportedly under production in Pakistan—has been in the news in India and abroad for several months now. The first hints about a Pakistani-Arab design to manufacture a nuclear bomb were seen to emerge from the publication (in India) of the late Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto's so-called 'testament' written and smuggled out of his death-cell in Rawalpindi jail. Said Bhutto: "We know that Israel and South Africa have full nuclear capability. The Christian, Jewish and Hindu civilizations have this capability. The Communist powers also possess it. Only the Islamic civilization was without it, but the position was about to change". That Pakistan had a modest nuclear research programme—assisted by the French—had been known earlier. But the publication of Bhutto's 'testament' was the first hint of the fact that Pakistan was well-advanced in its plans to produce and test a nuclear bomb even at the time of Bhutto's fall from power in July, 1977.

The book under review (by Palit and Namboodiri) is the first full-length study of Pakistan's quest and development of a bomb during and after the Bhutto regime. It is not only a record of Bhutto's persistent

efforts—From the time when he was Foreign Minister in the Ayub regime to his fall from power in 1977—to build the infrastructure and other facilities for an eventual nuclear weapons programme in Pakistan. It also contains a closely-reasoned analysis of the factors and circumstances that led to a marriage of interests between Pakistan and the oil-rich Arab states like Saudi Arabia and Gadafi's Libya in the nuclear enterprise. The Arabs needed a credible deterrent to Israel's nuclear bomb as they see it. Pakistan needed it as a counterweight to India's power and unmistakable nuclear potentiality demonstrated at Pokharan in May 1974. Pakistan had the scientific and technological personnel. The Arabs had the money. Moreover, joint enterprise would enable them better to absorb the angry reaction of the world community—it would spread thin when directed against three or four of them together.

In this setting, the authors discuss in some detail the regional security implications of the bomb and the various Indian options arising from it. They rightly point out that the bomb, when perfected, can provoke Pakistan into a misadventure against India whom (as Prime Minister Charan Singh also conceded recently) Pakistan has always regarded as a threat or a rival. But their projection—shared by many others in India—that the possession of the bomb by Pakistan would seriously restrict India's tactical capabilities *vis-a-vis* Pakistan is apparently based on the facile assumption that the nuclear bomb would be quite as usable as the conventional weapons. Such a hypothesis is manifestly grounded more in panic than rational and historical analysis. Indeed, with its assured conventional superiority over Pakistan and its well-demonstrated capacities in the field of nuclear research and testing, India

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need not be hustled into reversing its traditional nuclear policy. It is one thing (for Pakistan or others) to have an atomic bomb or two; but the will and the capacity to use nuclear bombs as weapons of war is a different thing. There are nuclear and non-nuclear powers in the world. But India's position is unique. She has demonstrated that she is as good as a nuclear power — in terms of resources, capacities and scientific and technological know-how. And yet she refuses to join in the nuclear race. There is

more strength in this position than in the others — it reflects both military and moral strength. Let us not give it up just because someone next-door is panicky or crazy.

Palit and Namboodiri have marshalled great many facts together and presented them lucidly and intelligently. But their suggestions for a change in Indian nuclear policy are very questionable and wobbly.

S.C. Gangal





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