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# COMMUNALISM in INDIA

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Edited by  
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## INTRODUCTION

In a developing economy if there happen to be numerous religious, regional, linguistic and similar other groups, more often than not, ethnic violence assumes graver proportions. And if there happen to be previous history of conflict between two particular groups of people, the ethnic conflict is likely to follow the historical pattern.

The Hindu-Muslim conflict referred to as 'communalism' in Indian political parlance, is also a product of socio-economic changes on one hand and political struggle for power, on the other. With the process of development and change it has assumed such proportions that no serious student of Indian politics can ignore it. More and more people are being drawn into its vortex. Our polity — supposedly secular — is getting more and more communalised. Are we fated to live with this conflict for a long time or are we, given statesmanship and political wisdom, capable of resolving it? Capable we are provided we display enough political courage and rise above narrow self-interests.

However, the complex world we live in, it is not enough to invoke idealism. It is also necessary to understand and analyse the phenomenon in all its complexity. Condemnation is moralistic, understanding is epistemological. While condemnation of communal violence, as of other categories of violence, is highly necessary if we, as human beings, want to build a harmonious and peaceful society, understanding of its nature and genesis is equally necessary if we want to evolve remedial measures.

This volume on communalism is an attempt to understand and analyse the phenomenon in all its complexity. Different scholars and social scientists have written on this phenomenon from different angles and have covered different regions of India though not all.

Prof. Shamoun Lokhandwala, a noted Islamicist, writes on 'Islam and Communalism' and examines the ideological position of Islam vis-a-vis the phenomenon of communalism. He also examines the concepts of Daru'l Harb, Daru'l Islam and Duru's Sulh i.e. abode of war, abode of Islam and abode of peace. He maintains that it is wrong to believe that 'wherever Muslims are not in majority it is to be treated as abode of war; it could be, and often is, abode of peace. He deals with other aspects of Islam and communalism as well.

Balraj Puri in his article 'Understanding and Transcending Communalism', mainly deals with the question of ethnic identities which has been assuming more and more importance in developing societies. Balraj has written extensively and perceptively on this question. It is highly necessary to understand the significance of ethnic identity in order to fully appreciate some of the psychological dynamics of the problem. He also points out "It is in the interest of the members of a religious community that their non-religious urges, some of which they share with other communities should also be satisfied. There are a number of secular identities that can subsume or sublimate a part of the urges of the communal identities."

Pandav Nayak, a political scientist, attempts a materialist critique of the relation between the political and communal in his essay. According to him the roots of communalism lay in economic and political ground, not in religious one. He rightly points out, "what is therefore specific to the communal question is its decisive, determining aspect viz., politicization. In other words, communalism represents a specific manifestation of the political and ideological domination which is an essential defining feature of the modern state. More acute are the problems of legitimation as in the case of developing states, sharper manifestation of communal problems is usually observed."

Moin Shakir discusses problems of national integration in his "Notes on National Integration". He distinguishes between political integration and national integration when he points out, "Here a distinction should be made between political integration means a shifting of the loyalties to the newly created centre in the system. It demands a creation of new

loyalties and devotion to the claims of the State, National integration is something more than political integration. It follows political integration. Its essence is an agreement among the different nationalities, minorities and other groups for making the political community and striking an equilibrium between the 'communal' identity and the national identity." This is very important distinction indeed and its proper comprehension can minimise much confusion which prevails today between communal and national identities.

Apart from others there are some subtler aspects of communalism which also must be properly understood in order to comprehend the richness and complexities of this phenomenon. It is easier to talk about secular polity on rational and political level but very difficult, even in the most rational and secular societies, to get rid of subtle ethnic and cultural prejudices. These prejudices may be hidden and subterreneas but are often determinant of their behaviour towards other ethnic groups and sometimes quite unconsciously. However, it is very important to study the subtler aspects of these communal and ethnic prejudices. These prejudices often assume the form of stereotypes which are difficult to combat. Asghar Ali Engineer discusses these aspects of communalism in his contribution to this volume.

Prof. Aloo Dastur views the phenomenon of communalism purely from the viewpoint of a political scientist. She traces political developments since the time the Muslim deputation met Lord Minto in Simla in 1906 with certain demands representing the aspirations of the Muslim elite. After discussing the political roots of the phenomenon she concludes, "The political process offers a wide spectrum to all citizens to find their proper niche. No religious group needs to hitch its wagon to a single parking; the converse of this proposition is that political parties should have an open membership. On the economic front there should be expansion of employment opportunities. Education must be given its due place in national development. Above all, the citizen has not to be identified by his narrow group affiliation. All this is not as difficult as we have made out over three decades. The political will has been absent. We are bartering future for petty political gains."



Zainab Banu too takes political scientist's view of communalism. She is of the opinion that "broadly speaking communalism in India is essentially a political phenomenon. The outcome of communalism in the form of group prejudices, communal contradictions, tensions and riots is due to struggle for control over the resources of power. Its roots are economic power and political domination."

Husain Shaheen tries to grapple with the soft and hard versions of communalism in his article "Software and Hardware of Communalism". Discriminations in jobs as well as communal prejudices he describes as software of communalism and its violent eruption as its hardware. The former is practiced, according to him by the upper class elite where as the lower classes practice the latter variety.

Uttar Pradesh has been a major battleground for communalism as for historical reasons communalism owes its genesis to the Hindi heartland. Raghuraj Gupta, an anthropologist, surveys the communal scene in U.P. for the decade 1974-1984. Mr. Gupta rightly maintains that U.P. is chronically afflicted with the scourge of Hindu-Muslim dissensions and communal riots. The recent communal riots in the U.P. cities of Moradabad and Meerut have only accentuated the poignancy of the problem. Raghuraj goes on to analyse the causes of communalism in U.P. and also throws light on the grievances nursed by the U.P. Muslims in the post-independence India.

Gujarat, as the recent communal riots also prove, has been one of the worst affected states by the communal virus. Communalism in this state is assuming more and more virulent form. Priyavadan Patel examines the communal situation in Gujarat in detail in his contribution "Recent History and Politics of Communalism and Communal Riots in Gujarat". Mr. Patel examines and analyses the riots in Ahmedabad, Baroda and Godhra which constitute the most sensitive belt from communal point of view in whole of Gujarat and these towns have seen worst and most prolonged bouts of communal violence. Mr. Patel's survey throws interesting light on socio-economic bases of communalism and communal violence.

Kashmir in the recent past has often been rocked with violence and has been at the centre of controversy. Is the

nature of violence in the valley communal? Abdul Ahad and Riyaz Punjabi examine this question in their respective contributions "Is There Communalism In Kashmir" and "Communal Politics in Kashmir". Abdul Ahad maintains that Kashmiris are resilient in spirit and subscribe to a philosophy of life that categorically rejects to accomodate communalism—a philosophy that subordinates institutions evolved in the historical process to a lively sense of living in harmony and makes people more and more Kashmiris and less and less Pandits and Muslims. Dr. Riyaz, on the other hand examines the concrete developments in the politics of the valley to put things in proper perspective. He also throws light on the emergence of Jamat-i-Islami and traces its growth. The Jamat has introduced the communal factor in the politics of Kashmir. Dr. Riyaz feels that the Congress(I) hobnobbed with the Jamat and provided it with necessary political anchorage in the state.

M.S. Dhama has contributed a paper on what is currently the area of greatest concern in Indian politics, namely, the Punjab. He analyses the situation in Punjab in his piece entitled "Communalism in Punjab: An Exploratory Study". The author traces the religio-cultural and socio-historical context of the Punjab problem. In this context he discusses the impact of British rule and the development of communal identities in Punjab. He then goes on to examine the phenomenon of politicisation of communal identities during 1920-1947. He thus puts the whole problem in historical-political perspective. He then goes on to discuss the current situation in this perspective in Punjab.

One of the powerful vehicle of propoganda for communalism is literature. Dr. Mohammad Hasan and Dinkar Sakrikar discuss in their papers propogation of communalism in Indian literature in general and Marathi liration in particular. This survey of literary scene is equally important to comprehend the phenomenon of communalism.

This author has, in his contribution, discussed the eruption of communal violence in Bombay-Bhivandi belt which is one of the most industrialized region and supposed to be comparatively free of communal violence. The whole question

has been discussed in the perspective of national politics. Apart from micro factors, macro factors also influence eruption of communal violence and hence the need for looking them in the national perspective.

Thus this book tries to cover various dimensions of communalism on one hand, and, also attempts to locate the genesis of this problem in different regions of India, on the other. It is hoped that the book would lead to enhanced understanding of this malaise which in turn can enable us to combat it more effectively.

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## ISLAM AND COMMUNALISM

Prof. S. T. Lokhandwala

It was Whitehead who said that 'religion is what the individual does with his solitariness'. If you are never solitary then you are never religious'. Perhaps a Sufi or a mystic would very easily concur with the definition. It is only in solitude that an individual may unfold unto himself his own awareness of life and may endeavour to perceive them. One Reality and to dissolve in it and be one with Brahman. The Prophet of Islam has said one who perceives himself perceives his Lord. The divine is said to be deeply embedded within us and if He is also every where it leads to the Mystic and Sufi derivations of **Advaita** and **wahdatu'l Wujud**. On the other hand this also leads to a subjective understanding of the truth and reality which if each individual strived and kept to himself, the religious conflicts would be almost absent. But religions do not merely confine themselves to the subjective experiences of individuals. Since He The Ultimate Reality is every where, religions also strive to establish relationships beyond oneself and in their efforts to reach Him, lay down dogmas, creeds, rituals and ways of life. If, here too, the emphasis was merely on devotion to God, Cleanliness of spirit and orderliness of life the conflict factors could be avoided. But Religion is taken as much more of a wider field. It is a convergence and collection of many Phenomena and many ideas Spiritual as well as material. Religion may be revealed and or could be a philosophic conception. It could also lay down the rules of morality and social behaviour and try to conduct, regulate and control the whole gamut of human life. Every religion has its own historicity behind it. The multiplicity of religions has its own problems, for the adherents of every religion believe that theirs is the most excellent and most perfect of all religions. One can not even object to this for one's acceptance of one's religion is tantamount to that assertion, even though the adherence may have the least awareness about the rationality of one's adoption except that one is borne in it. Religion can be used in diverse ways. It may become a strong instrument both for fusion as well as fission. It can be a tool for malvolence and also for benevolence. It can bend towards brutality, persecution and fanaticism and also tend to charity, brotherly love and compassion.

It is for some people escape and sedative and for others it makes for realism and deeper insight. All this is true for every religion, depending on how and where it is employed.

The presence of multiplicity of religions need not automatically lead to conflict. Nor does the conflict when it arises can be resolved merely by designating our religions as those of tolerance, love and peace. Hinduism is claimed to be the religion of tolerance, Islam that of peace and equality and Christianity that of love, although each one has to its credit also what could not be categorized under the presumed claims. However within every religion there are concepts evolved during the times of conflict strife and rivalry with other to denote superiority of the religion over others and to denigrate others. We can only arrogate ourselves superiority by branding others as inferiors. On the other hand there are also values and concepts in every religion which make for mutual understanding and appreciation of one another.

Communalism in India before independence had become 'an ideology which emphasized as the social political and economic unit, the group of adherents of each religion and stressed on the distinction and even antagonism between such groups'. Communalism was a shifting and changing phenomenon and what was communalism before 1939 was not one that developed by 1945 and the communalism today has different ingredients then it had in the early years of independence, although some elements of the old and the consequences of the Creation of Pakistan still linger on.

The Present day conflicts between the communities may have an immediate economic or other backgrounds but soon all assumed factors of religious differentiations and the past history are relieved mainly at the mental plane by the adherents of both the religions.

Islam in India now a days is mainly understood through two different streams. The Western orientalist's interpretations of Islam which had the missionary and colonial flavours and was spurred by ages long Christian-Muslim and European Ottoman hostility. The second is the orthodox, Islam propounded by the Madrasas which gyrate, round the glorious and unique achievements of the past

mostly of the first four centuries of Islam in West-Asia. These achievements in Empire building, social, reconstructing, legal and theological pronouncements etc. are so dearly and closely held as perfect and ideal achievements that any shift, change or development away or further from it would be viewed as a move towards imperfection and distortion. Even the liberal trends of Mohammad Abduh, Sir Sayyed, Ameer Ali, Maulana Azad, Kemal Ata Turk and Reza Shah Pahelvi which had given rise to the feeling that change for the better amongst Muslims would be easier than amongst the adherents of other religions, have taken a contrary turn. On the other hand, these days the Hindu efforts of understanding Islam and Muslim efforts of understanding Hinduism have been almost non-existent. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the father of Indian-Renaissance had the understanding of both the religions and his was not the knowledge borrowed from the West. But as we go along the line Ram-Krishna Pram Hansa, Brahma Samaj, Swami Vivekanand and Aurobindo, the interest in Indian Islam is a dwindling affair. Similarly the efforts of the early Sufis to understand, comprehend and appreciate Hinduism flowers into Din-e-Ilahi of Akbar and Dara Shukoh was the last of its representative who wanted to achieve the confluence of two oceans in India. We have ceased to looking inwards into the Indian phenomena as a whole.

However, with the departure of the British. The hostile interpretation of Hinduism that was done by the West has almost disappeared. The new liberal trends of understanding the Hindu tradition and reformulating it by some of the scholars are very invigorating and rewarding. The understanding of the Islamic traditions is mainly based on Western sources and none or very little attempts are made to re-evaluate and reformulate the Islamic traditions, so that larger understanding could be achieved. We will examine here mainly five Islamic concepts which usually create misapprehensions amongst the non-Muslims. These are **Daru'l-Harb**, **Ahlu'l-Kitab**, **Jizya Kafir** and **Pan-Islamism**. We shall then see whether there are within Islam any values which can create better understanding with others ; and lead to proper appreciation of Islam.

Daru'l-Harb (the abode of war) and Daru'l-Islam (the abode of Islam) are the earliest concepts which emerged out of the speedy expansion of Arab Empire : This was the logical development of the

idea of Holy war, **Jihad**. The etymological meaning of the term Jihad was only to strive and make efforts towards, the attainment of moral and religious perfection. The Quran says "Strive in the ways of God as you ought to (22:78)". Explaining that this verse exhorts for the attainment of spiritual good, a commentator says "this refers to the worshipping of God as He ought to be worshipped. You ought to worship Him as if you see Him. Even if you can not see Him, He sees you." To Him one should dedicate one's self and belongings, This was considered the greater **Jihad**, the **Jihad** to fight one's own self to lead it away from the unethical and unspiritual longings and desires.

The concept of **Jihad** however takes a different turn when it embraces the political expediency of the spreading of the Arab empire. Here even the universality of Islam which at some levels exhorts for the unity of human race has been turned to account for the use of force for the spread of the empire. Every religion has been used for political purposes and one can say to the credit of early Arabs that they used it absolutely for their own empire buildings. The principle of **Jihad** one may not forget has been used not only for fighting with non-Muslims but also for fighting with each other, although the formulations of the classical schools under the influence of the Civil Wars which started amongst the Arabs soon after the death of the Prophet and the establishment of central authority would not envisage or admit any bloody conflicts between two groups of Muslims, who it took to arms was a threat to the interests of the established authority. It should be mentioned here that the Sunni-Islam, having the political hegemony and a well-established empire did no longer find it necessary to include Jihad as one of the essentials of Islam, whereas the Shi'i, Zaidi, Ismaili and Khariji Islam, with no political power, had to include it as one of the essentials of Islam to facilitate, whenever and wherever exigencies and possibilities arose to take to arms to carve out their own niche of political power. It was also a defensive measure for them. **Jihad** is only classified amongst the Ahlu's-Sunna as **farḍ-al-Kifaya**, meaning that it is not, obligatory duty on every one but if necessary members of the community performed it, it would be assumed to have been performed by every one. This formulation also indicates to a period when the state did not require the services of every Muslim to join the military service.

The obligation of **Jihad** is mainly derived from the verses 9:5, 6 and 8:39-42 amongst others and were revealed when the wars with the Quraish of Mecca and the Jews of Medina had to become unavoidable. The Quran has verses for different stages of development of Islam. In the Meccan period, the Quran talks of comity of religions including the Quraish of Mecca and is averse to any compulsions in religious affairs. These would have definitely been a very great restraint on the spread of wars but in the wake of the expanding empires, the classical formulations considered all those verses as repeated by the latter Mediness verses validating fighting against the Quresh and the Jews.

The Jurists then describe five stages of the Quran and validates the fifth stage :

- (i) a period of trust, forgiveness and withdrawal.
- (ii) second stage of summoning them to Islam.
- (iii) Third stage of fighting in self defence.
- (iv) fourth stage of aggressive wars at certain times.
- (v) final stage of general aggressive wars.

There are also many traditions from the Prophet recommending wars but there are also many which speak against wars.

The classical formulations also lay down that the conclusion of a successful war offers to the vanquished one of the three alternatives either accepting Islam or payment of polt-tax (Jizya) or death. These in essence have the modern versions in loyalty to occupying powers, extra taxes and death for sedition.

However, it is surprising to note that the terms that were given by the Arabs to the conquered people were far more liberal than what were available in either Byzantium or Sassanids; the reason why in many parts of the Byzantium they were invited and welcome. Tabari even relates that the early Arabs before attacking any territory would demand that if the people specially the downtrodden residing within the non-Muslims territory were treated liberally and with justice, they would not attack the region. This speaks of the better social justice



the people of the other territories were expecting at the hands of the adherents of the new dispensation. This call, later on, was equated by the jurists to the call for acceptance of Islam. The formulations of aggressive wars by the jurists was the acquiescence to the political policies of the state.

The expansion of the Arab empire also created hopes, desires and dreams of greater conquests and the world was consequently reduced to two camps, the camp of Islam ruled by the caliph and the territories ruled by non-Muslims to be subdued by the caliph. However, where treaties exist between the Muslim and non-Muslim states, these territories belong to the realm of truce (**Daru's-Sulh**). The concepts of **Daru'l-Islam**, **Daru'l-Harb** and **Daru'l-Sulh** are of the times when the Abbasid Empire was waging wars every year with the Byzantium and territories were changing hands all the time. What was occupied by the Abbasids and was Islamic land one year changed into the territory of the Byzantium in another, what was **Daru'l-Islam** became **Daru'l-Harb** to be reconquered and assimilated into the Arab State. The expedient and empire-expanding war-fares of the Abbasid period were reduced into juristic formulations to be applied for all times to come. These rules were merely an aid for the ruling caliph to raise an automatic army and expand his empire at the expense of the Byzantium. The **Qur'an**, it should be remembered has no division of the world into two camps nor the traditions have any genuine support for it, although the jurists try to trace it back to the days of the Prophet in Medina and his invitation to the Arabian tribes and other rulers to accept his norms of social and religious justice. The continuous wars with the Byzantium and the absence of outright victory had also created animosities between them. The classical jurists call the Byzantine Emperor, **Maliku't Tagiya** (the king of renegades); and all other rulers not under the Abbasids as rebels. A similar or even more severe abuses from Byzantium Muslims were not lacking.

In the early classical formulations **Daru'l-Harb** includes all those countries where the Muslim law is not permitted in the matter of worship and there is no protection of the believers and the dhimmis (the protected people). This would restrict the **Daru'l-Harb** to minimum. To quote the Hanfi School; classical text **Raddu'l-Mukhtar**: If the law

of Islam remains in force together with the laws of unbelievers, then the country can not be said to be **Daru'l-Harb**.

The question of **Daru'l-Islam** and **Daru'l-Harb** became somewhat relevant in India when India came under the British rule. The gradual occupation of Muslim Countries in the 19th Century like Algeria, Egypt and dwindling parts of European Turkey, brought the problem to the fore and the Hanafi and the Shafi'i jurists in Mecca opined that 'as long as even some observances of Islam prevail in a country it is Daru'l-Islam. Some even accepted that if a single provision of Muslim law is kept in force it is not the territory of war. A Maliki fatwa was also to the same effect to satisfy its adherents in Algeria and upper Egypt. It said 'A country does not become Daru'l-Harb as soon as it passes into the hands of non-Muslims but only when all or most of the Islamic injunctions disappear therefrom'. Since the military power of Turkey in Constantinople which was the seat of the Caliphate, was not in a position to withstand the intrusion of West, a way had to be found to absolve him from doing what he could not. The fatwas achieved double purpose and seemed to have been inspired by the Caliphate in understanding with the occupationary powers. On the one hand, as we said earlier, the Caliph was condoned for not taking any action which could have brought more trouble for the Ottomans and on the other pacifying the occupied people, so that they may not be religiously motivated to fight occupying powers. Following this, India which with the Christian occupation had been earlier declared as **Daru'l-Harb** leading to many an up-rising had to be also religiously pacified and pampered. The British obtained the fatwa from Sunni and Shi'a 'Ulama. The Sunni fatwa in effect said "the absence of protection and liberty to Muslims is essential in a **Jihad**" and since these obtained under the British rule, India was not **Daru'l-Harb** and the opposition to the rule had to cease. The Shias excused themselves from any opposition, because the rightful Imam was not there to lead the army. In spite of these palliatives, some Muslims believed that India under British was a **Daru'l-Harb** and that they should migrate to Afghanistan rather than live under its rule. Strangely enough, many Hindus including Raja Mahendra Pratap joined the Muslims in this venture, of migration, refusing to accept the alien rule.

The concept of **Daru'l-Harb** and **Daru'l-Islam** as dual divisions of the world was a medieval political concept. Even the other side, i.e. non-Muslim side, looked at the world with a similar outlook. It should also be seen in the background of the efforts of the Sassanids and Byzantium to achieve universal domination. The concept after its use in the initial expansion of the Arab Empire was rarely activated and was more or less dormant, except for the historians to fit in the new conquests (after the conquests) within the golden-age visions of the Islamic empire. The division of the world in the national states has completely done away with that concept and from what ever side we may be reminded of it, Muslim or non-Muslim, it has no relevance. Besides a national entity with different religious groups specially in a democratic country where every one is a participant in the governance of the country, the concept could have and would have no validity.

The earliest Muslim doctrine was that war has to be tolerated only if it was just which if interpreted correctly would have meant only the defensive wars, and these could be started only to blunt the offensive intent of the hostiles. A treatise **Atharu'l-Uwal fi Tartibu'd-Duwal** by Hasan ibn Abdullah, a seventh century (A.H.) author, regards wars as a social disease and gives seven reasons for the recurrence of war in society. First for the establishment of a new state or dynasty, second for the consolidation of an already established state or dynasty, third, the wars of a just state (*dawla adila*) against rebels and dissenters, fourth, wars between two nations or tribes in the form of raids, fifth, the annexation of one state by another regardless of whether the latter was just or unjust, sixth, wars for the purpose of mere robbery, not for any political reasons and seventh, inter-tribal warfare as those which existed in pre-Islamic Arabia". (Majid Khadduri, **War and Peace in the Law of Islam**, Baltimore 1955 P-70). This is definitely a secular point of view. More or less wars are secular wars but religion is dragged into it. Even the earlier idea of just wars was twisted and contorted to suit the exigencies of the empire. There is not much difference between the concept of war in the medieval Islam and Christianity and if objectively analysed the treatment by Arabs of non-Muslims was far more tolerant than other peoples and one should not forget that the Catholic peace of the Middle ages was very securely wedded to the principle of eternal holy war against infidels and the Church always blessed the wars if they were aimed for the conversion of the vanqui-

shed. The concept of **Jihad** today is variously used for any secular wars and the other religions too employ the religious fervor and tendencies for their own military exploits. However the earlier concepts are neither relevant nor insisted upon, even by Muslims. They merely form part of a by-gone age and in spite of revivalism in some parts of Muslim world, these concepts are hardly touched upon.

The concept of **Ahlu’i Kitab** is a Quranic concept and emanates from the acceptance of all the religions as equal and rightful guides to the truth. The Quran even visualises and emphasizes the community of faiths and interests between the adherents of the new religion and other ancient religions. The verse (42: 13, 14) of the Quran says: He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah and that which We inspire in thee and that which we recommended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus saying : Establish the religion and be not divided therein. The next verse blames the division on account of religion because of rivalry and asks the Prophet to summon the people to rightitude and says : (42 : 15) : Be thou upright as thou art commanded and follow not their lusts and pay : I believe in whatever scriphox Allah hath sent down and I am commanded to be just amongst you, Allah is our Lord and is your Lord. On us is the responsibility for what we do and on you is the responsibility for what you do. There is no strife between you and us. Allah will bring up together and unto HIM we shall return. These verses are to my mind the operative verses if we disregard the polemics and political rivalries of the ages gone by. The mention of few individuals in the Quran does not exclude those who have not been mentioned and according to one of the traditions of the Prophet there have been more than 124000 Prophets and saints sent by Allah.

However, the people of the Book were restricted by the jurists to only Jews and Christians with whom they were in immediate contact and certain rules were laid down for their acceptance within the Islamic policy. They were given autonomy to follow their religions and laws. They were to be treated as protected people and they had to pay the poll-tax a sort of collective tribute for staying in State ruled by Muslims. Both the Sassanids as well as Byzantium had levied poll-tax on the people belonging to other faiths. The Roman Byzantine empire had a personal tax and was levied on the colonists and the

non-Christians. The Arab empire borrowed it. However when the Turks came to India, the local people were treated as protected people (dhimmis) and the poll-tax was invariably disappearing from most of the Muslim countries. Even in India, some historians assert that poll-tax was more an exception than a rule — the classical formulations of the fiscal policy of the State being blurred in entirely a different environment. Today there is no country in W. Asia or S. E. Asia where these formulations have any validity, except that the Saudi Arabia would not grant citizenship to any non-Muslim.

When a religion, and for that matter every religion, is considered by its adherents to be the perfect one, people belonging to other religions, in spite of all claims of tolerance and liberality, would be inferior to them and at times would be designated by terms which, not having any sense of denigration to start with, gather if gradually. The Jews called the non-Jews gentiles, (ignorants) the Christians called others pagans and heathens, Hindus Malechhh, and the Muslims Kafir. The etymological meaning of the word **Kufr** is obliterating or covering and thereafter concealing the benefits i.e. being ungrateful to God. The verse 36 : 18 speaks of concealing God's blessings and verses 16 : 7, 30 : 33 tells of people being ungrateful to God's gifts. If this sense is adhered to, many Muslims will come under that category. However, **Kufr** was gradually attributed to all the non-Muslims, although according to certain Muslim sects a Muslim could also be guilty of **Kufr** (those committing heinous sins) and incur eternal damnation. However these are matters for God and best left to Him. If one goes through the early history of Islam one would find that all these concepts including that of **Kufr** were formulated because of social and political conditions and had very little to do with religion. "Even down to the time of the Crusades, there prevailed in Islam a tolerance towards non-Muslims as is impossible to imagine in the whole of Christendom". In the early period, there was no question of fanaticism towards non-believers. It was only aroused and nourished through repeated conflicts and wars. The war psychology even led the Muslim states to call each other **Kafirs**, when they were fighting amongst them.

The last of the item which raises misapprehension is Pan-Islamism. Pan-Islamism was the idea preached by Jamaluddin Afghani

who wanted to unite all the Muslims States under a single political order to make possible to repulse European interference and encroachments. The decadence of Muslim countries and the gradually increasing political and economic control of the West over Asia and Africa led him to only possible way-out; a combination of Muslim States to face the onslaught of the West. Jamaluddin Afghani was mainly critical of British Rule for it was the major power, of which had occupied and brought under its influence most of the Muslim countries in W. Asia. The French-English rivalry brought him to France where, it seems, he was left at liberty to do his pan-Islamist propaganda which if successful would have hit the British more. The French English defence only came in the later years of the first decade of the twentieth century. The French support to him as an anti-British move still remains to be worked out. Jamaluddin Afghani could not achieve anything and the Salafiyya movement which followed him could not do any thing either. The 'Ihwan' movement too has not succeeded anywhere at all and at times it becomes merely a tool in the arena of international politics.

The Islamic unity has been a myth since the civil wars which started a few years after the death of the Prophet. Not once the Caliphate could claim allegiance of all the Muslims and with the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, the possible rallying point has disappeared and to expect that the Muslim countries, a large majority of them governed and controlled by personal rules, would be able to evolve any modus operandi to agglomerate or congregate under any single authority would be delusive and absurd. Even the revivalist tendencies in Muslim countries like Pakistan, S. Arabia, Iran, Sudan and Bangla Desh have different flavours and ingredients determined by their own inner and external political pressures and strains and to group them under one category would be to refuse to understand the factual state of affairs obtaining in W. Asia and elsewhere.

It is unfortunate that the lack of proper understanding about Islam creates misunderstanding and misapprehensions in certain academic and intelligent quarters and these need to be removed. The concept discussed have no relevance today and to feel that they could be revived or reactivated is to ask or wish for impossible.

However, there are humanistic tendencies within Islam and these are prolific and need to be properly studied and brought out. If one goes beyond the theological formulations of any religion which by necessity confines itself to certain determined community, one would find very rich material, specially in Islam amongst Sufis, which preaches respect and understanding for all religions. If one reads Biruni, Sharastani, or Ikhwanus Safa, for example one finds a proper approach to understand all religions, Here I will only give a very few quotations :-

The Ikhwan u's-Safa, an encyclopaedic work composed around the end of the 3rd century of Hijra (9th century A. D.) says :- Vol. ii Risala vii pp 238-39 Bombay edition : 1305 A.H.)

People should not shown hostility to any kind of knowledge or reject any Book. You should not be fanatical for any doctrine. Our opinion and our doctrine embrace all doctrines and receive all knowledge.

In one of its epistles on animals and their subjudgation and oppression by Man, there is a telling conversation between the presiding judge and the Philosopher.

Judge :- Why does humanity differ so much in their beliefs and faiths inspite of their Creator being one and the same.

Philosopher : Faiths, beliefs and laws are different paths and means of approach. The goal is the same whatever direction we take there will be the aspect of God.

Judge : Then why do they kill each other when the goal of all religions is the same, to attain God ?

Philosopher : Killing does not emanate from religion, for in matters of religion, there is no compulsion. The killing issues forth from power which comes as a corollory of religion.

Judge : Explain to me how does it transpire.

Philosopher : Religion and power have tended to become twins and they tend not to separate. One seems not to exist without another, although religion precede and the power follows it. It is because of this that the people of one religion kill people of other religions, aiming to attain control and dominion. Every religion desires to subjugate others under the traditions and decrees of its own.

Killing of persons is a tradition of all religions, creeds and faiths with this proviso that in religion the person kills his own self whereas in the traditions of power, the person desiring power kills others.

Judge : Killing of others for the sake of power is obvious but how do you establish that religions call for killing of one self if one wants to be religious.

Philosopher : That is the teaching of Islam and how clear it is ! For God the High says : Verily God has acquired their souls and wealth for eternal bliss. They strive in the way of God killing their own selves". Then He says : Be of good cheer for the contract you have entered (sacrificing yourselves) with God. And again they strive hard in the way of God and care not for the reproaches of the accuser. Same is revealed in Torah "Turn towards your Lord and sacrifice yourselves. That is, near your Lord, better". And the Christ addressing his disciples says in the Gospel : 'Prepare for being sacrificed and crucified if you want to help me. You shall be with me in the kingdom of heaven with my Father and yours'. Similarly behave the Brahmins of India, killing themselves or burning themselves to the dictates of their religion. They believe that to attain God one should sacrifice oneself : if being the only way to escape sins and reach certainty. Same is intended by the Manicheans and Dualists when they control themselves from desires seeking release from the house of trouble and lowliness. Thus all religions decree sacrificing one's own self as a training for the self and seeking salvation.

Let me mention here that there are fatwas which prohibit conversion by force, one of such fatwas is attributed to Imam Gazali. There were fatwas issued in the middle ages when jews and Christians



were invited to Islam with economic benefits in Basra to the effect that conversions with gifts and presents are not to be allowed.

The Hindu religious lore was studied with avidity during middle ages by Muslims and even idol worship was explained as worshipping a certain attribute of God. To Mirza Jan Janan Mazhar, idol worship was a process similar to *dhikr*, the contemplation of God and Mahmud Shabistani the author of *Gulshan-i-Raz* discussing idol worship says :

The idol is the expression of love and unity in this world and to wear the sacred thread is to take the resolve of service. As both faith and unfaith are founded on existence, unity of God is the essence of idol worship. As things are the expression of existence one out of them at least will be the idol. If the Muslim knew what the idol is, he would understand that religion consists in idolatry. And if the idol worshipper understood the idol, he would not go astray in his faith. If the Hindu does not see in the idol anything but an external creation he would become a Kafir in the eyes of law and if a Muslim will not see that reality is hidden in the idol, he shall not be a Muslim according to law.

If the prophet of Islam is a mercy & grace for the two worlds, his mercy has not to be confined to Muslims alone. Even God's mercy, the Quran says "encompasseth all".

It is unfortunate that Islam as a religion of love and compassion has been lost within the mazes of Western interpretations of Islam being a religion of violence and force and the unfortunate tendency of the 'Ulama to confine Islam to the formulations which helped build the Arab empire.

Let me end this with another quotation from one of the Risala's of the Ikhwan. The conversation is between the one who has attained the salvation (Naji) and one who has missed the salvation (Halik) (vol. iii R. vii p. 94, Bombay 1300 A.H.)

an. Naji : How are you !

- al. Halik : I am in God's favours and desire avidly for more.  
I help my Religion and am hostile to the enemies of  
the Lord. I fight them.
- an. Naji : Who are the enemies of God.
- al-Halik : Every one who does not share my religion and my  
belief.
- an-Naji : Even if he were a monotheist.
- al-Halik : Yes.
- an-Naji : If you have overpowered them what would you do  
with them.
- al-Halik : I will invite them to my religion and faith.
- an-Naji : And if they do not accept it !
- al-Halik : I shall fight them, spill their blood and confiscate  
belongings.
- an-Naji : And if you can not overpower them what would you  
do.
- al-Halik : I would send imprecations on them in my prayers,  
night and day in order to seek nearness with God.
- an-Naji : Would your imprecations and curses have any effect  
on them.
- al-Halik : I do not know. But when I do that I feel satisfied  
and happy.
- an-Naji : Do you understand why you feel that way !
- al-Halik : No.

- an-Naji : Because you have a sick soul, a tormented heart and a tortured spirit. The happiness consists in relief from pain. You seem to be confined to one of the lower layers of hell whose fire shall eat your heart away till the time, for your release and relief from punishment, arrives.
- al-Halik : Tell me about your beliefs and faith and the condition of your soul.
- an-Naji : Yes of course. I feel I am in such indescribable and unaccountable favours and grace of God that I can not adequately express my gratitude to Him. I am content with whatever God ordains. I do neither wish any harm to any of His creatures nor have any hatred towards them. I do not intend any hurt to them and my soul is at peace and my heart spacious and the whole world has nothing to fear from me. I resign myself to God and my religion is the religion of Abraham when he said addressing God, 'if you punish them but they are your creations and if you forgive them, Thou art forgiving and compassionate'.

As far as religions are concerned, it would be better to leave the religious principles to the realm of individual conscience and allow the forces of society unfettered control over the shape of political, social and economic relationships. There can be no gainsay to the fact that traditions if they have values and concepts which can help towards building a just equable and equitable society, these can be gainfully employed. One should always concentrate emphasizing those principles and pronouncements in religious traditions which could create better understanding amongst adherents of different religions and some appreciation of each other. This could go some way in assuaging the improper attitudes and mutual ill-will that have built up within last hundred years.

# UNDERSTANDING AND TRANSCENDING COMMUNALISM

By BALRAJ PURI

The problem of communalism has defied solution so far. What is worse, it defies a clear diagnosis and grip of the intellectuals. Above all, it defies a standard definition. The term is used more to malign than define.

There must be millions of people in the country who honestly believe in communalism and follow it, whatever definition we may adopt for it. But how can there be a dialogue with them on the merit and demerit of their belief if none accepts this derogatory label. The entire discussion on the subject has therefore degenerated into pious exhortations, empty rhetoric or self-righteous denunciation.

Some common sources of current confusion on the subject would be indicated by the type of questions usually asked in this context e.g. "Why in spite of the partition of the country, in spite of the industrial development and in spite of the spread of education, communal tension continues", as if these were the remedies of the problem. But why is it ruled out that communal tensions might have continued not "in spite of" but "due to" these cause ?

Not such reflection is needed to realize, for instance, how the partition has tangled the communal problem. It is usual to hold every Muslim responsible for the sin of Muslim leadership that had demanded Pakistan and to absolve every Hindu of his obligations to his compatriots. W. C. Smith, the celebrated writer of **Islam in Modern History**, reminds that even an illiterate Muslim peasant who perhaps never had a political idea in his head might be kicked about in a village with a contemptuous sneer : "Why don't you go to your Pakistan".

There are, of course, many post-independence causes of communal tensions as well. Modernisation, the process of which was speeded up after 1947 is, for instance, universally known to sharpen all identities including those based on religious communities. Revolutionary advances in means of communications, faster and easy travel and explosion in mass media shorten physical and mental distances

among members of a community scattered all over the country or even the world. Similarly spread of education and easy access to knowledge generally leads a community to fuller awareness of its historical and cultural roots. Modernisation, in short, helps in creating consciousness of geographical and historical continuity in a community. Development process improves material means of its members with which they can pursue the same objective more effectively and visit religious shrines and congregations more frequently and conveniently. In some cases development leads to disintegration of existing cultural identities and the ensuing vacuum is more easily filled by identities based on religious communities.

Finally, the same trend is further accelerated by measures of democratisation, politicisation and participation.

Communalism as we generally use the term is concern of a community about its secular problems. Most of the communal tensions have been the result of controversy over share of various communities in jobs, economic opportunities and political power. Rarely have theological differences led to communal troubles. It is therefore not surprising that Aligarh University and the modernist Muslims spearheaded the movement for Pakistan while Deoband and the Ulemas remained votaries of united Indian nationalism. Modern history of Indian politics clearly bears out the fact that modernist rather than orthodox section of the population was more prone to communal politics.

Growing sharpness of religious, regional, tribal, caste and other ethnic identities in post-independence India further indicates that this is an inevitable concomitant of modernisation. Even advanced countries like United States, Canada and Ireland and regimented countries like Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have witnessed resurgence of ethnic and communal identities in recent years.

Tensions arise when national elite fails to take cognizance of and respect emerging identities and their sharply articulated urges.

One way of looking at the phenomenon of communalism is to consider it as the urge for differentiation and autonomy of a com-

munity and its resistance to the so called integrationist attempts of the forces of uniformity. Or to put it in another way; it is the consequence of the failure of nationalism to represent and accommodate urges of all communities.

Concept of Indian nationalism does not inspire all sections of the nation alike and to the same degree. Muslim communalism, in its origin, was essentially a reaction against this concept. In our desire to keep the scales even between the two major communities as far as responsibility for communal politics is concerned, we often represent Jinnah as a counterpart of Savarkar or Golwalker. Nothing is further from truth. For, both of them were almost non-entities in Jinnah's time. He reacted against and rejected Gandhi — the symbol of Indian nationalism.

Much is made of the nationalist mind of Hindus against the communal mind of the Muslims; using nationalism and communalism as value loaded terms.

The difference in the two attitudes lies in the fact that Hindu communalism is an extreme form of Indian nationalism while Muslim communalism is a reaction to it. Hinduism, as Auribindo said, is nationalism. It has again been defined by militant Hindus as loyalty to the motherland and the holy land of India. Their hostility at members of other communities is rooted in the suspicion, that the latter's loyalty and respect for the country are not complete.

More than a set of principles and practices, Hinduism is a geographical and historical expression. It is confined to people of India or of Indian origin. Indian history merges into Hindu mythology so that ancient heroes, epics and literature have a religious character. Ramayana and Mahabharata are not only literary epics of ancient India but sacred books of Hindus.

The dilemma of a Muslim is that in his journey to his own history — i.e. history of his own country — he slips into a domain that belongs to another religion. "Hinduism meets Islam not as just another creed but as a representative of the ancient and native heritage of the nation. It is the assimilative and integrationist character

of Hinduism and not its communal brand that seems to threaten the Muslim identity””.

As Hinduism does not owe allegiance to a single book or prophet, Gandhi “found not the slightest difficulty in Hindu circles about evoking reverence for the Koran and the prophet”. But he disappointingly “found difficulty in Muslim circles about evoking the same reverence for the Vedas or in the incarnations<sup>3</sup>”. Obviously because Muslims believe only in one book and one prophet.

Many Muslim scholars have debated respective claims of nationalism and religion on their loyalty. They have also tended to divide humanity on the basis of believers and non-believers i.e. Dar-ul-Harb or Dar-ul-Islam. Where should India be placed ? If Muslims rigidly and literally follow the belief that Islam is a complete and perfect philosophy covering politics, economics, jurisprudence, social and cultural life and all other fields of human endeavour should they participate in a system which is not based on what might be considered Islamic injunctions relevant to these fields ? The theological question which would influence the degree and form of Muslim exclusiveness in India are linked with mundane question of the role of the Muslim community in the country and its relations with the national identity.

Transnational affinities of Muslims — at Pan-Islamic and sub-continental levels — are a major source of confusion about their role in India. If 90 crore Muslims of the world have been influenced in varying degrees by what is called the Islamic wave, could Muslims in India be hermetically sealed from it ?

But what are the political demands of the Islamic wave and how far are they compatible with the requirements of Indian nationalism ? Whatever may be said about its other manifestations, it is certainly less demanding than was the Khilafat movement which was not only an ally of Indian nationalism but was almost made one of its conditions. In fact Indian Islam is showing a far greater sense of maturity and self-confidence in receiving the new wave.

At the subcontinental level, Muslims of India have long ceased to look to Pakistan and her leaders for inspiration, guidance and emo-

tional support. Important Islamic institutions of the sub-continent like Aligarh, Deoband and Jamia, prestigious symbols of Muslim glory like the Red Fort and the Taj Mahal and Shrines of holiest of Muslim saints like Nizam-ud-Din and Chishti are in India. The essence of the concept of Islam dominant in the other two countries of the sub-continent was evolved in India. The contribution of her Ulemas — past and present — to Islamic learning is universally recognised.

It is no accident that a large number of Muslim pilgrimages from Pakistan and Bangladesh visit India and none in the reverse direction. For non-religious ideologies, too, Pakistan Muslims have to look more to India than elsewhere.

The brief reference to the Status of Indian Islam in the international Umma or in the subcontinent is meant to underline the fact that the Muslim community need not be treated as an embarrassment or liability for Indian nationalism. Its admitted transnational affinities should rather be a source of prestige and strength for the country. In no case transnational affinities can be treated as evidence of extra-territorial loyalty.

A closer look on the concept of Indian nationalism and the role of Muslim community alone would reveal the nature of what is called the communal problem of India. Instead of the customary Hindu-Muslim angle, it should be treated in terms of relationship of each community with the national identity. The concept of Indian nationalism itself needs to be liberalised refined and universalised so as to accommodate and reconcile the urges and interests of diverse identities — territorial, cultural, ethnic and religious — while granting a measure of autonomy to each one of them.

What is the legitimate sphere of communal identity? From which limit of activity communalism starts? How to categorise Jamiat-e-Ulema, an exclusively Muslim political organisation allied with Congress, which valiantly fought Muslim League during freedom movement? Or National Conference which mixed politics with religion by launching its attack on the appeal and ideology of Pakistan from the mosques and shrines of Kashmir?

Obviously we have tended to measure "secularity" of a party by the extent of its support to Indian nationalism. We also realize



that in some cases distinct and autonomous identities promote harmony than full uniformity does.

While conceding the role and inevitability of identities based on religious communities in the composite Indian nation, their limitations in promoting national harmony and satisfying all the urges of their own members should also be recognised.

India is a multiple federation, religious, regional and cultural. Merely religious identities do not exhaust the total reality of India. Nor is any religious identity totally homogeneous capable of representing all the urges of its members. If identities based on religion exceed their legitimate function — of providing a socio-cultural identity to their members — and became contender for political power, they would be suppressing many legitimate urges of their own members, arouse fears and hostility of other communities and strain the principles on which Indian polity is based.

It is in the interest of the members of a religious community that their non-religious urges, some of which they share with other communities should also be satisfied. There are a number of secular identities that can subsume or sublimate a part of the urges of the communal identities.

Religion and region are the two most important parameters of the Indian politics. Pakistan had to pay the heavy penalty of disintegration for ignoring regional dimension of the popular urges. In India, on the other hand, federal system and linguistic reorganisation of States absorbed many a fissiparous tendency. However, the forces of uniformity never gave in easily and continue to threaten national unity. Hence the need to underline the role of regional identities in providing emotional bridges between individuals and the national identity and for integrating religious communities. The latter role becomes significant in view of the inadequacies of Indian nationalism, noticed earlier, in this respect. "As regional identities, regional cultures, regional histories and regional heroes are generally not much coloured by standardised Hinduism, Muslims tend to own their pre-Islamic heritage at the regional level more readily than they do it at the national level. In fact in each region, there are saints, reformers

and warriors, who symbolise its common and composite heritage and inspire emotional allegiance of all its communities. But such symbols are fewer at the national level. While many Muslim faqirs are revered by non-Muslims at local levels, Krishna is integrated with Muslim consciousness at folk level in Braj and Mewat but not in that sense elsewhere.

Even Chhatrapati Shivaji and Maharana Pratap, who are projected as symbols of Hindu revivalism at the national level, are accepted by all communities in their respective regions, as fighters for local interests against the central domination as many regional Muslim rulers did at that time”.

In spiritual field Laleshwari and Sheikh Noor Din jointly represent a spiritual tradition owned by all communities of Kashmir. Similarly Nanak and Farid symbolise a spiritual heritage of both sides of Punjab and are revered by Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike. Again, Tagore and Nazar-ul-Islam contributed to an indivisible cultural heritage not only of Hindus and Muslims but also of India and Bangladesh. Regionalisation is thus greatest integrating force between various communities and, in case of Punjab and Bengal, between nations of the subcontinent.

It is no accident that Kashmiri and Pathan Muslims who were intensely proud of their respective regional cultures, became the main bulwark against the Muslim solidarity movement of the Muslim League. Again, proud regional cultures like Bengali and Tamil have rarely been fertile ground for communal tensions.

In the case of Punjab, collapse of regional identity — the causes of which may not detain us here — opened floodgates of communal violence.

All the manifestations of regionalism are not always healthy. But in most cases, regionalism would remain a lesser evil than communalism. The point of friction that it might generate are across or on the border of the region whereas communalism can vitiate the entire body politic within it.

While the role of regionalism in the context of national integration has often been debated, its potentialities for secularising the national politics have not been adequately appreciated.

Ultimately what we call communalism can best be combated by providing non-communal forums for meeting the legitimate needs of the people — a sense of belonging to a community and cultural and political urges. Unless alternative basis of identity are made available mere appeals to shed communal basis of identity would have marginal effect.

The notion that secularism as such is an alternative to communalism is one of the greatest source of confusion on the subject. The latter means identity based on religious community whereas secularism is an attribute of identities which are not so based. Region is only one of the many secular identities which can be considered as an alternative to communal identities.

Much unwarranted conclusions have been drawn from the experience of Pathans, Kashmiris and Bangladeshias. Their fight was not between secularism and communalism as such. They were fighting for the preservation of their regional identities which were being threatened by a movement of Muslim solidarity which professedly aimed at removing all other identities. They never ceased to be Muslims and asserted their Muslim identity as well when their regional identity had been safeguarded or when they were provoked as Muslims.

Region, though most potent, is not the only secular identity. The role of class in certain situations can be very crucial as it cuts across communal identities. Political parties which deal with socio-economic interests of the people and their power urge can play an equally effective role in achieving the same objective. Professional organisations and academic associations also provide a sense of belonging to elite groups.

The so called nationalist elite who decry all “divisive” forces, “parochial” loyalties, “sectarian” groupings in the name of one nation either do not succeed — on account of limitations of the approach discussed earlier — or succeed by raising nationalism to a high pitch resembling a State of fascism. The so called modernist elite who decry local traditions, orthodox but innocuous customs, folk mythology, fun and fair often strike at the grass root levels of Indian secularism.

Only a multiplicity of identities can represent vast complexity and diversity of a country like India in modern times. The unity of a country is not inversely proportional to number of identities of its people. Even two identities, if not mutually reconciled, can wreck national unity we saw in 1947. Multiplicity of identities on the other hand often overlap, check exclusiveness of one another and link people together through one or the other identity. It must always be remembered that basic urges of the people can never be completely eliminated or suppressed. All that can and should be done is to provide them with socially less harmful (or more useful) avenues of expression, sublimation and channelisation.

Without damaging the roots of the society, any attempt to inform its natural and traditional identities with universal and human values would certainly be useful.

The focus of this paper is on positive measures to promote harmony in society. The question of communal violence is certainly grave and urgent; which would need a supplementary paper to deal with. If it is not attempted here, it is due to limitations of space of this paper and in no way for lack of appreciation of its crucial importance.

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## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POLITICAL AND THE COMMUNAL — A MATERIALIST CRITIQUE

By PANDAV NAYAK

Articulation of political formations may share in a common political ethos but such political forms need not be of the same genre. This principle is as much true for the genesis of nation-states as for the sub-national assertions for autonomous or independent identities. Such articulation of political formations can be revolutionary depending upon the dynamics of correlation of social forces at work. Marx supported the national movement of the Poles and the Hungarians who were fighting against absolutism while he opposed the national movements of the Czechs and the South Slavs who were, according to his analysis, supporting indirectly the Tsarist system. Thus, progressive, revolutionary movements for national liberation and sub-national autonomy can have, for its reverse, reactionary and retrograde movements for 'national liberation' and regional separatism. The underlying principle involved here is that while the solution of the national and nationality question is linked with the abolition of private property and the advancement of the socialist cause, the salvation of the reactionary movements, of necessity, demands imperialist interventions in various forms.

Such political articulation need not be Manichean in its division, particularly after the October Revolution which boosted up the prospects of national liberation in countries of Asia and Africa. "Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia have confirmed, that the national question can be solved only in connection with, and on the basis of, the proletarian revolution, that the road to victory of the revolution in the West lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism". But since "no social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed" (Marx), the retreat of colonialism did not mean that in the newly liberated countries "new superior relations of production" have replaced their older type, at least to an extent imperialist onslaughts can be fought back. In case of India, the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes exhibited a curious blend of anti-

imperialist revolutionary fervour along with a series of compromises with the pre-capitalist institutions, ideas and principles. "Gandhian nationalism" which succeeded in attaining independence for India also provided the basis for partition on religious grounds, such were the powerful pulls and demands of state formation acting out Gandhiji's moral persuasions and the techniques of mass mobilization. This is however not to belittle the crucial significance of India's attaining independence, it should however be pointed out here that it is possible that such revolutionary projects are wrapped up by reactionary overtones which are largely responsible for the delay in the accomplishment of the bourgeois democratic revolution. This in other words is the underlying theme of India's 'composite Nationalism'/'one-nation theory' as distinguished from the reactionary project of the colonialists to create the state of Pakistan (with progressive wrappings of a Pakistan Movement) on the theme of 'Muslim Nationalism'/'Two Nation Theory'. The point we wish to make here is that between revolutionary and reactionary idiom of articulation, there exists a third possibility of a contingent mix of both, particularly in cases of countries which have been liberated recently. Such a mix has been the product of a historical contingency of new states emerging out of old societies; these states invariably choosing liberal democracy as the major historical-structural premise for governance during their independent set up, while the state structure remained far away from a democratic sublimation of the liberal state which the classical bourgeois states experienced in the course of their evolution. The liberal democracy represents therefore a major political contradiction in these new states whose problems of regime legitimation are becoming unmanageable and therefore demand a great toll of socio-economic engineering in the nation-building tasks of foremost urgency and requirement here. About this more later; but suffice it to say here that it is these unmanageable problems of regime legitimation in these new states which force the ruling classes here to exploit the available reactionary trappings to full political advantage with the help of the imperial aid and repressive political and ideological state apparatuses at their command, since the vital task of completing the democratic revolution is always perceived as a grave challenge to the continuance of the ruling class domination. As always, there are variations on the theme and content of this historical process depending upon the peculiarities of the concrete situation.

Communalism refers to a dominant ideological theme of this perverse state behaviour. Communalism represents communitarian articulation of political formations whether in ruling or in the opposition, whether of dominant classes or of the dominated classes. In this generic sense deriving from the class character of the state structure, the composite spectrum of communalism comprises as diverse elements as communitarian politics of the Asiatic State to which Marx refers in his 1853 despatches as to the modern, plural "communal" societies of Daniel Bell's characterization, where 'more and more groups act as veto powers and check each other's purposes'. The difference in perception here is not only one of methodology (which certainly is there) but what is important to note is that this difference in perception has also been caused by the social change over the historical time. This change in its turn reflects the degree of politicization that has taken place in the meantime. Failure to attend to the various nation-building tasks invariably compels the ruling classes and their ruling ideologues to politicise national issues along the lines of what can be called a composite view of communalism. In this sense, a composite view of communalism comprises hegemonic (in rule as well as in opposition) attempts at politicization of the polity in a manner and around the national issues so as to give rise to various disruptive and fissiparous tendencies like sectarian language, ethnic, regional etc. movements. In other words, the prevailing political obstacles in the path of national integration of a country are an objective outcome of the political behaviour of a bourgeois-democratic state whose ruling classes have failed or are faltering in the task of accomplishing the necessary democratic revolution. Such issues emerging from an objective basis of the state structure provide easy pretexts for the vested interests to exploit them for full political advantage from a communal angle. In the other words, depending on the degree and extent of failure on the part of the ruling classes to resolve the national-democratic tasks, the communal contents of state behaviour can be ascertained.

What is therefore specific to the communal question is its decisive, determining aspect viz, politicization. In other words, communalism represents a specific manifestation of the political and ideological domination which is an essential defining feature of the modern state. More acute are the problems of legitimation as in the

case of developing states, sharper manifestation of communal problems is usually observed. Conversely, in a domination-matrix of more accommodative class interests, such manifestations get diffused and appear discordant.

Communal manifestation is a logical product of cumulative transformations of individuals into captive subjects held together by a cultivated dogma with an implicit but necessary component of a mystique. "This inversion by which the determinate is falsely presented as the determinant, takes place through a process of 'hailing' or "interpellating individuals as subjects". (Laclau) What defines a movement/manifestation as communal is this ideological incorporation of popular interpellations into the discourses of the vested interests. Movements/manifestations which achieve this may have very diverse political characteristics-from reactionary to progressive-but they all arise as a result of hegemonic crisis and their ideological synthesis represents an attempt to resolve this crisis in one way or another-either in the interest of the dominant classes or in the interests of the dominated classes. Whereas the dominant classes always seek to restrain such a movement within calculated limits, the dominated classes, particularly in those situations where normally organised communist parties are either weak or even non-existent, go full out till their political project is completed. Pakistan both in its unity and division provides illustrations for both these trends of the communal movement.

Thus, communalism is primarily an ideological theme which is appropriated by the dominant as well as the dominated classes for reactionary or progressive reasons respectively. As such, communal contradiction is constituted at the political level which mediates between its ideological manifestation and its concrete class basis.

A concrete political inquiry into the problems of communalism must therefore derive itself from the theoretical problematic of the relationship between the political and the ideological levels, which along with the economic level (ultimately determining) constitute the state structure. Brief space here does not allow us to develop a critique of this structuralist-marxist version which was propounded and advanced by Althusser, Poulantzas and others in order to counter the



instrumentalist and the neo-Hegelian 'Critical Theory' perspectives in the field of marxist analysis of state and politics. In the following section, a brief critique pertaining only to the problematic relationship between the political and the ideological (as specific levels in the analysis of the state structure) is attempted.

Despite a long history of evolution, the essential features of the concepts like the **Political** and the **Ideological** continue to centre around the state and the distortion of consciousness respectively. Since it is nearly impossible to critique this unwieldy corpus of literature, we shall confine ourselves to some bold points germane to our topic under discussion.

It can be safely said that understanding of the political flows from and is determined by the various concepts, premises, methodologies and generalizations as developed by the discipline of Political Science. However, such understanding of the political phenomena by a political scientist need not always be true to the empirical contents, particularly when it is widely accepted and rightly so, that political science is one among the most ideologically suffused social science (the bug of state is right there under the bed). The evolution of modern Political Science reveals three interesting phases. First, there was a lamentation that the political philosophers, in early days, had either indulged in what Gramsci had beautifully expressed 'scholastic straw-threshing or evolved weakneed theoretical defences (MacIver, Lindsay among others) of democratic states which no sooner degenerated into fascism. The central problem was that they failed to evolve a paradigm in the absence of which it is alleged a science of politics could not develop. In the second phase, the implicit lacunae of the first phase, viz., a proven failure to correctly grasp the dynamics of market determination of political forces cautioned the political scientists of the Marshall plan and the cold war era sufficiently enough to drop altogether the central unit of political inquiry viz., the state, from the scope of theoretical inquiry. Thus when Gabriel Almond declared in his Oracular 1966 Presidential Address to American Political Science Association that political science which is 'predominantly American' became a true science with the introduction of a paradigm viz., political system (David Easton), what he was

really hiding from the scholars of the non-Western world is that this new science of politics is all about authoritarian and managerial politics. As to why the political scientists in the developing world still cling on to this mode of empirical political inquiry, the answer has to be sought in the material relations which this essentially ideological 'science of politics' carries with itself. In the third phase, one witnesses the eclipse of imperial political science along with the emergence of radical political analysis which owed its inspiration, at least a substantial portion of it, to the structural-Marxist version as propounded and advanced by Althusser, Poulantzas and others. A critical dimension of this structural-Marxist approach to politics is that it could critique and transcend the boundaries of functional-empirical theory of politics on the one hand and the humanist-historicist Marxist view of politics on the other. But then, again, not only that this approach grew in the context of the advanced capitalist states, which therefore remains to be tested in the context of the political realities in the developing world (which is our concern here) but, more importantly, this entire business of raising an alternative theoretical edifice turned out both artificial insofar as it hinges on Althusser's 'necessary philosophy' and a historical in being primarily structuralist in its central theoretical thrust. We have attempted elsewhere a perspective called political Economy of State in order to scientifically analyse and understand the state structure in the developing world. According to this perspective, state is not only crucial to understanding the political realities but more importantly, in the rejuvenation and renewal of this central unit of political inquiry, it should be considered in its historico-materialist dimensions specific to politico-economic milieu in which it was born and accordingly conditioned. In this connection, it is important to underscore three essential definitional aspects of state structure (Bob Jessop) in the developing world:

- (i) State is a structural ensemble rather than a subject;
- (ii) State is a system of political domination rather than a neutral instrument; and
- (iii) State power is a complex set of social relations which refresh the changing balance of social forces in a determinate conjuncture.

In this framework of analysis, ideology is but a social 'cement' (Gramsci) which enables the ruling classes to secure social cohesion

while maintaining political domination over other classes. "Ideology thus appears as a certain representation of the world, which links men with their conditions of existence and with other men.." (Althusser). In being that ideology's most of the problems arise from entangled 'mediations' between the economy and the consciousness. Ideology is an essential element of all societies since it secures fulfilment of certain essential tasks in the interest of preservation and promotion of social, economic and political order. Thus, ideology is a structural feature of all class societies in so far as ideological representations serve the class role of cementing socio-political unity across class conflicts and struggles.

Taking the ideological theoretical practice of imperial political science as a point of departure, one may as well legitimately ask where does ideology end and science begin? Were Marx and Lenin indulging in ideological theoretical practice? Or taking a recent example from the writings on Indian history, are scholars like Bipin Chandra, Romila Thapar and others indulging in ideological theoretical practice? Our answer to these questions is based on two important insights. One from Marx himself who was not prepared to call Ricardo an ideological economist for the simple reason that Ricardo was responding as a sound bourgeois economist, who could realistically relate economic performances to the experienced realities, albeit in a way dictated by the circumstances. Ricardo's conception is, on the whole, in the interests of the **industrial bourgeoisie**, only **because and in so far as**, their interests coincide with that of production or the productive development of human labour. Where the bourgeoisie comes into conflict with this, he is just as **ruthless** towards it as he is at other times towards the proletariat and the aristocracy." (**Theories of Surplus Value**, Vol. 2, pp. 117-18). It is only in the phase subsequent to industrial revolution that the bourgeoisie deployed the mediatory role of the state and its various reproductive and repressive apparatuses to ensure and guarantee social order for smoother capital accumulation and in doing that the bourgeoisie adopted ideological practices. Perry Anderson hammers the point home when he says that the very existence of the bourgeois state is in itself "the principal ideological lynchpin of western capitalism". Thus what is specific to a real understanding of the ideological is not that it is a class weapon but such class-oriented thought must also conceal contradictions from

acquiring sharper, disruptive edges in order to become truly ideological. (Jorge Larraine, p. 63). The second insight, complementary to the above, comes from Lenin's **What Is to Be Done?** According to Lenin, ideology in a class society, tends to divide itself and develop contrary tendencies of representation of thoughts and views. Borrowing this clue, Althusser develops and in our view rightly so, two categories of ideologies-dominant and dominated and suggests for the dominated class to formulate their grievances and protests from an altogether different, 'theoretical terrain' of Historical Materialism. Since the working class cannot liberate itself from the grips of bourgeois ideology, they need to receive help from outside the dominant ideological stream. This help comes from a different theoretical practice namely science. In other words, class struggle in theoretical practice is only a necessary adjunct of the historical class struggle in so far as they seek to unravel the class-basis of the contradictions which were either deliberately covered up by the hegemonic ideology or have been allowed a drift owing to a large measure of social inertia and uncritical adherence of the belief patterns found in traditional societies. In other words, ideologies have a world-view i.e., a **Weltanschauung** but a scientific world-view is one which derives from and is based on socialist realism and ideology is therefore transcendable.

Pursuing the above logic, one can discern almost a gratuitous formulation of Althusser when he maintains a distinction between the 'theory of ideology in general' and the 'theory of particular ideologies'. Following Marx, our contention is that ideology in general (Althusser's **eternal ideology**) is as vague and unreal as speculative ideology since they cannot 'manifest' or 'realize' themselves in concrete situations. The distinction between the two-the ideology of pure reason and the ideology of pure speculation-is an abstract distinction incapable of appearing in specific situations. Ideologies are historically bounded and have definite relationships with the living experiences of a society from which they emerge. Otherwise, "as the taste of the porridge does not tell you who grew the oats, no more does this simple process tell you of itself what are the social conditions under which it is taking place (Marx quoted from Larraine).

Thus a correct assessment of ideological character should **not** conceive of ideology in terms of a pure generality or an abstraction.

The class character of ideology derives from its two interconnected functions viz., (i) it is a social adhesive, a social cement used by the ruling classes and their ideologues (ii) to conceal sharp edges of emerging contradictions so as to forestall disruption of social order. In being that, the class character of ideology should necessarily derive itself from the class character of the historical-structural premises underlying the formation of a particular state. Between the two analytical insights of Laclau and Althusser viz., popular interpellations as distinguished from class interpellations (Laclau) and the ideological division of the dominant and the dominated classes in which the latter habitually falls a victim to the ideological discourses of the former (Althusser), one can explore a useful insight, relevant to the communal politics in the developing countries. This analytical insight is useful to comprehend the underpinning dynamics of the so-called electoral waves which are usually lapped up by the bourgeois media in India. The fact that this 'wave' was checked by the Marxists in West Bengal While it had taken a heavy toll of the Janata constituencies underlines the historical lesson that no amount of populist reformism and slogans can be a substitute for class-based politics both in theory and practice. The loss of many of the Communist constituencies and the defeat of many trade union leaders in their own working bases in North India particularly underlines an important dynamics of class formation here viz., given the class character of our state, it is possible that electoral fervour of the bourgeois politics can suck away inadequately trained and educated (politically) working-class bases. This contradiction between the ruling class populism and the class-based politics becomes more articulate, sadly though, in those states (like Pakistan) which are products of and which are still nurturing reactionary nationalism. In Pakistan, for example, the ban on the working-class parties is almost as old as the state itself. Even the petit-bourgeois parties there have undergone, though to a lesser extent, the similar fate. The ruling military-bureaucrats with the stubborn props of imperial aid and assistance are hell-bent on resolving this contradiction through dissolving it by their ruthless repressive measures. Many interesting hypotheses emerge out of such a state structure where the line of conflict is so open and direct between a heavily reinforced military and bureaucracy on the one hand and a continually repressed working-class and the toiling masses on the other. Thus the thesis of 'popular interpellations' can be usefully

stretched to provide some meaningful explanations to communal problems of diverse political characteristics. What is central to this thesis is that ideology distort knowledge enabling the ruling classes to exploit political control of social consciousness including that of a large chunk of subordinated classes in those developing states where articulation of class formations has been either hindered, delayed or misdirected. This therefore raises the question as to how Ideology is distorted.

In *Ideology and Utopia*, Karl Mannheim addresses himself to this question at the end of his 'evaluative approach' which according to him, is needed because 'history as history is unintelligible unless certain of its aspects are emphasized in contrast to others'. Understanding of history therefore implies value-judgements which at a collective level assume the form of an ideological class weapon. Ideological distortions flow from these collectivised value-judgements. Mannheim distinguishes three types of ideological distortions:

(i) A particular ethical attitude is invalid "if it is oriented with reference to norms, with which action in a given historical setting, even with the best of intentions cannot comply." Mannheim cites the example of the Islamic norm of interest-free lending which becomes invalid according to him, in an era of rising capitalism since this norm becomes incapable of practical significance.

(ii) Another type of ideological distortion normally uses absolutes and ideals in order to cover up real relations. In his own words, "This is the case when we create 'myths' worship 'greatness in itself', avow allegiance to 'ideals', while in our actual conduct we are following other interests which we try to mask by simulating an unconscious righteousness."

(iii) A third kind of ideological distortion normally taken recourse to occurs when a particular form of knowledge is peddled even after the circumstances in which it arose have either disappeared or are extinct. Developing world scholarship can bear out testimony for this, in any number. Concepts like 'Modernization', 'Development' or the theses like 'Stages of Economic Growth' are only some of these examples from the field of social science research and inquiry.

There can be many other forms of ideological distortions (Jorge Larrine). But the important point to be noted here is that ideology **per se** may be a class-oriented thought but in order that it becomes a class weapon, it needs to be distorted keeping in view the emerging challenges and disruptions in the existing correlation of socio-economic forces at a given point and stage of the history of a state. Ideological distortions therefore represent an essential aspect of the contradiction between the political and the ideological, and as such constitute the very matrix of mediations by the economic between these two levels of a given state structure.

Specificity of the relationship between the political and the ideological: The Central political ethos which informed the logic of governance whether in developed or developing states is known as liberal democracy. This is true of all these states which have attained independence through bourgeois-democratic nationalist struggles (and therefore, do not apply to the socialist republics). In the developed states, democratic franchise came as a matter of historical transformations, only after the foundations of a liberal state were firmly laid. Not so, however, in case of the ex-colonies whose independent political functioning came under a heavy-load of colonial inheritance. Even the developed liberal states are today experiencing what Huntington describes as the 'crisis of governability' for diverse reasons most of which can be traced to a crisis-ridden imperialist phase of capitalism. We shall however confine ourselves to the analysis of the political roots of this crisis in the developing world.

State as an entity of legal-jurisprudence is a formidable corporation which holds the sovereign right of making laws and ensuring obedience thereto. The legal-juristic personality of the state in the developing countries, like its counterpart in the developed world is by definition liberal-democratic. A closer examination of the socio-economic background of these two types of liberal state reveals the difference between logical evolution (in classical bourgeois states) and externally induced imposition (in case of late-comers) which came down to us in the form of a constitutional set-up. Even the foremost defenders of so-called religious nationalism (e.g. Pakistani rulers) cannot deny the historical fact that their national movement was directed to achieve independent statehood and having acquired the

latter, they addressed themselves to the task of constitution-making inspired by the political ethos of liberal democracy. A revealing hypothesis now attracting critical attention of the scholars on the sub-continent affairs is that; Those areas of the sub-continent which experienced little or less gestation of the national liberation movement finally responded to the appeals of reactionary nationalism giving birth to the state of Pakistan in the name of Islam. This venture of the reactionary nationalism was aided and abetted by the colonial designs which have heavily determined the state structure of India, Pakistan and subsequently Bangladesh. The style and content of such historical structuration have created various problem for effective working of liberal democracy, varying on the degree and extent of liberation they experienced during their national struggles. Hamza Alavi's finding of an autonomous 'over-developed state' placed in charge of the 'military-bureaucratic oligarchy' who have carved out a national area of convergence of interests for the metropolitan bourgeoisie and the landed classes may be true of Pakistan and even Bangladesh, but it is certainly not true of India or Sri Lanka. Alavi's autonomous state thesis does not however apply to the case of many African states recently liberated. These independent African states witnessed a thinly-veiled direct transition from a colonial to a neo-colonial political economy at the hands of their new rulers with the result that the comprador bourgeoisie came to dominate the national scene. Many of these liberated states-whether autonomous or comprador-have thrown to the winds the tenets of liberal democracy. In those states where the liberating democratic content has gone in a heavier dosage into the state formation, these tenets of liberal democracy have also failed to attract a reasonable measure of respectable emphasis from the political rulers. Emergence of this phenomenon of military dictatorships and restrictive civil authoritarianism in these developing ex-colonies calls into question their central political ethos viz., liberal democracy. More importantly a structural crisis is staring at ruling classes in these states forcing them hard to choose between imperialism which backs them all and conceding democratic demands of the toiling masses. Many of these military rulers have gone for facades of civilian governments under military control. But in all these crisis-ridden states, the problem of ideological legitimation is becoming more and more acute. These states encourage worst forms of communal divisions in the society in a diversionary



bid to keep the people off from challenging statist authoritarianism growing under the protective custody of imperialism.

Liberal democracy as a concept and as a political ethos comprises a set of political **institutions** popular elections, accountable government, majoritarian decisions etc., as well as a set of **Principles** like civil liberties, legal equality, rule of law etc., which these institutions embody and as such, are under a normative obligation to translate them into living realities. But the normative nature of these obligations is also precisely the reason which enables the ruling classes either to distort or destroy these institutions/since they can easily play up one pole of 'liberalism' stressing on liberty and free enterprise against the other pole of 'democracy' stressing on equality and equitable distinction depending on the exigencies of the situation. The enormous range of flexibility which the ruling classes have claimed for the convenient use of political power (in the name of democracy) is very much inherent in the twining of these two opposites in 'liberal democracy'. Take for example, one of its cardinal tenets: 'majority rule, minority rights'. Even a state which pays a reasonable measure of emphasis to democracy, can always interpret 'majority rule' at the expense of 'minority rights' purely for reasons of state. But if these contradictions did not show up in advanced capitalist countries, it was primarily because of a bourgeois political culture which was a product of the industrial revolution and its underlying dynamics of state formation. But the developing states, for their historical reasons, present an altogether different scenario in which the component and responsibility of the national bourgeoisie is not a very critical factor. In those states run by military dictatorships, the national bourgeoisie component was rather minimal. But when these states and their ruling classes came under strictures of normative obligations of liberal democracy, they faced the contradictory tasks of introducing capitalist relations of production before the prevailing feudal relations were dissolved. This resulted in a situation of 'uneven combined development' which was primarily characterized by the contradictions emerging between the market and the traditional sectors of the polity. Moreover, the pressing tasks of generating economic growth in these poor, traditional societies demanded more of an interventionist role for the state which is against the tenets of liberal democracy but the ruling classes availed the opportunity, none-

theless. These built-in contradictions of liberal democracy which guaranteed enormous flexibility for the ruling classes to implement democracy gave immense scope for ideological distortions in the same channel. But wherever this flexibility for ideological distortions and manoeuvres has been taken for granted by the ruling political blocs as during Emergency in India, the rulers were required to pay a heavy price to the electorate. 1977 elections can therefore be said to have reflected a big crisis in the heremonic ideology resolved democratically by a strong component of democracy in Indian polity. The defeat of the Janata alternative in 1980 elections underlined the importance of strategic unity in ideological behaviour whose visible absence or inadequacy contributed to demythification of the ruling class ideology with the following consequences for the future:

- i) An open and direct form of authoritarian control (like Emergency of 1975-77) appears an impossibility.
- ii) At least for some more time to come, state behaviour in the areas of social control is going to be very subtle and indirect in its impingements on the people.
- iii) The rehabilitated regime may decide to project more progressive orientations at least on the external front to enhance its chances of legitimacy and acceptability at the people's level.
- iv) As a corollary to the above, the contradiction between the ideological and the political may have to be resolved in favour of the latter, though the implied change has, of necessity, to be a matter of degrees only.

Specific to the analysis of the relationship between the political and the communal is the problem of disentangling the economic mediations at work in the task of resolving the contradiction between the ruling class ideology and the liberal democracy. The latter task simply is one of reconciling conflicting economic interests with the franchise politics. Depending upon the nature of origin of a state (reactionary or revolutionary nationalism) and the resultant component of democracy in the structure of the independent polity, the

lines of conflict which communal manifestations/movements take can be ascertained in terms of the following two major premises:

(i) Where the state is a product of reactionary nationalism with less democratic content in its polity, communal manifestations are usually state-sponsored and directed against democratic and national forces who constitute a continual source of challenge to their economic position in the country, Pakistan offers such an example.

(ii) Where the state is a product of long-gestated liberation movement with relatively more democratic content in its polity, the source of sponsoring communal manifestations is usually to be found among the competitive groups vying with each other for narrow economic ends. India fits into this category.

These two major premises need to be hedged with several qualifications but the point to be noted is that because of difference in location of the source while in one case the state structure itself is exposed to the danger of communal movements, in the other case it is to a great extent potentially free from such a structural crisis. Another important point here is that while the rulers in the former have mostly destroyed tenets of liberal democracy, they are better protected in the latter owing to various liberal democratic institutions and rules which absorb away the communal shock. But in both the cases of developing states, it is the popular interpellations, as we have argued above, which take a heavy toll of class-identity and consciousness and which explain the origin and nature of communal manifestations/movements. These popular interpellations across the lines of class division have mostly been fueled by ideological representation of distorted facts in order to cover up the disruptive effects of the emerging class contradictions during the era of rising capitalism.

Asghar Ali Engineer has reached similar conclusions on the basis of his findings from an on-the-spot study of several areas hit by communal violence. His central finding is that "communalism in modern India is a product of competition between petty-bourgeois classes in medium-sized towns". It is important to note, according to

him, that religion, popularly understood to be the source of communal friction is only one among several other reactionary social trends which have largely generated owing to uneven development in India both community-wise and region-wise. While criticizing Althusser's concept of 'ideology in general', we have maintained above that no form of knowledge which comes in the form of pure abstraction can be considered valid for the simple reason that it cannot 'realize' or 'manifest' itself. What is central to ideology as a classweapon is that it should be politicized. It is therefore wrong to say, as the Pakistani rulers are doing, that Muslim rulers in the past failed because they were bad Muslims. The realities rather point to the contrary. A Jihad failed to save the empire of the Khalifa in the past or even the Kashmir Valley in the modern days. It is very much doubtful whether these rulers will declare a Jihad to protect the Palestinians. It is well-established by now that the shrewd political uses of Islam by Jinnah has made Pakistan a possibility while the philosopher founder of the concept of 'Muslim Nationalism' Mohammad Iqbal waited in anguish for fear that his 'dream' which he once described as 'communalism of higher type' might come true. During his last days, the poet-philosopher is on record to have said that "Pakistan Plan would be disastrous to the British government, disastrous to the Hindu community, disastrous to the Moslem League and therefore, it is my duty to support it". (Edward Thompson : **Enlist India for Freedom**),

Ratna Naidu who defines a communal situation in terms of "tension between culturally distinct, but geographically intermingled communities" slips into an ideological impression that religion which is "the womb of all cultural values" is the source of communal violence while the other social minority issues like linguistic chauvanism, regional separatism etc. are too 'narrow compartments' for such a consideration. No wonder, therefore, developments in Assam and Punjab rob much of the vitality from her findings she reached as late as 1960: "Communal problem is most intractable to political solutions because the communal minority has social, political and cultural ambitions which are aborted by discontinuities in its demographic spread over territories, and in particular over economically viable autonomously governable territories." (p. 8). To take another finding: "The economic compulsions in the communal situation

however, has some peculiarly inflammatory characteristics which are not to be found in other minority situations". (p. 15).

At the end, some empirical indicators associated with communal riots during last 20 years (N. C. Saxena, 1983) are as follows:

- i) A region particularly in an urban area with a Muslim minority population ranging between 20 and 40 percent seems more prone to communal disturbances. Most of the communally sensitive towns (Moradabad, Firozabad, Aligarh, Meerut etc.) have a strong concentration of Muslim artisans, a few of whom have become manufacturing and exporters challenging the market domination of the Hindu merchants.
- ii) Areas where Hindu refugees from East Pakistan (and now Bangladesh) settled in significant numbers are communally sensitive.
- iii) Recurrence of riots in a town seems to be directly proportional to the number of riots which have taken place in that town in the past.
- iv) Riots seem to take place more in North India, especially Western U.P. and Bihar than in South India.
- v) Most of the communal riots took place on the occasion of religious festivals. However, it should be understood that "Religion is the outer cover, the inner core of group conflict is to ensure secular power and dominance over the other group".
- vi) More riots have occurred when the central authority was weak i.e. during 1961-64, 1967-70 and 1978-80.
- vii) Brutality and use of deadly weapons are increasing while the duration of a riot is getting reduced. Similarly, at least after sixties, the communal riots are more of a localized phenomenon (except Moradabad riots of 1980), and do not spread to the neighbouring towns.

# NOTES ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION

By

Moin Shakir

The problem of national integration is being encountered by every country — socialist, developed and developing. In effect, it is the problem of forging harmony, unity and cohesion among the different segments of population. Undoubtedly it is a difficult task as no country has a perfectly homogenous people. If the people are of a mixed character, there are bound to be social differences ethnic or cultural variations, political discords, economic rivalries and historical antagonism. The minorities are the product of this situation. There is no sovereign remedy to eliminate the majority and minority problem in order to bring about a uniform pattern of thinking and behaviour. The social and political life of the developed capitalist countries, like the United States of America and United Kingdom, is marked by a sharp divisions along racial lines, decline of national feeling and nihilistic postures<sup>1</sup>. Even in the Soviet Union certain minority groups do not get justice<sup>2</sup>. In the developing countries, the problem of integration is becoming more and more acute. The Tamilians in Sri Lanka, Overseas Chinese in Indonesia, Qadianis and Urdu speaking population of Pakistan, Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh, Kurds and Bahis in Iran may be instanced here. In India the problem of Muslims, Scheduled Castes and the tribals still awaits solution. The Assam agitation and the demand for Khalistan underline the gravity of the problem of integration.

Here a distinction should be made between political integration and national integration. Political integration means a shifting of the loyalties to the newly created centre in the system. It demands a creation of new loyalties and devotion to the claims of the State<sup>3</sup>. National integration is something more than political integration. It follows political integration. Its essence is an agreement among the different nationalities, minorities and other groups for making the political community and striking an equilibrium between the "communal" identity and the national identity. Pluralism and cross-pressuring are the devices to effect such an equilibrium. National

integration, therefore, is a necessary condition for political and economic development.

2. In India, the problem of national integration is generally perceived in terms of the role and aspirations of the different minority groups. The basis of these groups may be religion, ethnicity, language or region. Really speaking the minorities constitute a national category. From the standpoint of theory no concept of a 'majority' and a 'minority' is tenable. No definition of minority can be taken as wholly satisfactory. Those who constitute less than fifty per cent should be called a minority. But the difficulties arise when one asks the question: fifty per cent of what? In India, the Hindus are a 'majority' since they constitute 82.72 per cent of the total population. But they are not a majority in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Nagaland where Muslims, Sikhs and Christians constitute more than 50 per cent of the total population. It is also wrong to believe that if the Hindus are about 83 per cent the remaining 17 per cent constitute non-Hindu minorities. A bulk of the Scheduled Castes, enumerated as Hindus in the Census, do not certainly share the Hindu identity — it is the identity of traditionally literate and spiritually initiated ("twice been") upper castes.<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that 37 per cent of the Indian population is that of the non-Hindus in the country<sup>4</sup>. Besides, the so-called Hindu society is characterised by fragmentation, rigid stratification and hierarchy. The vertical and horizontal divisions of the Indian social structure show that the 'majority' and the 'minority' are both fictitious. As a polyglot country, India displays a diversity of languages and cultures. Fortunately or unfortunately there is no all India language or all India culture. There is also no oppressive nationality which exploits other nationalities. Owing to these diversities and some subjective perceptions, a section of people may choose to be a minority, a nationality, a nation, a sub-nation or ritually superior group. This is not to deny the existence or the validity of the minority group as the Hindu chauvinists do; at the same time it may be wrong to argue that India is a confederation of minorities' and a conglomeration of different communities and sub-communities. What is to be stressed here is that neither the 'majority' community nor the 'minority communities' are 'well-knit' and homogeneous. The fact is that they are divided socially, politically and economically. The social and economic divisions in these communities are bound to be expressed

in different and conflicting political postures. It is, therefore exceedingly difficult to generalise the so-called incidence of caste and 'communal' conflict and violence. It should be explained in terms of local situational and economic factors rather than Hindu-Muslim or high caste-Dalit conflict. A number of studies conducted on the caste and communal violence shall bear it out. It does not, however, mean that particularistic nature of problems of minority groups should be completely ignored. But the problems of the minorities like the Parsis or Jains are different from those of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Muslims an overwhelming majority of whom are deprived and impoverished. In view of their numbers and economic position, these minorities (the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and Muslims) cannot be treated on par with other 'minorities' like Parsis and Jains who may be described as "middleman" minorities.

Are the minorities "communal" and 'casteist' in their outlook and political behaviour? On the basis of the different electoral studies it can be asserted that the political behaviour of the minorities is neither communal nor casteist. However limited their perception of political realities may be their voting behaviour has been governed not by communal considerations<sup>6</sup>.

3. In the context of India certain areas of diversity are identified. They are religion, language, region, tribal population and the division between the mass of the people and the educated middle class leaders.<sup>7</sup> In all the developing countries, the problems created by the diversities are too obvious to be emphasised. The forces of religion, region etc. divide the people and that is why they were termed as 'fissiparous' which reflect the 'tribal mentality' of the Indian communities. It is felt that these forces act in a manner which is contrary to the desire of the preservation and maintenance of the integrity and sovereignty of the people. The 16th Amendment to the Indian Constitution aimed at countering the secessionist demand made by the DMK. Before 1947 the demand of Pakistan was made on religious grounds which resulted in the partition of the country. The recently made demand of Khalistan by Dal Khalsa on the basis of the Sikh religious identity, is another indication that religion-based identity does have a potentiality to become a disintegrative force. Religion and caste, by aligning with politics, tend to generate communal politics and also perpetuate backward looking and oppressive institutions attached with religion or caste mentality.



4. It is believed that the existence of a number of groups and their operation in the socio-economic life generates an area of conflict and disharmony. Communalism, linguism, regionalism etc. are considered to be manifestation of the divisions in the social structure. These divisions are described as the product of the strong primordial loyalties which are inherent in any traditional society. In any developing country a conflict between 'primordialism' and 'modernisation' is essential. The conflict is characterized as tradition-modernity dichotomy. The tension takes a chronic form because of the "peoples' sense of self-remains bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, or tradition, and because of the steadily accelerating importance in this century of the sovereign state as a positive instrument for the realization of collective aims".<sup>8</sup> It is the responsibility of the modernizing elite to dilute and weaken the primordial loyalties and create a new centre which should command the loyalty of the people. There should be a value consensus in order to avoid conflict and tension. The role of the modernizing elite is, therefore, quite crucial.

Some of the social scientists believe there is no dichotomy between tradition and modernity. The interaction between the two results in the modernization of tradition and traditionalization of modernity. The functioning of different institutions like religion and modernity. The functioning of different institutions like religion and caste shows that they have been playing an important role in making democracy and competitive polity meaningful and participatory. Many studies suggest that these institutions like religion etc., are not dis-integrating forces. They stabilise the polity and provide opportunities to the different sections of the people for upward mobility and in achieving desired goals. After all 'political community' consists "in the development of loyalty and allegiance to such institutional forms, aided and abetted by the mediating role of secondary associations, by the caste, occupation, or other interest-oriented groups".<sup>9</sup> It is also argued that caste associations, communal organizations etc. are "essential to developing nationhood in a pluralistic society".<sup>10</sup> P. C. Aggarwal's study of the Islamic revivalism among the Meos suggests that "democratic political system is, at least initially, hardening the lines which divide religious and ethnic groups. To these collectivities, consolidation appears more advantageous for political gain . . . . In my judgment, revival of religion in Independent India is not simply a

search after some amorphous, 'primordial identity,' as has been suggested by Geertz and Shils, but a pragmatic adaptation to a social setting where religion, caste and linguistic barriers are still strong, and the secular melting pot has not yet begun to boil. Lastly, . . . it (religious revival) has also generated greater desire for modernisation".<sup>11</sup> Commenting on the role of ethnicity in Indian politics, Paul Brass argued that ". . . there is nothing false about the consciousness that develops around the choice of ethnicity as the identification that best serves the interests of the ethnic group in question; it often works in both the short and the long run, and it sometimes also leads to creation of solidarities that cut across internal class divisions — within the ethnic group. It works because, among other reasons, it is easier to organize small, culturally distinct groups than large, multicultural class collectivities and because, admittedly, state authorities would rather recognise cultural categories than class categories".<sup>12</sup> For the Western tradition of social science, the theoretical framework about the Indian politics is more Weberian than Marxist one. "It boils down," says Brass, "to the simple proportion that people pursue their interests in society by forming groups and selecting identifications that maximize their advantage in the competition for scarce jobs and economic resources and for political power".<sup>13</sup> In this context, the function of the Central Government and administration is to effectively mediate between the conflicting groups and maintain an order and balance in the system.

Most of the works of the American and the Western social scientists betray a faulty understanding of the Indian social system. This is perhaps inherent in the Weberian approach.<sup>14</sup> The social scientists, under the influence of Max Weber, follow a particular concept of society and state and power which undermines the facts of class divisions, economic basis of political power, the role of dominant economic class as the ruling class and the manipulation of the system to perpetuate exploitation and inequalities.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the whole question of national integration is looked upon from supra class approach to modernization, without properly analysing the social and economic context of modernization with all its implications on the production relations and class conflict in society. The approach provides a non-political, i.e. socio-causal understanding of integration. Integration is achieved via social assimilation and measured in terms

of transactions between groups. There is, however, no necessary theoretical relationship between social assimilation and national integration.<sup>16</sup>

The 'Weberian' approach does not really take into account the interaction between the social, political and economic systems in the developing countries. The spread of secondary and vocational education, increase in the number of large cities, growth of regional and state linguistic communities and the movement away from power at the national centre to power dispersed at the state levels<sup>17</sup> are not necessarily the indications of integration but the logical implications of the 'mixed economy' and democratic polity. What is important here is to understand the nature of democracy and democratic politics. It should be noted here that democracy is perhaps the best form of government for the rule of the bourgeoisie. It does not exterminate exploitation because the capitalist mode of production is maintained. It does provide an illusion of equality and freedom to the large mass of the people in the political life but at the same time manages to keep the basic economic structure intact. Not only that, its functioning gets legitimised through the institution of elections, representation etc. What Marx said about the bourgeois state is relevant here. He wrote, "the state abolishes in its own way, distinctions of birth, social rank, education and occupation, when it declares that birth, social rank, education, and occupation are **non-political distinctions**, when it proclaims, without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is an equal participant in national sovereignty . . . Nevertheless the state allows private property, education, occupation to act in their own way, i.e. as private property as education, as occupation and to exert the influence of their special nature. Far from abolishing these real distinctions, the State only exists on the pre-supposition of their existence."<sup>18</sup> Indian democracy has not abolished, nor it wants to abolish, the real distinctions of private property, education, occupation etc. It is not an accident that the entire Indian system is controlled by the educated and rich whose ideological predilections are in consonance with the philosophy of capitalism and capitalist development. It is also not an accident that the Indian ruling class, while talking of socialism all the time, built up a capitalist system after Independence. The results of the 'mixed economy' or 'planned development' or 'public sector' are two well-known and one need not delineate here.

The point is that the real beneficiaries of the system are propertied classes — metropolitan bourgeoisie, monopoly bourgeoisie and the Kulaks. Such a system hastens the process of pauperisation of the people (more than 48 per cent of the people are below poverty line) and strengthen the grip of the monopoly capitalists on the economy. This system is the greatest source of disruption and disintegration in the polity. It produces uneven economic development which helps such agitations like the one in Assam.

The Indian bourgeoisie class, unlike its counterpart in Europe, is not sufficiently “revolutionary” to fight the feudalism and its remnants and to strive for rational secular ideology. It fears ‘revolution’ and ‘masses’. It resorts, therefore, to maintaining the pre-capitalist socio-economic formations. The compromising posture of the ruling class is evident in all matters of culture, religion, education etc. The chauvinistic and reactionary outlook naturally creates suspicious in the minds of smaller religious communities. — The extremist kind of manifestation of it can be seen in the politics of the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Dalits because of the non-redressal of their grievances and partly because of the reactionary ideology of the ruling class.

A word about the mobilisation and consolidation of the ‘primordial’ or traditional collectivities. The articulation and assertion of the demands for material advantage or share in the spoils has been very much acclaimed by the western social scientists. They discard the criticism that such movements are the product of ‘false consciousness’. But they do not seem to be aware of the real limitations of these movements. Not denying the progressive role of the politicisation of the ‘primordial allegiances’, such movements can never become revolutionary and emancipatory. They are being used for petty political and economic gains by a very small segment of the collectivities. They tend to become counter productive. What Engels said about the religious uprisings in the Muslim world, and especially in Africa, is applicable to the Indian caste and religious movements. He wrote, “All these movements which assume a religious cloak have economic causes. But even when they succeed they have the old economic conditions untouched. Everything remains as it was, and a clash becomes periodic occurrence.” They cannot succeed because caste and

religion have not been used to serve as a banner and a mask for attacks on the social and economic system which is becoming obsolete. But the Western social scientists are not concerned with changing or over-throwing the system, but are more interested in interpreting it. "I now believe that the only way to change the world is to interpret it".<sup>20</sup> said David Apter.

5. What are the options available to the different minority groups in a democratic set up for maintaining their separate cultural identity? Or what compromises should they strike, at the cost of their distinct and unique individuality, with the demands of the polity dominated by majority which is culturally different? In the Indian context, secessions and dominance-seeking, as the majority group goals (described by Louis Wirth)<sup>21</sup> are out of the question. The Sixteenth Amendment to the Indian Constitution makes secession anti-constitutional. However, a demand for autonomy should not be confused with secession. In India such confusion has been persistent since the early sixties.<sup>22</sup> Militant or dominance-seeking goal, through Christianisation or Islamization of India cannot be crystallised as conversion, on a large scale, generates the danger of Hindu backlash. Recent conversion of the Scheduled Castes to Islam in South India and the activities of the missionaries in North East India have created a bitter reaction which adversely affects the minority communities' interests.<sup>23</sup> The other two opinions (as described by Louis Wirth) are pluralism and assimilation. They need to be elaborated because pluralism has been consistently talked about by the leaders of the national movement and after independence by the leaders of the ruling party. Assimilation policy is being propounded by the chauvinist Hindu groups and their cultural and political organisations.

The basis of the assimilationist theory is the division of the people into religious communities. It implies the consolidation of the majority community. Attempt to reform and change are condemned as they divide the community. After all, not equality but harmony should be the guiding principle of the Hindu nation. The non-Hindus should not be trusted. Because "with the change in their faith, gone are the spirit of love and devotion for the nation."

"Nor does it end there. They have also developed a feeling of identification with the enemies of this land. They look to some foreign

land as their holy places. What is needed is to fuse them all in the Hindu way of life in our Dharma and take them back as lost brothers".<sup>24</sup> It is also asserted that the accident of residing in a common territory cannot make them — the Jews and Parsis, the Muslims and Christians — the children of the soil."

The assimilationist approach also discards special treatment to the lower castes as it creates artificial distinctions, which are entirely based on discrimination between people and people. It views the reservationist policy as a discount on merit and premium on inefficiency. The advocates of 'assimilation' hold that the non-Hindus should "cease to be foreigners or may stay in this country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment — not even citizens' rights".<sup>25</sup> The assimilation view of national integration means elimination of diversity and the amalgamation of the non-Hindus into the Hindu culture and Dharma.

The pluralist approach is being advocated by the leaders of the national movement and is being followed by the ruling party after independence of the country. This approach is based on the "one-nation" theory and the recognition of the existence of the various minorities, and linguistic and cultural groups. It upholds the principle of secularism which means that there is no state religion and no particular religion gets any patronage from the state. The advocates of the pluralist approach believe in 'protective discrimination' as a positive attempt to uplift the lowest of the low in the society.<sup>26</sup> The pluralist approach of national integration is obsessed with "one nation theory" which serves the interest of the bourgeoisie. In effect it means the denial of the existence of the nationalities. The pluralist theory recognises the minority groups or communities but refuses to solve their genuine cultural problems. The pluralist theory in India recognises the need of regional reorganisation of the polity but suspects the validity of regional autonomy.

In a non-socialist under-developed country, the pluralist theory also fails to satisfy the aspirations of the different minority groups. The ruling party, which subscribes to the theory, cannot adopt a genuinely secular posture in order to appease the religious feelings of



the majority and for achieving the obvious political benefits. Its approach towards the minorities is not to offend thoroughly reactionary beliefs and oppressive ideas and institutions. Instead of promoting a secular outlook, the government audits agencies promote orthodoxy and blind faith. Besides, the protective discrimination which has become a part and parcel of the pluralist theory, both in the advanced capitalist countries like the USA and India, has been a failure. Such a policy helps only to a small upper layer of the community who are already quite well-off. The American experience of the black community is the same. According to William J. Wilson, "on the one hand, poorly trained and educationally limited blacks — of the university, including that growing number of black teenagers and young adults, see their job prospects increasingly restricted to the low-wage sector, their unemployment rates soaring to record levels . . . their labour force participation rates declining, their movement out of poverty slowing, and their welfare roles increasing. On the other hand, talented and educated blacks are experiencing unprecedented job opportunities, that are at least comparable to those of Whites with equivalent qualifications".<sup>27</sup> A number of studies in India have suggested that the reservation policy for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes benefitted a small fragment of those communities. One of the reasons is the prevailing socio-economic order. It is pointed out that in the United States discrimination against ethnical minorities annually brings the monopolies at least 30,000 million dollars in super-profits.<sup>28</sup> In case of the Scheduled Castes in India, (between 1961 and 1971), there has actually been an increase in the percentage who are engaged in primary sector of the economy — from 75.1 per cent in 1961 to 82.3 per cent in 1971. Within the primary sector, there has been an increase in the proportion of the landless labourers and a decline in the proportion of cultivators. In 1961, there were 345 landless agricultural labourers and 378 cultivators per one thousand among the Scheduled Castes. In 1971, the corresponding figures were 518 and 279 respectively. The figures indicate relative faster pauperisation of the Scheduled Castes among the mass of toiling people. The atrocities on the Harijans and Adivasis, which have been registered with the administration have gone up from 5969 in 1966 to 1089 in 1977. In the first six months of 1978 the number had already reached the figure of 5952. While the general crime rate has fallen by ten per cent, the number of atrocities committed against the Harijans

has risen by 41.9 per cent. Murders decreased generally by 12.57 per cent but increased by 100 per cent in respect of Harijans. The number of communal clashes (of which the main victims were the poor Muslims) between 1967 and 1976 were 3009.

6. The limitations of the pluralist theory impel us evolved a different strategy for handling the problem of national integration. The concept of nation and nationality should clearly be stated. It is necessary to discard the Hindu chauvinist view and ruling party's approach. The chauvinist view does not regard the non-Hindus as a part of Indian nation. While to the pluralists, people speaking different languages and the nationalities living in the country are one nation. 'Such a definition of the term 'nation' can stand neither the test of history nor science. It does not help one to analyse and assess the national problem in India in all its facets. The Indian sub-continent, both before and after its partition into Indian Union and Pakistan is a vast country comprising peoples speaking different languages, living in different compact and contiguous areas, and belonging to varied ethnical, racial and cultural groups. It was a multinational state ruled by the British colonial rulers.. Neither the sentimental theory that the entire Indian sub-continent was a 'nation' nor the pernicious communal theory that it comprises two nations namely, Hindus and Muslims can meet the truth or the scientific point of view . . . . The Indian Union is multi-lingual and multi-national in character. Without such clear thinking on the issue it is neither possible to consciously work for the preservation and strengthening of Indian unity audits integration nor easy to effectively fight against the forces of disunity and disintegration".<sup>29</sup>

The concept of National integration also involves a definite cultural policy of the State. Lenin, while analysing the national question in Europe, said that there are two nations in every modern nation and there are two cultures in every national culture. To counterpose against another allegedly integral national culture is not socialist but bourgeois nationalism. The bourgeois concept of culture should be attacked. He further said that assimilation and amalgamation of the proletariats of the two nationalities will be beneficial for the protection of fundamental interest of labour, humanity and democracy. Such amalgamation is necessary because bourgeois



nationalism “drugs the minds of the workers, stultifies and disunites them”.<sup>30</sup>

In order to ensure cultural security to the different minority groups, secularism, in the true sense of the word, should guide the state's policy. There should be a real separation between religion and state i.e. depriving all the religious communities of any support from public funds, and of all influence on public schools, which is not practiced in India. At the same time, an attempt should be made to create an atmosphere of tolerance. Unnecessary attack on religious prejudices, which tend to perpetuate the division of the people along religious lines should be avoided. The deepest source of religious prejudices “is poverty and ignorance; and that is the evil we have to content”.<sup>31</sup> Such a policy requires greater and consistent democracy. The question of national integration is neither one of biological fusion of the various nationalities or communities nor of maintaining the autonomous communal or regional identities. It is a question vitally connected with the nature of socio-economic order. If the economic and social policies of the system lead to concentration of power and deny equality of opportunity to overwhelming majority of the people, belonging to all communities, discord and disharmony are inevitable. In such a system the ruling class has a vested interest in dividing the people along communal and religious lines. The problem should be tackled at that level. High sounding exhortations and platitudes like ‘unity in diversity’ or ‘composite culture’ will be of least help in achieving the goal of national integration.

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for the analysis of the type of authority. This enabled him to set forth the affinities, the identities and the differences of the great historical societies in a way that no other social scientist has even done before or since. Whatever might be the empirical limitations of his work on the sociology of religion, his our suit of a common problem in societies and cultures as different as China, India, ancient Israel, and post-Reformation Europe sets a standard for comparative macro-sociological analysis that it is difficult to equal and that it is necessary to transcend. The great source of historicism — Hegel, Marx and Romanticism — came to fulfilment in Max Weber's work in an idiom and imergery necessary for the progress of empirical research." Edward Shils : On the Comparative Study of the New State in C. Geertz (e.d.). Op. Cit., pp. 20-21.

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## ON THE THEORY OF COMMUNAL RIOTS —

### SOME SUBTLER ASPECTS.

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

Communalism, needless to say, is a highly complex phenomenon like any other social phenomenon. There are aspects which are very obvious and often talked about and commented on and there are aspects which are very subtle and often we are not conscious about them. The former are mostly of religious political and socio-economic nature whereas the latter entail social attitudes expressed consciously or unconsciously. We shall confine ourselves, in this article, to the latter category.

Social attitudes are again very complex in their origin and structure and manifest themselves in the form of prejudices and stereotypes about the other communities, castes and groups. It should also be remembered that these attitudes and stereotypes are structured over a long period of time and once formed keep on lingering on often unconsciously, in our minds colouring our perceptions and behavioural pattern. These attitudes manifest themselves in most diverse forms and often are not recognizable easily. Even those who have consciously accepted secularism are no exception to this rule. These subtler forms of caste and communal attitudes may not directly cause a caste or communal riot but do in one or the other way contribute to aggravation of the situation. It is, therefore, very important to throw some light on those subtler aspects also. When one also takes into account the psychological fact that our disposition to believe or not to believe certain things about a caste or community very much depends on our predetermined attitudes.

Ours is a plural society often referred to as multi-ethnic, many still believe it to be multi-national, though it is difficult to agree with the latter categorization of our society. The diversity of our society is very complex indeed and the challenges it throws up in a dynamic situation of socio-economic transformation are not easy to face. Each community in our complex society entertains certain beliefs and attitudes towards the other. It would be interesting to

examine some of these beliefs and attitudes of which minorities, especially the Muslims, become victim. However, one should not entertain for a moment the idea that Muslims and other minorities are in any way free from such ideas and attitudes about the Hindus. We propose to examine the former only as in recent years the Muslims, Christians and Harijans have been, more often than not, victims of Hindu communal aggression (one may accuse me too, and not very unfairly of course, of entertaining certain subjective beliefs and attitudes in taking this position. While pleading guilty of this charge to some extent I would only say in my defence that in last few years I have investigated several major riots and I have taken the above position on the basis of these empirical studies. Many other scholars too would bear me out.).

In respect of these subtler beliefs and attitudes the most commonly held one is that a Muslim, somehow happens to be always aggressor and has a strong sense of solidarity with other Muslims while others, specially the Hindus are non-violent, more tolerant and totally lacking any sense of solidarity with their co-religionists. Needless to say neither Muslim is always aggressive nor Hindu always tolerant and non-violent nevertheless this belief persists, even carefully cultivated by even those, though not all, who consider themselves to be liberal and secular intellectuals. Mr. Girilal Jain, editor, Times of India, for example writes in one of his articles, "The community sense among Muslims is stronger than among Hindus but it is in all probability no stronger than among Sikhs. Both are in minorities and minorities, when faced with aggression external to the community appear to be internally cohesive when judged exclusively from their emotional reaction". But such a judgement is more fictional than real. It does not stand scrutiny of empirical reality. Muslims and Sikhs are as much divided as any other religious community could be not only along class lines along ethnic, cultural, caste and sectarian lines. There is enough of empirical evidence available to corroborate this point.

It has also been generally assumed by Hindu intelligentsia - and it finds much wider echo among other sections of population as well - that the Hindus are, by very nature of their faith, tolerant and assimilative of other faiths whereas the Muslims are dogmatic at best and

fanatic at worst with far less degree of tolerance and intolerance are no static categories, it is as much related to the dynamics of one's situation. Even those communities which are followers of doctrinaire system as Christians, Muslims and Sikhs are, tend to be quite open minded and receptive to external ideas when materially ascendent and progressing and prospering or when not faced with appreciably adverse circumstances. Islam in its heyday during the Abbasid period in Baghdad and the Fatmiid period in Egypt assimilated best of what was in Greek, Persian and Hindu thought. In fact the flowering of Indian Islam too involved an assimilative process and there are recognizable elements of native thought in Indic Islam.

Rigid orthodoxy tends to overwhelm liberalism when a religious community, whether it follows doctrinaire or non-doctrinaire faith, feels to be pitted in a situation wherein it perceives threat to its existence. The example of Sikhs and Hindus, as of today, proves this point. The Sikhs — I must hasten to add here. Jat Sikhs as represented by the Akali Dal (monolithism is as mythical in the case of Sikhs as in that of Muslims), are manifesting degree of aggressiveness and asserting their separate religious identity with vehemence not known before. These Sikhs have developed a strong sense of deprivation in the process of development taking place in India after having enjoyed a relative prosperity for a period of time. Whatever aggressiveness appears on the part of Sikhs it is expression of their anger at the perceived deprivation and that too only a section of Jāt Sikhs supporting the Akali Dal is involved.

The tolerance and intolerance of Hindus also changes with the situation. In a dynamic, developing society, equations between various groups and communities does not remain in unshakeable equilibrium; inter-communal, even intra-communal equilibrium keeps on shifting and changing. For variety of reasons the process of development in a multi-ethnic society remains skewed and uneven as some religious or ethnic groups are ahead of others and it becomes very difficult to reorient the process in favour of the disadvantaged. This gives rise to tension and conflict, violence and aggression.

In such a situation it is sheer myth to maintain that a particular community would be non-violent and tolerant compared to other

community or communities only because these are its religious ideals. It is to fly in the face of empirical facts to maintain that a community's socio-political conduct is primarily governed by its religious ideals, whatever the ideals might be. Even the past history, let alone the present situation of developing Indian society, does not seem to support the claim that Hindus have always been tolerant and non-violent and Muslims the aggressors.

Thus Gense and Silveira maintain in their book **"The Long Road of Time"**:

"The excess committed by the Hindu fighting men in Ahmednagar roused wide spread feelings of anger and indignation throughout the Deccan Sultanates. Mosques had been razed to the ground or used as stables, villages had been destroyed and burned, the country had been laid waste, while men and women and children had been massacred without discrimination." (Quoted by N.C. Saxena in his paper "Secularism and Our Text Books").

Also, throwing light on writing of text books in schools in U.P. Mr. Saxena, in his above mentioned paper says :

"Unfortunately the major ideology behind the writing of Indian history has been communal. History as it is taught in the schools in the form of history books and Hindi text books is full of sectarian and communal bias, and is nothing more than historical prejudice. The choice of the heroes has been restricted to one single community and an attempt has been made to prove that only those Muslim rulers were good enough who were kind towards Hindus. I am basing my observations on a survey of the following books which are taught in class VI, VII, and VIII in the U.P. schools and are approved by the Government of U.P." (Mr. Saxena then names the books)

The myths and half truths thus imparted to the children in schools at a tender age become an important part of their mental baggage of which they are not rid throughout their lives. All this helps in forming and crystallising certain stereotypes in one community



towards other community. One community develops hatred towards the other and the other a strong feeling of guilt. However, even those who are secularised later and up their communal attitudes consciously, carry, in the depth of their sub-conscious hangover of these attitudes and beliefs which are manifested in most subtle forms.

How the behaviour of a community, like an individual, changes under the impact of a developing situation, can well be understood the way Vishwa Hindu Parishad has launched an aggressive campaign of Hindu revivalism which often turns violent and causes communal irruption. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Islamic world was conceived as a threat by a section of the Hindus in our society and through an aggressive campaign other Hindus, most of whom apolitical and belonging to lower middle classes, were also made to perceive this danger. On top of it came the episode of Meenakshipuram conversions. These conversions, careful investigations show, cannot be reduced to a single factor like 'bribing and inducing through money and gulf jobs' as widely alleged but was a result of combination of complex factors including insults and harassment of Dalit by the upper caste Hindus. The myth of inducement only was widely believed and other complex factors responsible for conversions easily ignored mainly due to climate of subtle attitudes and beliefs prevalent among one community towards other community. The logical consequence of such a campaign was a campaign for Hindu unity and it took the form of an Ekatmata Yagna. The kind of pamphlets distributed publicly during the Rath Yatra clearly bring out the attitude of intolerance and aggression towards minority communities. One of the pamphlets distributed showed a Hindu couple with the slogan 'Ham Do, Hamare Do (we two and our two) and a Muslim with host of wives with a slogan Ham Panch, Hamare Pachchis (we five, our twentyfive).

Who can doubt the fact that the Jains are most non-violent as far as their religious doctrines are concerned. Also, they being a business community, tend to be more peaceful than others. But the impact of developing situation brought out intra-communal violence within the two sects of Jains — Digambars and Shwetambers — on one hand, and, between the Jains and Marathas represented by the Maratha Mahasangha, on the other. Violent conflict has been going on between these communities, with Dalits thrown in between, at

Bahubali hills. According to a report in the Times of India, "The Shvetambar leaders have been complaining that the Digambars are in a majority in the region, are trying to push them out. They have charged the latter with having removed the "eyes" from Shvetambar to physical violence on several occasions." (Times of India, December 25, 1983).

Generally the Muslim rulers have been charged with, and in many cases with justification, idol breaking and committing sacrilege to Hindu temples. Here is an example of one Jain sect committing numerous instances of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain temples having been damaged or razed in such inter-sectarian conflicts but what has stuck in the memory of an average Hindu is that only Muslim rulers were idol breakers and perpetrators of sacrilege on Hindu temples. It must be realised, and also emphasised, that the Muslim rulers behaved as they did, like other rulers, under the impact of particular situation, rather than on account of, as generally believed, their religious prejudices. It is not religion but ones situation which makes one fanatic or liberal.

The modern scholars of social sciences too, often project their subtle prejudices into their writings while discussing about Muslims. A section of secular scholars led by A. B. Shah believed that as far as Muslims are concerned their behaviour is primarily determined by their religious doctrines. Shah believed that separatism is integral to Islam and hence strong current of separatism among Indian Muslims. Describing Muslim separatism *sui generis* Mr. Shah says : "If Muslim separatism is *sui generis* and not a reaction to Hindu revivalism, it still remains to trace it to its roots. **I would suggest that it is inherent in the religion and culture of Islam !** (emphasis mine). It is not only a superficial view of Muslim separatism but also dangerous in Indian context. Separatism and exclusivism, even if preached by any religious doctrine, always happens to be product of certain political situation and power equation between competing communities. Separatism *per se* or separatism integral to a religion or culture has no empirical basis. Such an attitude is a result of either prejudice or ignorance of the history of interaction of various cultural groups and religious communities. Such an attitude projects Muslims as zealots completely insulated from the reality around them. A social scientist must know

that no theology, however doctrinaire, separatist or exclusivistic, can remain totally oblivious of the situation around its followers. Theology also evolves in response to empirical situation, although it tries to remold it.

It is also important to note that those attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes which are formed during conflict situation often tend to distort truth and can easily be transferred with similar implications to other conflict situation. Some of these mutual attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes formed beginning with the struggle between Aurangzeb and Shivaji and had their roots in the conflict between them (this conflict was essentially of political and not religious nature) are transferred to present situation which also tends to be conflict oriented. The stereotype of militant Islam and fanatic Muslims which an average Hindu tends to believe, are product of conflict situation when Muslim rulers commanded power and a section of Hindu elite found its aspirations thwarted. Islamic theology has ingredients of militancy precisely because Islam was pitted against powerful forces both in Mecca and Medina and a careful study of the Quran clearly shows that Islamic militancy, as it is reflected in its doctrine of jihad, has obviously situational orientation.

Similarly the theory of **Dar al-Harb** and **Dar al-Islam** (the domain of war and domain of Islam) is also much misunderstood and torn out of situational context. It is nowhere clearly stated in the Quran that the Muslims cannot share power as equal partners with non-Muslims, if ensured safety, security and equal rights. Shah Waliullah's son Shah Abdul Aziz, through his religious edict (**fatwa**) had declared India an abode of peace (**Dar al-Amn**) under Maratha rule, although his father, in a different situation, was eager to invite Ahmad Shah Abdali to get rid of Maratha domination over the Mughals. Shah Waliullah's descendents and followers declared India again a **Dar al-Harb** (abode of war) under the British and made it obligatory for the Muslims to wage war against the foreign rulers. These '**Ulama**' were also of the opinion that as the Prophet in Madina had entered into an agreement with different Jewish and pagan tribes to constitute a federal set up, the Indian Muslims can enter into an agreement with the non-Muslim people of India to constitute a composit nationalism.

It can thus be seen that the concept of **Dar al-Harb** varies with the situation and as the situation varies, the concept of **Dar al-Harb** also changes. But, more often than not, and as far as communal Hindu organizations are concerned, the propaganda that the Muslims consider India as **Dar al-Harb** goes on unabated. Sometimes even well meaning and liberal Hindus are heard arguing on these lines. Even the extremist Muslim organization like the Jamaate Islami finds it difficult to declare India **Dar al-Harb**.

Also, the stereotype that the Muslims are in general polygamous and tend to produce large number of children irrespective of their social and class status is widely prevalent. A reference has already been made above to a pamphlet distributed in Bombay during Ekatmata Yagna in which Muslims have been shown with the slogan **Ham Panch or Hamare Pachchis**. Polygamy is undoubtedly permitted in Islam and it is also true that Muslims have strongly resisted any move to change the status of their personal law but it is not true that Muslim made is polygamous in general irrespective of his socio-economic status. Empirical studies do not bear out this fact. Very few Muslims, in fact not more than 2.5 per cent of a sample survey in U.P. were found to be polygamous and among polygamous Muslims number of wives rarely exceed two.

Another stereotype prevalent about Muslims is that they do not practice family planning and strongly resist any attempt in that direction. In fact the Maratha Maha Sangh, alongwith the Patit Pavan and Vishwa Hindu Parishad in Maharashtra had launched a door to door campaign that as Muslims are polygamous and they also do not believe in family planning they are multiplying very fast and within coming twenty years they would outnumber the Hindus and that India would become a Muslim majority state. An intensive propaganda on these lines resulted in outburst of communal fury in Pune and Solapur in February 1982. What was shocking to note that an erstwhile Central minister from the Janata Party was also seriously arguing on these lines with the present writer.

Acceptance or rejection of family planning very much depends on ones socio-economic status. Those Muslims who belong to middle class and live in town and cities readily take to restricting their

children where as those who belong to artisan and working classes do not do so as readily and tend to produce more children. This is as much true of other communities as for Muslims. Other things being equal, more economically backward a community or country is less likely it is to practice family planning. In fact in third world countries people multiply much faster precisely because they are economically backward. Among the Muslims also it is their comparative backwardness which is real cause of lack of motivation for family planning rather than doctrinal consideration of their religion. Thus M. E. Khan in his research paper "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice of Family Planning among Muslims in an Urban Setting" concludes :

It is the poverty, illiteracy and the perceived benefit and felt burden of children which are hindrance to family planning acceptance and not the religion. It has just been demonstrated that within the Muslim community, the level of contraception among those who were following a hereditary occupation and those with no hereditary occupation was not the same. It was the latter group which had a large proportion of contraceptive users. The differences in the proportion of users might have stemmed from the fact that the MNHO group (Muslims with non-hereditary occupation) was culturally different from that of MHO Muslims with hereditary occupation). They were relatively better educated, more exposed to mass communication and less orthodox than MHO. Children were considered to be an additional working hand and hence were more valued among the Muslims following their hereditary occupation."

It is thus very obvious that rejection or acceptance of family planning very much tends to depend on ones socio-economic status rather than ones religion. However, most of the people, including some well-meaning and liberal ones tend to assume that Muslims in general refuse to accept family planning.

It has also been the tendency to believe that Muslims resist change and modernization as it is contrary to their religious doctrines. This is again rather mistaken notion. Such a notion arises when high status group of one community passes its judgement based on its knowledge of low-status group of the other community. As the middle

classes among Indian Muslims are weak for various reasons not to be gone into here, one usually comes in contact with, and bases ones observations on the basis of contacts with lower status groups. And it need not be argued that in a developing capitalist society the lower strata are left out of, or do not derive much benefit from, the process of development and continue to exist at the level of pre-capitalist socio-economic formations and hence hardly feel any pressure for change. A large number of Muslims in India have been existing within a pre-capitalist frame of economy and hardly feel any necessity for change. The change in superstructure is related, even if not directly, in many ways to changes in economic base. Maxime Rodinson, in one of his essays published in **Marxism and the Muslim World** has shown, through examples from the Arab world, that it is wrong to believe that Muslims resist change and modernization; wherever genuine need has been felt, the change has taken place. This is not to argue that there are no attempts to resist change; there certainly are but they tend to succeed among the lower strata of the Muslim society. Resistance to change in Muslim personal law, on the other hand, is not simple resistance to change but a complex political question exploited for political ends from both the sides of communal divide. The political significance of the question of change in personal law can be understood from the fact that even Sikhs are now demanding a separate personal law.

It is also important to note that the Muslims in general, as opposed to the elite among them, consider religion a personal affair. A study carried out by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, shows that 71.5 per cent in the age group 18-25, 65.3 percent in the age group 26-35 and 58.6 percent in the age group 46-55 consider religion a personal affair from amongst the cross section whereas from amongst the elite 57.3 per cent from the age group 56 and above hold similar views. In the younger age groups among the elites this percentage is considerably less. It is not difficult to understand the reasons for this. The younger elites lacking maturity and more impatient to achieve quick results think it expedient to use the weapon of religion to fight their political battles.

The image of Muslim as fanatic, aggressive, resistant to any change and inherently communal has persisted too long and there has

been so much loose talk about it and hardly any attempt to study Muslim attitudes empirically with scientific rigour. Many a time such attitudes collectively held among the Hindus easily lend themselves to creating communal atmosphere which ultimately leads to rioting and violence. These are subtler aspects of communalism and a theory of communal riots cannot ignore them as they have very dangerous potentials. Our attitudes determine our disposition to believe and in a riot situation this disposition gets further aggravated and we easily become victim of baseless rumours systematically spread by the vested interests. It is, therefore, very necessary to fight these attitudes and beliefs in order to check the fast spreading communal virus.

In this paper I have been briefly concerned with Hindu attitudes towards Muslims. However, it does not in the least mean that Muslims do not entertain wrong attitudes and beliefs towards Hindus. Any theory on communalism cannot ignore this aspect too without remaining inadequate and incomplete. I propose to examine the Muslim attitudes and beliefs towards Hindus in the subsequent part of this article.

## COMMUNALISM AS VIEWED BY A POLITICAL SCIENTIST

— Dr. Aloo Dastur.

Let it be stated by the outset that communalism in India is not a religious problem; nor is it only a social problem. It was and continues to be a politico-economic problem and it is primarily the Hindu-Muslim problem.

The origins are well-known but a brief recapitulation is necessary. Traditionally communalism implied social organisation on a communal basis, characterised, by collective ownership and use of property. Recent Indian history has given it a new turn or twist and converted it into loyalty to a socio-political grouping based on religious affiliation which hampers the growth of a national consciousness.

It was the year of grace 1906 which started it all. The British were toying with the idea of introducing elections for provincial legislatures. Inspired by the powers that be a Muslim delegation led by the Aga Khan waited on Lord Minto, the Viceroy and Governor-General, and asked for the introduction of separate electorates. His Excellency gracious response was :

... the pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that under any system of representation... the Mahommedan community should be represented as a community. You point out that in many cases electoral bodies as now constituted cannot be expected to return a Mahommedan candidate, and that of by chance, they do, it could only be at the sacrifice of such a candidate's view to those of a majority opposed to his community, whom he would in no way represent.

Lord Morley, true to his liberal tradition, initially opposed the idea but ultimately gave in to the man-on-the-spot. The Indian Council's Act, 1909, introduced separate electorates for the Muslims. The Lucknow poll between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League endorsed the principle. Even when the next instalment of legislative reforms was on the anvil, there were misgivings. The Montagu — Chelmsford Report, 1919, expressed its concern thus :



Division by creeds and classes means the creation of political camps organized against each other, and teaches men to think as partisans, not as citizens... We regard any system of communal electorates, therefore, as a very serious hindrance, to the development of the self-governing principle.

But it opined that the British Government had made a pledge to the Muslims and only the Muslims could release it from the pledge — and this was something they were not minded to do.

The Nehru Report, 1928 firmly opposed separate electorates and history records that Muslims were alienated from the Congress. Later in the year, on December 31, to be exact, an All-Muslim Conference crystallised its demands for its “rights, protection and safeguards as a minority” into 14 points. They encompassed a future federal constitution with residuary powers vested in the provinces, separate electorates, one-third Muslim membership of any cabinet, central or provincial, one-third representation in the central legislature, adequate share for Muslims in all the services to be constitutionally guaranteed, full religious freedom, protection and promotion of culture, language, education. As far as representation is concerned, it was special electorates with weightage. The conference reserved to itself two vetoes : no change in the constitution without the concurrence of all the states. The concluding paragraph of the resolution bears reproduction :

This Conference emphatically declares that no constitution, by whomsoever proposed or devised, will be acceptable to Indian Musalmans unless it conforms with the principles embodied in this resolution.

### **Veto on Political Progress**

This Veto suited the imperial power which was always ready to oblige. As further appeasement was the Government of India Resolution of July 4, 1934 which recognised the demand for proportionate representation in the services of all grades and departments — 25 per cent of all vacancies by direct recruitment of Indians to be filled by Muslims, 8-1/3 per cent by other minorities. If the Muslim

recruitment fell short of 25 per cent the remainder had to be filled by nomination. If the other minorities could not fill their Quota, these vacancies, too, were made available, to the Muslims.

Thirteen years later came partition. The basis of the claim for Pakistan was the two-nation theory. On November 1, 1946, Jinnah made the categorical assertion :

Pakistan is the issue in the election. The Hindus and Muslims are different in every thing. We differ in religion, civilisation and culture, in history, in language, in architecture, in music, in jurisprudence and laws, in food and society, in our dress, in our every way, we are different.

Yet the partition left 45 million Muslims in India. Naturally their proportion in the population declined; and the realisation gradually dawned that possibly their political leverage was contracted. Separate electorates were abolished, reservations in services abandoned and weightage, both for election and employment, totally surrendered. Thus the privileges and special positions they enjoyed under the raj disappeared.

They received another raw deal under the dispensation of the linguistic states. Urdu has an all-India spread but it was never a regional language, not even in Kashmir where they preponderate in numbers. It is not the official language in any state and receives no official patronage which other regional languages do. Last year it came to be recognised as the second official language of Bihar. This is hardly adequate recognition given to a language rich in literature and vocabulary, the language of the ghazal and poetry. The official language of India which is Hindi in the Devanagri script ignoring the Gandhian prescription of Hindustan in two scripts — Devanagri and Persian (Urdu). All this added grist to the mill of communalism. Far from receiving state patronage as the other languages did, Urdu in the land of its birth, north India, was being neglected. Uttar Pradesh was in the front line of such neglect.

In a big way the political process is the major contributory to the injection of communalism. Democracy, parliamentary democracy,

was inevitable in our country; and democracy involves elections. Herein lies the rub. The act of voting, notes Lipset, is "the Key mechanism of consensus in democratic society," and how we have distorted this act of voting. As elections approach the counting of communal heads begins. It is not the Indian voter who is approached. It is the community calculus that is considered. With the first general election of 1951-52 the trend set in. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, a totally non-communal Indian with patriotism as his very life breath was a Congress candidate from Rampur (71.9 per cent Muslim population) in U.P. Did he need to find a "safe" seat? and was he elected because the vast majority of voters was Muslim? Would Delhi not have elected him? Did Delhi become dangerous because of the inflow of uprooted Hindus and Sikhs from West Pakistan? Shah Nowaz Khan, a hero of Netaji's Indian National Army and one of the Friends in the Red Fort invariably represented Meerut (37 per cent Muslims) in the Parliament. The Congress Party then was at the pinnacle of its popularity basking in the auro of a freedom struggle; yet it lacked political courage to test its principles of a common nationality on the election anvil. The constitution had done away with communal electorates; the political process surreptitiously brought in the communal element.

Let us take Bombay which is familiar ground to us. From which constituencies did the minority community members on the Congress ticket contest for the state assembly? Instead of taking the only correct, perhaps bold, stand was to treat every constituency as a single homogeneous unit; but no; a community-wise break-up became necessary as homework for selection of candidates. A Parsi had to contest from constituencies where the Parsis have residential colonies. One may perhaps understand an independent candidate having such consideration. A political party of the stature of the Congress lacking faith in its own secular, non or is it anti-communal protestations was something strange and fought with grave perils for the future. Muslim candidates were made to contest from Nagpada; and Christians invariably from Mahim or Bandra where they congregate in reasonable numbers. This pattern has been repeated over the seven elections and threatens to be continued in the future.

Worse; there is neither hesitation nor squeamishness in winning over the religious leaders to appeal for votes. And visits to temples

and durgas and churches are routine halts during the electoral campaign trail! The practical leader sees that all this is well advertised. Not religion but religionists, not secularism but obscurantism, not education but appeasement, are the pass words for vote-hunting. Instead of imparting political education election time turns into a period of much communal politics.

A good example of reviving communalism is provided by Kerala in mid-1959. The first elected communist government could not be shaken in 28 months — it carried with the slanderest of majorities-one. Purchase by money or allurements of office had not come into vogue, then. The Congress President Indira Gandhi, persuaded the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, that the Kerala Government must be removed. They the Congress, Praja Socialist Party and the Muslim League jointly and successfully fought the 1960 election; but when the time for the cabinet selection arrived, it was discovered that the Muslim League was a communal organisation and hence it had to be left out, the PSP plea on its behalf notwithstanding. Later came a time when the Kerala Muslim League was good enough and secular enough to be a cosharer with the Congress in Kerala but the All-India Muslim League was communal. Such opportunistic hair-splitting does not do credit to the Congress; one is not worried about the party's reputation. The objection is to playing with the communal faggots.

Any political scientist cannot view with equanimity the absence of a uniform civil code. Article 44 of the constitution enjoins on the state to "endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." Every Government of India, be it that of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi or the short-interregnum of the Janata Government has fought shy of even moving towards it. Each one of them has displayed pusillanimity on this score. Nehru, to whom the honour and dignity of the Hindu woman was dear, released her from the degradation of polygamy. What of the honour and dignity of the Muslim woman? The Emergency in angled the constitution in a variety of ways but totally ignored the Article 44. The Janata Government ditched the adoption of children Bill at the first protest from orthodox Muslim quarters.

Hindu-Muslim riots are not uncommon, judicial inquiries are set up. Their reports are never made public; so we continue as ignorant about the causes and the undercurrents as always. Inexplicably the Gujral Committee's report on the status of Urdu gathered as Top Secret 7 to 8 years till under pressure from the Minorities Commission the short-lived Janata Government brought it out.

The roots of Hindu-Muslim tension, opposition and communalism go quite deep in our history. We cannot erase or distort or rewrite history. But we surely can learn and draw correct lessons. Today it is not Cow slaughter or music before the mosque, though sometimes these are raked up, that generally ignore the spark of communal passions. The trouble spots are where Muslims are in good numbers as in Meerut, Moradabad, Aligarh, Malegaon, Bhiwandi and where they make good at traditional crafts. Today's struggle is to retain these crafts. The ugly pulls of the market-place, underpayment, exploitation of the craftsmen's sweat and labour are not unknown, specially where the workmen are Muslims and the owners, financiers and middlemen and merchants are Hindus; the other way about is comparatively rare. In a penetrating observation, Zoya Khaliq Hassan states :

Instances of increasing competition are quite numerous. Certain areas in western U.P., where the communal phenomenon has acquired inflammatory proportion, constitute a case in point. Here Muslims have come to occupy a relatively influential position in the economic and political life of the region which has seemingly threatened the hegemony of existing Hindu commercial groups. On the brute fact of economic competition is superimposed cultural antipathy, religious animosity, linguistic prejudices and, above all, the memories of Partition. (Zoya Khaliq Hassan : *Communalism and Communal Violence in India in Social Scientist*, Vol. 10 No. : 1, 1962).

A big problem before us is to treat the minority psyche. Poverty, unemployment, undernourishment are not religion or community conscious. They touch all alike. But a comparatively new factor has risen born of frustration and the educated youth is the main victim. This is the minority psyche young Muslims are cultivating — there

are millions who are unemployed in the country, the largest number being Hindus; but Muslim youth put down their own fate to their being Muslims. Examples can be multiplied. It is this psyche which has to be treated.

Before independence it was the imperial interests of the British that kept the two communities apart. Since independence interests of India's largest political party are injecting and sustaining minority awareness and consciousness. The official policy may be secularism, torn out of its true context though it be; in practice it is sometimes subtle, sometimes over communalism. The recent election campaign in Kashmir did no credit the exponents and practitioners of secularism. Blatant communalism was preached from many a rostrum.

To meet the challenge of communalism, courage of conviction is not enough. The Congress has rarely faced this challenge squarely. A frontal attack is required. We have fought shy of identifying communal forces, except perhaps the R.S.S. Even when they have been identified the legal action was taken against those of its leaders or units held responsible for causing, instigating or conducting riots.

But something sinister is suffacing. The minorities, specially the Muslims are declaring their lack of faith in those who are charged with the maintenance of law and order. The Muslims, specially in U.P. have accused PAC of turning their weapons mainly, of not only, against them. The idea is gaining ground that minorities' representation in the police should be increased. This is a fair proposal; and must be done on the level. This should not inject the communal virus into the services.

This is the thin end of the wedge and angurs ill in the immediate future. For quite some time an occasional cry has been that the percentage in the services must correspond to the percentage of the total population. But of there is or has to be a correlation between numbers and employment, where does training for employment fall? School, college University enrolment reveals a comparatively small percentage of Muslims. Why? Is it discrimination or prejudice against them? Surely it will not be so in Aligarh Muslim University. Even here in the professional colleges the majority is non-Muslim. The reason? Not enough Muslims apply though it has an all-India intake.

Once again the same question has to be asked — how do we meet the minority psyche? One type of communalism is bound to throw up and nourish another. This is precisely what has happened with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The backlash is never healthy because one communalism feeds on the other and there cannot be a let-up; and if the one is tolerated, the other must be also. Efforts must be set afoot to exercise both.

More easily said than done. The legitimate grievances must be looked into and rectified; this is not for party gains but for national needs. These days since communalism may acquire economic and political understones it has to be met at these. The employment potential has to expand. The Muslims owe a responsibility to themselves. Their leadership is too poor in ideas and imagination, and is backward-looking, perhaps even incompetent to guide them. What they need in their own interests and for a better future is education and not only in madressas. They must be in “mixed” schools, meet the others including the majority on equal terms and work and study towards greater achievement. This will help bring forth an enlightened leadership with courage and conviction to guide and lead their people forward. It is only fish that float with the tide, the living try and float upstream. This is the contemporary challenge before Muslim youth which has either to accept it or to continue to follow in their backwardness.

This applies with equal strength to Hindu leadership which has not to compete with the Muslims in obscurantism but set the pace for a rational, national approach. We are witnessing perhaps the early beginnings of an unhealthy and dangerous backlash. The Hindu Vishwa Parishad, Ekatmata Yatra, are the external symbols of a deeper malady. As the Irish bull has if we will have to nip the matter in the bud lest it burst forth into a conflagration and deluge the world, in this instance, the country.

The Hindus, as Hindus, owe it to themselves and the country not to slide back into the slough of superstition and bigotry but move forwards in tune with rationality. Their ultimate strength lies in this.

A political party and leadership that claim to be secular and which has incorporated the expression into the Preamble of the constitution certainly indulges in communalism when it favours one religious group, here the Hindus, for social reform which does implicate advancement and progress but out of apprehension does not dare to help the progressives among the Muslims but Kowtows to the orthodox among them. "Let the community decide" is the slogan of the weak because reforms and revolutions are not made by the majority but by a brave, vocal minority and here we are stifling that minority voice of the non-conformists so much so that no action is taken against excommunication among the Dawoodi Bohras although a Bombay High Court judgement of 1953 declared that "the prevention of excommunication is a social reform."

The political process offers a wide spectrum to all citizens to find their proper niche. No religious group needs to hitch its wagon to a single parking; the converse of this proposition is that political parties should have an open membership. On the economic front there must be expansion of employment opportunities. Education must be given its due place in national development. Above all, the citizen has not to be identified by his narrow group affiliation. All this is not as difficult as we have made out over three decades. The political will has been absent. We are bartering the future for immediate petty political gains.



The problem of communalism is deep-rooted in the politico-socio-economic realities of the society which constitute important areas of study in political science.

Political science today seems to have gained increasing footing in empirical tradition. Empirical approach is characterised by (i) the study of political functions and actions, and (ii) the study of political groups. In the study of political functions and actions, the political roles and their totality which make-up the political system of a society are studied. The empirical tradition on this approach consists of the study of the actions of the government which organises public affairs. The sum total of this approach is to deal with authoritative structuring of governmental roles, which are hierarchically arranged. It also has a focus on the competition for power which is not necessarily hierarchically arranged, since any one may try to influence decisions and policies. In terms of this tradition of empiricism the meaning of political is to study the functions and actions that affect the groups in terms of decision-making and policy-framing.

Another approach or tradition found in empirical studies is to consider politics as a study of events and not of structures.<sup>1</sup> According to this approach politics not only studies the government and its various forms, but also scrutinises the events and public goals made by informal political interactions. Admittedly, politics is concerned with the activities related to the formulation and implementation of public goals. It is also concerned with the distribution and use of public power. But if these activities or events take place beyond the structure of government or its forms, they also constitute the part

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<sup>1</sup> In political science and, more particularly, political sociology and political anthropology, a new school has emerged which emphasises the study of public goals and differential distribution and use of power within the group as the main focus of 'political'. (See Marc J. Swartz (ed.), **Local Level Politics**, London, University of London Press Ltd. 1969, p.1.

of the study of politics. The structural considerations of the study of government, Parliament, Assembly, Panchayati Raj are not undermined in such an approach. The point which is significant in this respect is that there should be a search for activities and events which affect the formulation of public goals, distribution and use of public power beyond the purview of these structures also. Such an approach of the study of 'political' provides a wider perspective. The empiricists accept structure as a viable unit to study the public goals and events. This is one view. Another view identifies public goals and events without any reference to structure, that is, government, Assembly, etc. But the central concept in the study of 'political' or 'politics' is the goal, irrespective of its location in any structure or otherwise. "It is through the discovery of public goals that the investigator who adopts this view of 'politics' identifies political activity".<sup>2</sup> The goal-centered view of politics is more fruitful because in a developing society the activities are not located in any institution but are defused in the masses and have a strong bearing on decision making processes and policy formulation. It has been our endeavour, therefore, to study politics in terms of the location of goals. In other words, we try to find out what are the goals and events diffused in different groups affecting the policy decisions. It must also be said that the goals and the events might be related to such networks and frameworks which do not have any structure or which are not political structures. For instance, a religious or caste group which is not a political structure might generate events which relate to decision making and policy formulation at a broader plane. In such a situation the caste or religious group needs to be studied in terms of goals and events.

If the activities of individuals or groups affect the public goals or events, these must have power. All activities are not power oriented activities. Only those are power oriented activities which affect the formulation of goals and decision making. Power has been defined in different ways. We do not enter into the debate of the definition of power. Perhaps, Weber's concept of power suits well to our present enquiry. Weber has defined power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability

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Mark J. Swartz (ed.), op. cit. p. 2.

rests".<sup>3</sup> Weber admits that the person should have qualities or virtues which are capable of influencing the broader goals. It means that he should have "control over resources, whether human or material".<sup>4</sup> or "the ability to channelize the behaviour of others through actual or threatened use of sanctions".<sup>5</sup> Weber's concept of power, therefore, assumes that through the political activity a person or a group of persons gains control over man and resources and maintains its positions against others who have similar ambitions. To provide some examples at random, through political activity, a communal group gains control over the formulation of public goals. The source of power, besides others, has control over the means of production and the market mechanism. To further illustrate it could be said that the various communal groups of Hindus and Muslims come in competition and contradiction to gain control over the local market or the means of production. Such a contradiction, it is probable, might result in conflict, riot etc. In fact, the process of class formation which works in a developing economy is likely to take the form of power relations in terms of gain over resources and their allocation.

The conceptual framework further suggests that the riot situation or broadly speaking communalism in India is essentially a political phenomenon. The outcome of communalism in the form of group prejudices, communal contradictions, tensions and riots is due to struggle for control over the resources of power. Its roots are economic power and political domination. Individuals or persons struggle to gain over these through various devices. A very common device adopted in developing countries is to exploit the illiterate and tradition bound masses. The masses in these countries belonging to

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<sup>3</sup>. Max Weber, **The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation**, (Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons): Talcott Parsons (ed.), New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1947, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup>. Ralph W. Nicholas, 'Segmentary Political System', in Mark G. Swartz, Victor W. Turnel, and Arthur Tuden (eds.) **Political Anthropology**, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1966, p. 52.

<sup>5</sup>. Morton H. Fried, 'some Political Aspects of Clanship in a Modern Chinese City', *ibid.* p. 285

different ethnic or plural groups even today remain un-organised. They have a strong bias for traditions. Religiosity is one of the strong holds of traditionalism. The power seekers, therefore, do their best to seize over the vast masses of people who are neckdeep in religiosity. Indian communalism, therefore, needs to be analysed with the perspective of power relations and control over the means of production in the local or national markets.

## **Seminar on Multi-dimensional approaches to Communalism**

(Conducted by the Institute of Islamic Studies, Bombay - 400 055)

Date : 19-2-1984

### **Software and Hardware of Communalism**

by Hussain Shaheen

Asked to define communalism, the late Mr. Humayun Kabir, former Minister for Education in the Government of India, had once described it as a phenomenon by virtue of which persons belonging to a certain community are either discriminated against or shown favour to, regardless of their merits or demerits, just on the basis of their community.

In other words, if a person is deprived of his or her rights or is shown some privileges, just on the basis of his or her community, this would constitute communalism.

#### **Workshop on Communalism:**

At a workshop on communalism conducted by an inter-disciplinary and inter-religious group of social scientists and students at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, on October 25, and 26th, 1983, which was inaugurated by Shri T. N. Chaturvedi, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, certain important conclusions were reached, which are worthy of serious consideration.

According to a statement released by the workshop in the context of the mounting insecurity, tension and violence in different parts of the country, the participants recognised the urgency to analyse the underlying causes of communal conflict and to contribute to their resolution. Though conflicts between religious communities are marked by psychological, cultural, economic, political factors, they fundamentally result in dominance-subordination relationships. At the present stage of social and economic development, the struggles for economic

and political power are assuming greater importance than what appear to be on the surface religious differences and inter-community prejudices. Within the democratic set-up, numbers have assumed importance and elections have become an instrument for perpetuating the communal character of our policy. In the struggle for power, the elite of the dominant and subordinate communities use religion, religious emotions, symbols and prejudices to mobilise the masses. Often times religious ideologies, symbols, festivals and languages are manipulated in such a way that they foster negative attitudes and prejudices against other religions, thereby serving the purpose of the vested interests, without counting the human and social costs. The participants agreed that religious sentiment itself is good and deserves to be encouraged. It is manipulation of these sentiments by a few leaders to acquire greater power for themselves that needs to be condemned. Ways had to be found of using these religious sentiments to help the weaker sections to gain greater self-respect and to attain their human rights and socio-economic equality, which have been denied to them.

With this in view, the participants of the workshop committed themselves to form an inter-disciplinary and inter-religious team to take up in depth studies to obtain reliable information on the forms of discrimination and on manifestations of and possible responses to communalism. By situating their analysis of communal relations within an economic and political frame-work, such studies should initiate a process of socio-economic transformation. The participants agreed that at the level of religious leaders, platforms for continuing dialogue with other religions should be set up and future religious leaders should be given opportunities to come to know and appreciate the values and beliefs of other religious communities. They should be trained to view communal relations within the socio-economic perspective. In this context emphasis was stressed on turning education into a mode of dialogue as against the present text books that perpetuate prejudices and communal stereotypes.

### **Text books and Communalism:**

In the context of the conclusions on communalism reached at the workshop, it would be relevant to examine in this article certain aspects of our educational system and certain social and religious attitu-

des, which are directly or indirectly breeding germs of communalism, and religious prejudices, which tend to poison the blood stream of the nation.

A glaring example of how some of the text books prescribed by the educational authorities for our schools and colleges, continue to distort history and create communal discord and religious prejudices is furnished by Mr. B. N. Pande.

Mr. Pande states that while he was doing some research work on Tippu Sultan at Allahabad, he had come across a book on history, which had been prescribed as a text-book for high schools in Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In a chapter on Tippu Sultan, Mr. Pande was struck by a sentence, which had described that three thousand Brahmins had committed suicide, as Tippu Sultan wanted to convert them forcibly into the fold of Islam.

The author of the text-book was Dr. Har Parshad Shastri, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Calcutta University. Mr Pande wrote to Dr. Shastri for finding out the source of his information. Dr. Shastri replied that he had taken the information from Mysore Gazeteer. Since this Mysore Gazeteer was not available either at Allahabad or Calcutta, Mr Pande wrote to the then Vice Chancellor of Mysore University, for seeking confirmation of the statement of Dr. Shastri.

Mr. Pande received a letter from Prof. Srikantiya, who was then editing a new edition of the Mysore Gazeteer, that the episode regarding mass suicide by three thousand Brahmins was nowhere in the Mysore Gazeteer. Prof. Srikantiya assured Mr. Pande that he as a student of History of Mysore, was certain that no such incident had ever taken place.

Prof. Srikantiya further informed Mr. Pande that the Prime-Minister of Tippu Sultan was a Brahmin, by name Purnaiya, and the Commander-in-Chief was also a Brahmin by name Krishna Rao. Prof. Srikantiya also furnished a list of 156 temples to which Tippu Sultan used to pay Annual grant. Prof. Srikantiya suggested that Dr. Shastri might have obtained his information from a so-called "History of Mysore" written by a Britisher, by name Col. Miles, who had

mentioned this episode based more on fiction than on facts. Mr. Pande states that this text book of history was finally withdrawn from the course, as a text book, through the efforts of Shri Ashutosh Mukherjee, the then Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University.

What damage is being done to the religious harmony and to the noble cause of the national unity of the country at large by prescription of such fictitious "text books" of history which might be still in circulation in our schools and colleges without any defection by un-biased historians like Mr. Pande, can be well imagined.

In Maharashtra State, there had been a lot of controversy recently about certain text-books of history prescribed for schools, which were found to contain statements with little regard to historical facts or truth. Fortunately, the State Government has agreed to have these books reviewed by competent authorities. It is earnestly hoped that these efforts will also succeed in letting the truth triumph over untruth and falsehoods.

### **Communal Software and Hardware:**

Mr. Asghar Ali Engineer in an analytical article on "the ideological background of communal riots" has stated that communalism is an urban phenomenon, whose roots may be traced in the middle and lower middle classes of people. Mr. Engineer also feels that peasants workers and the upper class elite are seldom affected by communalism. By and large, this is a correct assessment of communalism.

However, in this connection, many examples can be cited, which would show that communalism is practised un-checked even at the highest social level. Communalism is dispensed in many shapes and forms. Many examples of the soft ware and hard-ware of communalism can be cited from day-to-day life. While the former variety is somewhat sophisticated and physically harmless, the latter may be crude and violent. Just like the micro and macro factors of communalism, analysed by Mr. Engineer, the soft-ware and hard-ware of communalism also deserves to be studied in their various forms and dealt with suitably,



A friend, who is heading a well-known educational and social service organisation of the Muslim Minority Community in Bombay, and who had served for a term as a Minister in the Government of Maharashtra, narrates a painful incident. Once he had recommended to a leading "cosmopolitan" Industrialist of Bombay the name of a person, for appointment as director of the Board of the Industrial firm. The incumbent enjoyed a respectable status in social, political and economical circles, and because of his national stature had also been appointed by the Government as her envoy to represent India in an important Arab Country. Notwithstanding all the outstanding merits of the candidate the industrialist had informed the minister that it was the policy of the Industrial firm "Not to prefer any Muslim" for the post of a director,

Needless to say, this is indeed rather a shocking example of the practice of communalism in its crudest form at the highest social levels of the urban society in India. Many more examples pertaining to our so-called national and multi-national industrial firms can be cited, which practice similar anti-national policies of communalism to discriminate against a certain community in the matter of recruitment and allotment of shares of their firms, in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Secular Constitution of the country, which guarantees equality of opportunities to all citizens, without any consideration of caste, creed or community.

How the germs of communalism have infected even the higher social strata of Indian society, is illustrated by another incident of a different nature, based on the actual experience of an engineer friend of mine, who had visited Pondicherry. The engineer friend, who happened to be a South Indian Brahmin belonging to the Iyengar caste, and had a Muslim as his jeep driver, was surprised to be informed by the proprietor of the restaurant attached to the Aurobindo Ashram, that food could be served only to him, and not to his driver, for obvious reasons of communalism. The engineer friend informed me that he felt so much out-raged at this communal discrimination that he walked out of the restaurant after informing the proprietor that it was a pity that even in the shadow of a great spiritual centre, such an inhuman and indecent communal discrimination is practiced and he felt it below his personal self-respect to patronise any such restaurant.

It has been aptly said that wars are born in the minds of the people. Likewise, it can be stated that communalism too is born in the minds of the people.

Mr. Justice D.P. Madon (Former Chief Justice, Bombay High Court) in his report of the Commission of enquiry into the communal disturbances in Bhiwandi, Jalgaon and Mahad in Maharashtra, which had taken place in May 1970, has some pertinent observations on the disease of communalism and the people, who suffer from the disease:

“Communalism is a disease, which warps the mind. Communalism is a way of thinking, the result of the perversion of religion and the distortions of history. Those who have lived for decades with communalism as their creed are beyond redemption. The tragedy is that as they think, so do their children grow to think. Indians have ceased to think of themselves as Indians, but look upon themselves only in terms of their religion, state or region. Article 25 of our Constitution provides for freedom of conscience, and the free profession, practice and propagation of religion. The ringing sonority of this article of the Constitution has however, fallen on deaf ears and many who so glibly prattle about “Secularism”, and “National Integration” are themselves communalists at heart. In order to root out this cancer from our country, it is necessary to re-orient the thinking of the youth of our country and thus save them from communal brain-washing by their parents”.

The frank and outspoken views of Mr. Justice Madon on the virulent disease of communalism that is affecting our national life and some of the radical remedies, which he has suggested for ridding the national body-politics of India, deserves serious consideration.

## COMMUNALISM IN UTTAR PRADESH (1947-1984)

By Raghuraj Gupta

The historical antecedents have converted U.P. into an arena of inter-religious tensions and conflicts over the centuries. Unlike the British Christian rulers who quit *en masse* in 1947, soon after partitioning and acceding to India's political independence, the foreign Muslim rulers, immigrants of diverse origins from Arabia, Iraq, Central Asia, Mongolia and Afghanistan-permanently settled down in India and added new indigenous converts to their fold from the Hindu society. The latter, mostly belonged to its lowly, artisan, untouchable and depressed castes, exploited and degraded under the rigid, heartless Hindu system. A few Hindu high caste erstwhile rulers also embraced Islam out of sheer expediency to share loaves and fishes of office or save their skins and privileges and sought shelter in their courts.

The Muslim minority in India today has an estimated population of 90 million and constitutes nearly 12 per cent of its people. The majority of the Indian Muslims, around 90 per cent, are supposed to be of Indian origin and stock, have acquired the status of a national minority. It has also been designated as a 'problematic minority' by social scientists. As permanent, full-fledged citizens, Muslims may be called the most numerous and important national minority in India—a community most crucial for this country's political, economic and cultural life.

Nothing precise is known about the number and growth rate of Indian Muslim population before the inauguration of census in 1881 under the British rule. A one-to-eight or ten ratio of Muslims to the whole population was reported in the sixteenth century which reached one to four by 1947, at the time of partition. In divided India, there is again a steady increase in the proportion of Muslim population. It is now around 12 per cent.

U.P. occupies a unique place in the history of Indian Muslims. Delhi and the Ganga, Jamuna, Doab of U.P. has been the cradle of Muslim religious, linguistic, educational, cultural and political activity

and has the distinction of having major all India institutions like Deoband's Daml Uloom, Lucknow's Nadwatul Uloom, Aligarh's Muslim University, that have attracted Muslims from all parts of the country.

It is in U.P. alone, that the Muslims aristocracy after the eclipse of Mughal empire, found a safe haven, a congenial setting and for their advancement. This made U.P. the main recruiting ground of Muslim leadership in politics, religion, literature and education and also placed it in the forefront of communal 'separatist politics' a district-wise breakdown of U.P. Muslim population has crucial significance and a direct bearing on communal tensions and conflicts. The distribution of Muslim population in U.P. districts for 1971 is given in Table-1.

Table 1. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MUSLIMS AND HINDUS IN U. P. POPULATION

District	Muslims	Hindus
Uttar Pradesh	15.48	83.76
1. Uttarkashi	0.39	98.81
2. Chamoli	0.05	99.59
3. Tehri-Garhwal	0.43	99.46
4. Garhwal	1.61	97.98
5. Pithoragarh	0.33	99.37
6. Almora	0.51	99.24
7. Nainital	13.25	77.15
8. Bijnor	36.66	61.96
9. Moradabad	38.15	61.23
10. Badaun	18.45	81.34
11. Rampur	45.76	49.98
12. Bareilly	29.20	69.74
13. Pilibhit	21.62	74.03
14. Shahjahanpur	16.14	02.49
15. Dehradun	8.07	86.26
16. Saharanpur	31.11	67.56

<b>District</b>	<b>Muslims</b>	<b>Hindus</b>
17. Muzaffarnagar	28.83	70.14
18. Meerut	22.14	75.70
19. Bulandshahr	18.20	81.56
20. Aligarh	12.39	87.14
21. Mathura	6.56	93.15
22. Agra	9.95	88.09
23. Etah	10.27	89.14
24. Mainpuri	4.83	94.60
25. Farrukhabad	12.72	86.92
26. Etawah	6.13	93.44
27. Kanpur	12.24	86.34
28. Fatehpur	11.92	87.98
29. Allahabad	12.96	86.72
30. Jhansi	5.08	92.99
31. Jalaun	8.20	91.49
32. Hamirpur	6.64	93.23
33. Banda	5.82	94.08
34. Khari	17.24	80.56
35. Sitapur	16.46	83.41
36. Hardoi	11.31	88.61
37. Unnao	9.08	90.89
38. Lucknow	19.78	78.96
39. Rae Bareli	10.02	89.86
40. Bahraich	26.99	72.81
41. Gonda	22.56	77.35
42. Barabanki	19.99	79.84
43. Faizabad	12.27	87.62
44. Sultanpur	12.93	86.99
45. Pratapgarh	11.79	88.16
46. Basti	20.30	79.67

District	Muslims	Hindus
47. Gorakhpur	10.77	88.98
48. Deoria	16.17	83.78
49. Azamgarh	14.07	85.44
50. Jaunpur	8.31	91.65
51. Ballia	5.38	94.53
52. Ghazipur	9.48	90.42
53. Varanasi	10.64	89.11
54. Mirzapur	5.51	94.26

Hindu-Muslim tensions and conflicts have been one of the major inter-group problems and a source of constant worry to the policy makers and administrators of U. P. in particular which has a population of about 110 million, out of which 16 per cent is Muslim. U.P. is chronically afflicted with the scourge of Hindu-Muslim dissensions and communal riots. The recent communal riots in the U. P. cities of Moradabad and Meerut in U. P. have only accentuated the poignancy of the problem.

Plentiful publications, mostly historical and political and a few sociological studies on Hindu-Muslim problem and tensions and conflicts, along with numerous reports of the Judicial Commissions of Enquiry set up by the Government are available. These studies and enquiries have relevance for period, they covered and are now dated. In the fast-changing external relations with India's Muslim neighbours on the border and the internal upheavals in the Muslim world, accompanied by the changing economic status and roles within the state, 'political mobilisation' and shifting political alignments of the Muslim political, religious, socio-cultural, linguistic organisations, an up-to-date understanding and analysis of the condition of U.P. Muslims needs to be attempted.

While dealing with the Muslims in U.P. it must be clearly understood that in the past as well as in the present, they had never been one, uniform, homogenous socio-political category. Diachronically and also synchronically, the U.P. Muslim community and its

religion has expressed itself in diverse forms, its unique identity and overt unity notwithstanding. The same may be said of its non-Muslim population. This unity and variety in Indian Islam is the outcome of the cultural interaction between the 'Great' and 'Little' local traditions that emerged from the constant contact between the classical and regional, 'universal' and 'parochial' cross-currents. Even in a single small geographical area, it was articulated in different modes, conditioned by the ethnic, class, caste and tribal backgrounds of the converts to Islam. Thus it will be more appropriate to designate the U.P. Muslims, not as one monolith community, but as a conglomeration or combine of many communities.

Hindu-Muslim contacts in the past were not always problematic and pathological. They had been, like all other inter-group human contacts, both pleasant and repugnant, much depending on the peculiar socio-political milieu in which these were enacted and reified. However, the contemporary Muslim minority situation and the recent past is the subject matter proper for an anthropological-ethnological investigation.

The year 1946 is a watershed in Hindu-Muslim communal relations. At this juncture, the Indian Muslims, especially in the state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) were, by and large, a dominant and politically powerful, had major share in state's higher government service; privileged and prosperous, highly literate and urbanised "problematic minority" community. In some other states (provinces) such as NWEP, Punjab, Sind, most parts of Bengal and Kashmir, Muslims were in a majority, and not much well off and thus occupied a qualitatively different position.

The partition of India was chiefly the outcome of the political mobilisation of the Muslim community under the banner of All India Muslim League in U.P. which had aggravated the dormant Hindu-Muslim tensions, and at times it was abetted by the then British rulers in their own imperial interest.

During, the first half of this century, the U.P. Muslim **Shurafa** elite played a prominent part in the propagation and translation of communal separatism; and from 1940 onwards, toward the achievement of the utopia of Pakistan into a reality.

The concept of a Muslim independent state, based on the two nation theory, in whatever form, from the very beginning had been an anathema to the Hindu majority. It was, therefore, natural and inevitable that the creation of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan, carved out of the Indian territory, should have severely strained the Hindu-Muslim relations and engendered unprecedented overt violent conflicts, particularly in West U.P. which experienced a mass influx of Hindu refugees from West Pakistan-Punjab and North West Frontier Province, who were deported to India under the government auspices.

The Pakistan ideology of separate nationhood for the Muslims appealed and swayed the urban, Western-educated U.P. Muslim mind more than the rural Muslim masses during the fateful decade of 1940-1947. The strained relations between the two major communities touched such an intense level of hostility during this period and the prospects of political re-approachment between the two appeared bleak, rather impossible. The Britishers had decided to quit, and both the effective leaderships of Hindu and Muslim communities, virtually represented by the National Congress for India and the U.P. Muslim League for the emergent Pakistan were keen to take over the reins of power. This made partition attractive and unavoidable. Hence the consequent communal upheavals and carnage.

On the eve of independence, the politically mobilised Muslim urban communities of U.P. were soon overtaken by the pace of events. The select few, with assured prospects of advancement in Pakistan decided to emigrate; the unfortunate rural Muslim masses were left to fend for themselves. Many of them, by that time did not comprehend the true physical and socio-political significance and implications of their deep faith in the Pakistan ideology and its repercussions on their living, their present and future statuses and roles in free and divided India.

Even at that time, there was a substantial segment among the U.P. Muslims which did not favour the Pakistan ideology. This subgroup was led by the Ulama of the Deoband school, called the 'nationalist Muslims' by the Indian National Congress Party. It opposed the Pakistan ideology, not for secular reasons, but the



communal ones. It held that Pakistan was not in the true interests of the Muslims. These religious revivalists and protectors of Islam came out with a **modus vivendi** the doctrine of **Muhaada** — compact between the Hindus and the Muslims for co-existence in India. They drew this analogy from the past. Both the U.P. Muslim political leaderships, one overtly secular, and the other essentially religious, failed to grasp the modern secular forces that were to shape the future destiny of the Muslim community(ies) in U.P. and the country.

## CHANGING STATUS : RECENT TRENDS

U.P. Muslims who were undoubtedly an advanced community before partition, in the last three and a half decades of freedom have undergone a process of sea change. The current socio-cultural situation reveals that in terms of literacy, higher education, per capita income, representation in higher government executive services and in legislatures and judiciary, the share of Muslims has steeply fallen. This development has become a source of deep anxiety, despair and discontent among the articulate Muslim elite and also the ordinary Muslim literati who read Urdu newspapers. Urdu press is a potent force in the opinion formation of U.P. Muslims. It is much obsessed with Muslim representation in Government services. It also provides a ready grist to the U.P. Muslim Urdu press and to its 'community leaders' of all shades, whether sectarian or secular. And this frustration unites them as an aggrieved community which feels that it has been deprived of its 'legitimate opportunity and due dignity'. This feeling of deprivation is further accentuated by the ever-increasing incidence of communal riots.

How and why all this has happened needs to be looked into. As I understand, it is neither fortuitous, nor the product of any deliberate policy of discrimination, but, as a perceptive Pakistani scholar and civil servant has said, is an outcome of the historical situation which mainly applies to U.P. to quote :

The upper-princes, nawabs and landlords — found themselves stranded and disadvantaged after independence in 1947 in a rapidly changing social order. Their doom was ordained. They were not equipped to cope with modern times. With one

stroke of Patel's pen their power and privileges disappeared. At the state level, too, as in the United Provinces, after the abolition of Zamindari — the landlord system — their lives were affected. Some drifted to Pakistan, most sank into oblivion.

The middle class — lawyers, doctors, civil servants, defence personnel migrated en bloc to Pakistan. A dynamic middle class at its best has historically provided leaders, ideas, continuity, stability and strength to the community... The migration of the middle class devastated the social structure of Indian Muslims and was largely responsible for their acephalous condition. For those who stayed, added to the joy for those going to a better life in Pakistan there was also a feeling of betrayal. The third category, the general poor — scattered in urban slums and village of India were the peasants, artisans and domestic servants. These remained behind in India and continued to live and dress as before. In spite of pressures they clung to their traditional dress and language; in some places becoming easy fodder for communal riots.

### COMMUNAL VERSUS JOINT ELECTORATE

The former British rulers of India, pursuing the policy of 'Divide and rule' used Muslims as counterpoise against the Hindu nationalists of the Congress clamouring for freedom, introduced in 1909 'communal electorate,' a system of representation in which Muslims and non-Muslim Indians separately voted and elected their representatives for the provincial and central legislatures. Communal electorate was chiefly responsible for political bifurcation of the two major Indian religious communities and found its final culmination in the demand for Pakistan and partition of India into two separate sovereign states of Bharat and Pakistan in 1947.

Shrunken and smaller India, opted for a secular republican constitution and decided to abolish the pernicious system of communal electorate with a view to integrating the contending communities. But this abolition of separate communal electorates in the wake of partition further robbed the U.P. Muslim elite of its Muslim following on whose communalism it fed and flourished.

For understanding the post-independence contemporary communal developments in U.P. Hindu-Muslim relations the following three studies provide useful insights.

The first and foremost is : the six tension studies — two of these were conducted in U.P. viz. Aligarh, and Lucknow a high and a low tension area by two eminent psychologists' Pars Ram and Kali Prasad respectively sponsored by the Government of India under the direction of another social — psychologist Gardner Murphy, who summarized them in his the *Minds of Men*, 1953. Relevant for our purpose are : (i) Pars Ram, *A UNESCO Study of Social Tensions in Aligarh*, 1956, and Kali Prasad, *A Study of Communal Tensions in Lucknow*, 1963. These studies were carried out in 1951-52, and are of great significance as they serve as a benchmark for the contemporary Muslim communal situation in U.P.

#### ALIGARH STUDY

The major findings of the Aligarh study were;

1. Problems of social tensions are related to religion, group identity, nationality consciousness, caste, language groupings, economic class and political mobilisation ;

2. Rumours play a critical part, at least in the causation of Hindu-Muslim 'Communal riots. Every rumour has its public and consequently reveals its social structure needs and attitudes of groups and the functional value it has for them. It also prompts group action and distorts the situation and also undergoes modification in course of transmission.

3. Kurt Lewin's concept of "time perspective" has validity in explaining the inter-religious tensions in India. According to Pars Ram, the typical Hindu approach is : temporal reference to tension in a round-about detour before coming to the point. The Muslim approach is loaded with emotion. This difference may be due to the vast span of time conceived by Hindu cosmology. The Hindu agelessness of all reality is contrasted by dynamic or explosive nature of Muslim history, with event crowding upon event. Differences may be due simply to high anxiety level among the Muslims.

4. The Hindu-Muslim strife is not primarily a function of **actual hostilities** but a function of the basic differences in **cultural outlook**;

5. The caste differences among the Hindus in their attitudes toward Muslims play a part. The Hindu higher castes appearing in general to place the Muslims at a greater social distance and the evident feeling of the Muslims that they would rather associate with high-caste than with low-caste Hindus.

6. Hindus and Muslims have been socially more isolated from one another since independence.

7. There is no effective agency in operation to build a better understanding at the grass-roots, where people and the Government officers of humbler status, professing different religions come together,

Paul R. Brass, **Language, Religion and Politics in North India**, 1975 is another insightful work which throws up valuable ideas and is useful for understanding and assessing the present Hindu-Muslim political confrontation in U.P. Its major analytical contributions are :

1. In modern India the ethnic group cohesion among the Muslims has grown and developed a particular times to a sufficient degree of intensity to become politically significant and finds its manifestation in nationalism, national integration and nationality formation.

2. Uttar Pradesh has been the primary arena in India of religious cleavage between Hindus and Muslims. The Pakistan movement received its primary impetus in U.P. after 1937 and religion has been such a powerful force and the conflict between religious groups in the north has been more bitter and prolonged than elsewhere.

3. Two types of cleavages, religion and language, have been non-congruent. Language has not been a barrier to communication between Hindus and Muslims in north India, but has been turned into a symbolic barrier by the political elites seeking to advance the interests of their religious communities. Therefore, there is no casual-tive general relation between social cleavages and political conflict.

4. There is enormous dialectical diversity in the Hindi and Urdu languages spoken by each religious community in U.P. both Hindu and Muslim.

5. The pattern of Hindu-Muslim inter-group relations has been governed by the frequency and character of the inter-ethnic contacts and the differential rates of social mobilization among the Muslims and Hindus.

6. Political organization and the relevance of policies has been decisive in shaping the outcome of communal adjustment.

Raghuraj Gupta's **Hindu-Muslim Relations**, 1976 is an anthropological micro-enquiry carried out in a city of West U.P. between 1956 and 1975, covers two crucial decades. It focusses on day to day intergroup relations in mixed Hindu-Muslim and exclusive Muslim localities and highlights the significance of neighbourhood in influencing the level of tensions, conflicts and formation of individual and group attitudes.

The birth of Pakistan, far from solving numerous problems of the U.P. Muslim minority further complicated their adjustment, accommodation and assimilation with the larger Indian national identity. Soon after partition and the establishment of Pakistan, the loyalty of those Muslims who continued to stay in India became suspect. All Muslims from the state of East Punjab and present Haryana were forced to migrate to West Pakistan under a inter-governmental agreement. Many Muslim families, mostly from West U.P., were divided and one or more of their members opted to go over to Pakistan. This again subjected such families to the charge of lacking in national loyalty in times of strained relations with Pakistan, particularly during the unfortunate days of Indo-Pak Wars of 1947-48, 1965 and 1971 and even today.

For most of the Indian Muslim refugees (*Muhajirins*) from U.P. Pakistan did not prove the promised land. Any friction in Indo-Pak relations has its fall out for the Indian Muslims. The political upheavals in Pakistan are a source of constant concern for the U.P. Muslims.

## POLITICAL POLARISATION

Soon after the partition of India the important Muslim communal leaders, who had spearheaded the Pakistan movement from the Hindu majority states, mainly U.P. slipped to West Pakistan, among whom Liaqat Ali Khan, of Muzaffarnagar the first Pakistani Prime Minister, and Khaliqzaman of Lucknow were most prominent. Only third rank Muslim leaders were left behind in U.P. Overnight they renounced communal politics and the majority among them joined the Indian ruling party-the Congress which had been in the forefront of the freedom movement and now ruled the state. This instant conversion of the 'communalists' into 'secularists': born of political opportunism and expediency created by the exit of the Britishers did not carry much conviction with the U.P. non-Muslims.

However, the compulsions of 'joint electorate' and democratic politics tempted the secular parties to exploit the cohesive Muslim minority community and its communalism for their own political ends to win power with the solid support of the Muslims' 'vote bank'. There was a race to grab it. The Muslim elite leadership also used this changed situation and secular politics for their own personal ends. A significant development was the formation of Majlis-e-Mushawarat, a federal organization of Muslim political, social and religious bodies in August 1964 under the leadership of the redoubtable Dr. A. J. Faridi of Lucknow, an old Praja Socialist.

The common programme of all the avowedly Muslim organizations was to secure for the Muslims due representation in North Indian States, to preserve the Muslim character of the Aligarh Muslim University and to prevent Parliament from interfering with the Muslim Personal Law.

The circumstances have made articulate U.P. Muslims defensive and extremely suspicious. By the time of 1967 general elections, the non-Congress section of the Muslim leadership had decided that, since the Congress had failed to satisfy the Muslims with regard to any of the community's demands, they would organize a Muslim political party or a federation of regional Muslim parties to represent

Muslim opinion and bargain with non-Muslim parties and distribute Muslim support among different political parties on the basis of their willingness to accommodate and promote the interest of the Muslim community.

This strategy boomeranged on the Muslims and their representation in the State legislature actually declined. The riots of 1969 and 1970 once again posed the problem of Muslim security. And the old alliance between Muslims and the Congress was restored in 1971 Parliamentary poll, but with a major difference. This time, the Muslim leadership believed that they had acquired genuine leverage with Congress and their demands could no longer be ignored. Between the elections to the Lok Sabha in March 1971 and to State Assemblies in March 1972, most of these advantages were lost. In 1972 elections open breach between the Congress and the more vocal sections of Muslim political opinion occurred. At the root of this was the Muslim leadership's resentment over India's role in bringing about the emergence of Bangla Desh and Mrs. Gandhi's firm refusal to support the Bihari Muslims' cause in that country.

It was in 1972 State elections that the Muslim League extended its activities to north India, and there was a split between the Muslim Majlis and the League on this question, and disregarding the Majlis opposition, the Muslim League established its branches in U.P. and Delhi.

A nationwide sample survey of Muslim voting in the 1972 State elections conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies revealed that Muslims, as is generally assumed, did not vote in a bloc. Muslim electorate still by and large supported the Congress, with 46.8 per cent votes for the Congress and 39.7 per cent for the opposition.

Gopal Krishna thinks that despite the apparent extension of Muslim parties, the Muslim electorate has been heavily penetrated by secular forces. The competitive politics and the process of modernization have inevitably begun to create a differentiated political opinion among the Muslims. This is only partly true. Separatism is still powerful force among the Muslims. Muslim leadership has a

vested interest in it. The Muslim agitation against the Aligarh Muslim University (Amendment) Act, 1972, is a pointer. Muslim separatist leadership once again succeeded in mobilising Muslim masses against it, not on academic grounds but on purely communal appeal that this new amendment posed a threat to Muslim religious and cultural identity.

The Muslim voters became a pawn in the political chess of elections. And this trend continues to this day.

The imposition of 'Emergency' in 1975 and its political aftermath in the Parliamentary poll of 1977 also turned the U.P. Muslim masses against the ruling party and was a major factor in the victory of the Janata Party opposition led by Jayaprakash Narayan.

In 1980, fresh initiatives were made by the Congress (I) Party to win over the U.P. Muslim minority vote and to bring them back into their fold. In this, it substantially succeeded.

The subsequent three years, from 1980 to 1983 have seen a spurt in communal tensions and conflicts in U.P. that touched a new high in 1982. This has naturally caused great anxiety and despondency among the U.P. Muslims and their leaders who must exploit it.

Recent political developments in Jammu and Kashmir region and the challenge thrown by its Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah leader of the National Conference — a party mainly backed by the Muslims of the Kashmir valley — compelled the Congress (I) party to seek refuge and Hindu support in the Jammu region which has a Hindu Majority has its psychological repercussions in U.P. which were aired by the U.P. Muslim Urdu press.

These recent political moves of the Congress (I) and its conflicting attitude towards Muslims in the states of Assam and Jammu and Kashmir, has given a new twist to the communal situation in U.P. and has agitated the U.P. Muslim leadership. U.P. Muslims' faith in Congress seems shaken. This is manifest in the memorandum



to the Prime Minister, signed by all the U.P. Muslim MPs of diverse political hues. They expressed concern about the fate of Muslim on the eve of communal rioting in Meerut (U.P.) where they alleged that the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) had indulged in communal violence against the Muslims.

**A Mulk-o-Millet Bachao Tehrik** — ‘Save the country and the community agitation’ was launched in 1979 by the **Jamiat-ul-ulema-e-Hind** during the Janata regime when Mrs. Gandhi was out of power and was supported by her. But after triumphant return to power in 1980 she wrote to Shah Nawaz Khan, a U.P. Muslim leader who led this agitation on January 21, 1983 that any agitation “of the kind you have in mind, and however peaceful you may think it will be, will be regarded as a direct hit at the Congress.”

A decade earlier, on August 18, 1973, a high level delegation led by Sheikh Abdullah, Prime Minister of Kashmir had called on Mrs. Gandhi. At that time she had complained that “the without appreciating what the ideals and policies of these parties were.”

On may 15, 1983 in her speech at Hardwar in U.P. Mrs. Gandhi held Janata rule responsible for communal violence and condoned the conduct of the Provincial Armed Constabulary of U.P.

Among the U.P. Muslims, the feeling of deprivation and discrimination is not equally shared. It is strongest among their elite and the attenuated educated middle class who interpret representation in higher government services as the index of progress and advancement of their community.

The U.P. Muslim elite of the **Shurafa** category formed the recruitment base to higher services in Government or public undertakings. Their massive out-migration to Pakistan in 1947 in good numbers continued through 1950; and from the sixties it turned towards the Gulf countries, markedly reduced the number of eligible Muslim competitors for higher jobs in U.P., and is consequently reflected in their lower intake and lower representation in services. A sudden exodus of the educated higher and middle class Muslims to foreign lands and a resultant fall in the educational standards of the Muslims has largely created this situation.

## ISLAMIC REVIVALISM

The Muslim Leagues movement in U.P. in the forties though coated in communal colour was essentially political and secular and expressed the assertion of religious identity of the Indian Muslims. Its leadership under Muhammad Ali Jinnah virtually isolated religious revivalists who were organised under the Jamiat-ulema-e-Hind or the Jammat-e-Islami, both quite strong in U.P. The last three and half decades of freedom have witnessed a resurgence and spurt of Islamic revival in U.P. There is a renewed interest in Islam and a concerted effort to resurrect its pristine past. There is a growing keenness for spreading religious education, mostly inspired by the Tableegi Jammat.

One of the causes attributed to this development among U.P. Muslims is the failure of secularists, both Marxists and liberals to answer their needs, whether material or spiritual; their failure to satisfy the quest of authenticity and participation. Its causes are modern, namely, the uneven social and economic development and lack of respect for the ethnic identity of Muslims, their language and way of life. The group of Muslim Leftists, once somewhat influential at the Aligarh University has now become "institutionalised" and is faction-ridden, busy in feathering its nests. In such a climate of despair, religion offers a substitute for a "lost home" to the slum dwellers in the city and many a artisan who are struggling for their livelihood.

This new celebrated phenomenon of Islamic revivalism is much misunderstood by the non-Muslims. There is also a paralled interest in Hindu religious revival. Revivalists of either camps look at each other with suspicion, without appreciating the underlying common urges. The recent 'conversion controversies' of 1982, highlighted in the Muslim Press like Meenakshipuram in the South, where some Hindu Harijan families embraced Islam to escape from indignities and discrimination they suffered at the hands of Hindu high castes, generated lot of resentment, especially among the U.P. Hindu revivalists who saw in it the 'hidden hand' of the Gulf — money and greed of the converts. They fail to appreciate the sociological and psychological factors,

## SUMMING UP

In the foregoing pages I have outlined the birth, rise and the present status of communalism in U.P. From this it is obvious the clash of cultural identities and the forces released by colonial rule, and the changing status and role of the articulate ruling classes vis-a-vis the masses in the last 36 years has played a crucial part in its development. The very means of modernization like the mass media and political mobilization through parties have been used to subserve and strengthen separatism.

The present situation appears indeed depressing in the value framework of a composite, harmonious and secular society. The apparently secular leadership of the majority religious community has come to acquire a vested interest in keeping communalism alive and the minority elite leadership is a willing to play its tune. There are, however, signs of restlessness also among the Muslim masses, and unless and until they throw up a more representative, broad-based leadership, reflecting the aspirations of the common men, the communal tensions centring round familiar symbols are likely to continue.

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# RECENT HISTORY AND POLITICS OF COMMUNALISM AND COMMUNAL RIOTS IN GUJARAT

— Priyavadan Patel \*

## WHAT IS COMMUNALISM ?

After about thirty seven years of Indian Independence, it has now become quite clear that the persistence of the problem of communal tension, conflict, violence or riots throughout the country is not an easily explainable and instantly understandable phenomenon. Its continuous incidence in one or the other part of the country at regular intervals has caused a great deal of anxiety and concern among the interested scholars of this problem. Its manifestation in variegated forms and ever-changing contents makes the exercise of detailing the causes and understanding it further difficult and complex. Fortunately, for the analyst of this eluding and complex social phenomenon, there is no dearth of relevant literature. Quite a few scholars have made admirable attempts to grapple with the phenomenon of communalism. As a result, the field of communalism abounds with many well-documented empirical and reportage-studies on the incidence of communal riots. However, it must be confessed and clarified at the outset that understanding a complex social phenomenon in entirely perfect and complete form is an impossible ambition. One can at best, try to be as correct as possible in his analysis of such complex social phenomena.

Despite the sizeable growth of literature on this subject, there is a disturbing feeling among the students of this problem that the phenomenal growth and massive quantity of empirical literature has not made adequate theoretical inroads. We have a great deal of studies giving account of communalism but attempts are yet to come forth for generating sufficient theoretical understanding of the whole phenomenon. This leads us to the following questions and to an exercise of finding some plausible answers in the form of 'uniformly' acceptable explanations. In other words, a student of communalism must try to understand the general social, economic, political and

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cultural forces that shape and steer the growth of communalism. Where does communalism draw its social support from? Which are its popular bases? Which sections of society get their interests served? Why and how the communal politics is promoted and organized? Though, such an aim of covering all these aspects of communalism, sounds quite ambitious, a modest attempt is made in this article to chronologically detail and understand the incidences of communalism and communal politics in the cities of Gujarat and view them against the recent history and politics of Baroda City as well as of the State of Gujarat. For this purpose, a recent history of communal violence and communal politics and ideology is briefly explored and described in order to obtain a necessary historical understanding of the issue. The major incidents and centres of communal riots in Gujarat are delineated and one of them is covered for detailed description on aforesaid lines. In recent period since last sixties, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Godhra have been the three major centres of communal politics and its consequent communal tension and violence in Gujarat. All three places differ from one another in every aspect viz. size of population, area, economic conditions, social composition, role of political parties and socio-political and historical experiences. Despite there being differences on all these counts, the pattern of violence and strategies of strike as well as the bases and spread of communal politics and ideology remained essentially the same. The fuelling factors or trigger-mechanisms varied from one incidence to the other in all three cities. More of this little later.

It is necessary at the moment to define the term 'communal' and 'communalism', for minimising the interference of the otherwise existing ambiguities, and contradictions that one encounters while studying social phenomena of this nature. A few attempts already made need to be reviewed for establishing some clarity about the word 'communalism'. Before indulging into such an exercise, it also must be clarified that the multifactoral and complex social phenomenon like communalism can not be explained or solved with the help of "single-cause" thesis. This also does not warrant an exercise in mere accumulation of all the available information and details on riots. The causes of communal violence must be logically ordered and meaningfully arranged for proper interpretation. Now, we shall review a few such efforts. Bipin Chandra, an eminent scholar of the

subject in the context of modern Indian history, views communalism as follows :

..communalism is the belief that because of a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common social, political, economic and cultural interests .... In India [there are] different and distinct communities which are independently and separately structured or consolidated that all the followers of a religion share not only a community of religious interests but also common secular interests, that is, economic, political and cultural interests .... Religion has to become the basis of their basic social identity and determinant of their basic social relationships and they possess the inherent tendency to act and function as a separate group or entity or unit in these fields (Bipin Chandra, 1984, p. 1).

Bipin Chandra explores several possible meanings of communalism of which the prominent ones are covered in his definition above. He also believes that the respective religious communities have become the basis of the organisation of modern Indian politics. Indian society has always been smouldering with the persisting struggles for communal identity and division. He further elaborates this theme by attempting to read the mental and ideological make up of a communalist :

The communalist assumes that the most meaningful distinction among the Indian people on social, cultural, economic and political issues is to be made on the basis of such units of religious communities. The Indian people can exist and act socially and protect their collective or corporate or non-individual interests only as members of religion-based communities. They never think, want, feel or act in any other manner or where interests, outlook, way of life etc. are the same (In this sense, a communal riot represents the concentrated where interests, outlook, way of riot represents the concentrated essence of this notion when killing of any stray individual represents an attack upon his 'community' and defence of the killer's 'community'). All their choices are made and all their benefits are enjoyed as members of these communities .....

Religious distinction is the most important or fundamental distinction . . . . [which] overrides all other distinctions. . . all other social identities and distinctions are either denied or, when accepted in theory, either negated in practice or subordinated to the religious identity (Bipin Chandra, 1984, p. 2).

Instead of reflecting the organization or formation of nation, nationalities and class groups or regional groups, the Indian situation reflects the persistence of religious communities as its basic social components and instrument of action. The contemporary politics and history-writing also prominently reflects the communal, sectarian and religious biases, ignoring other secular aspects of general concern. The secular issues are "ignored, confused and even suppressed".

In Harbans Mukhia's definition and understanding ; communalism,

is the phenomenon of religious differences between groups often leading to tension and even rioting between them. In its not so violent manifestation, communalism amounts to discrimination against a religious group in matters of employment or education . . . the locus of communalism is placed at the point of tension either in the form of discrimination or in the extreme form of a riot. But tension/riot is merely an overt manifestation of a phenomenon which also manifested itself at its other end in a silent, almost imperceptible form and the two together constitute a spectrum in which communalism could get expressed at any point (Mukhia, 1983, p. 1664).

Similarly, Smith too has made an attempt at defining communalism. He, however, points out at the beginning, the limitation of such definitions of communalism because it is a highly dynamic phenomenon which keeps changing. As a result, definitions need revision from time to time. Communalism, therefore, can be referred to in past rather than in present, because what was it in past may not be the same today. He defines communalism in India ;

as that ideology which has emphasized as the social, political and economic unit the group of adherents of each religion and



has emphasized the distinction, even the antagonism between such groups (Smith, 1979, p. 187).

The ideology of communalism reigns supreme. It keeps the communal issue afloat and overlooks other issues like political, social and economic. Smith further states that the problem of communalism has not remained constant and unchanged. It has acquired varying shapes and dimensions from century to century, province to province, town to town, city to city, class to class and from one politico-economic setting to another. In other words, the problem of communalism in the modern history of India "has grown and shifted, changed and developed and is still changing and will continue to develop" (Smith, 1979, p. 190).

Imtiaz Ahmad has raised a few proposition on this theme. According to him the character and nature of communalism is recently changing. Communal riots reflect this in terms of "internal shifts in the nature, orientation and location". The communal tensions do not reflect the systemic break-down as believed but they are indicator of onset of dynamic and secular changes as a result of economic development. According to him, they are also not a set of "illogical and irrational actions." They are essentially a consequence of "deeper social processes at work" which produces not only communal but several kinds of social and civil tensions and conflicts. Communal tension and riot is only a part of such a phenomenon. He says "... sociologically, communal rioting is a clearly directed, goal-oriented social action whose logic and rationality is clear to those who engage in it" (Ahmad, 1984. pp. 903-906).

We shall see in more details later on as to how communal tension and riot on one hand and the communal politics and ideology on the other draw its social supports from respective communities. An actual incidence of communal riot takes place in an atmosphere of tension. Usually tension grows first and riot is its consequence. It, at this stage, mainly involves the lower classes of each community. Inter-community relationships are the first casualty of the communal tension. Propaganda by word and in print generates inflammatory situation. Rumours like slaughtering cow or insulting religious book, defiling an idol or "music before mosques" often lead to a

gory rioting. Communal passions reach a point of no return and a minor spark blows up the whole thing into flames. It is often observed that those who plan and execute escape the impact of riots. They neither participate nor become direct victims of such violence. The lower classes of either community mostly participate in actual riots and they only bear the main brunt of communal frenzy. The recent incidences of communal riots have proved that the situations of rioting last for long. Many a time it is hit and run occurrences. Normal mutual socio-economic relations between riot-torn communities get relinked and atmosphere of fear, anxiety and insecurity too quickly dissipates though it does leave a few scars in the minds of the members of either community. Communal riots, it must be remembered, are a recent phenomenon. The communal riots began to take place only since the last two-three decades of the nineteenth century. Till partition in 1947, they did not occur on a significant scale (Bipin Chandra, 1984).

In a four-year period between 1923-26, there were only 72 major incidents of communal riots in the country. But gradually this number grew alongwith the scale of violence in the post-Independence period. In the fifties, there used to be an average of 65 riots a year (between 1954-1959) whereas it escalated to 257 incidences of riots per year during the seventies. The total number of riots for both these decades is 365 and 2938 respectively. Seventies witnessed a slight decrease in number of riots as 2574 riots were reported. But after 1975, the incidents were on rise as in 1980 there occurred 427 riots as against 205 in 1975. These incidences were mostly concentrated in the urban or periurban locations (Shah, 1983, pp. 79-80 and Naidu 1980, pp. 17-19).

As we saw, providing communal ideology and tension-building is done by one class within a community and actual rioting by another. The actual participants belong to lower classes. Communal tension and violence is preceded by a long-lasting, persistent and continuous activities of communal politics organised, promoted, controlled and used by the middle classes, politico-bureaucratic and small-industrial-business elites, and landlords from each community. Through these sections, the ideology of communalism sneaks into and finds expression in the available political arena at local or supra-local level. They refrain from direct, overt acts of violent physical attacks but communalize and

contest issues on the basis of personal political rivalry or promotion of personal interest (Banu, 1984, p. 235). There are situations where friendly and socio-economically co-operative relations exist between politicians or businessmen as well as their middle and upper class supporters of two diverse and warring communities. There are instances where the communal leaders of diverse communities support, interact and collaborate in municipal committees or district boards etc. (as in Baroda and Godhra in Gujarat) with each other, although they are elected to such bodies through communal politics and rivalries. Both these forms of communalism are "integrally linked" and mutually contribute to each other's growth. This is well summarized as below :

.. communal riots are not the main form or content of communalism. They were .. its reflection, its active episodic expression, its bitter and virulent manifestation and consequence and one of the instruments and agencies for its spread. The communal riot was sudden and spasmodic .. and its causation lay either in the prevalence of a communal atmosphere generated by communal politics and ideology or in conjunctural causes, involving religious feelings alone or combined with some particular local interests which could be effectively handled by efficient administrative or police action and secular public opinion. It is communalism as politics and ideology which .... should be the subject of analysis as also of ideological political struggle (Bipin Chandra, 1984, p. 5).

In yet another examination of the relationship between political and communal forces from essentially a radical Marxist theoretical standpoint, Pandav Nayak states ;

Where the state is a product of a long-gestated liberation movement with relatively more democratic content in its polity, the source of sponsoring communal manifestations is usually to be found among competitive groups vying with each other for narrow economic ends (Engineer, 1984, pp. 753).

Communal violence is also viewed as "a part of the British legacy in India" but with a pinch of salt as it has yet to be "proved" in clear evidential terms (Shakir, 1972, p.19). Shakir also maintains

that communal riots are not a neat result of religious differences between two different communities but products of communal politics and thinking. To him, the nature of state power, the contending political forces for it and Hindu chauvinist groups are the main determinants of communal and caste violence (Shakir, 1983, p. 57). He warns that the increasing incidence of communal riots constitute the biggest threat to secularism and it signifies "the emergence of the fascist forces" and expresses hope for change only if these fascist forces can be thwarted by "the solidarity of the progressives who subscribe to the principles of socialism and secularism" (Shakir, 1980, p. 93).

Communalism is viewed as "... a political doctrine which makes use of religio-cultural differences to achieve political ends" (Dixit, 1974, p. 1). When a community utilizes its religio-cultural identity for political gains, the usual communal consciousness gets translated into communalism and takes shape of a political doctrine. She further outlines her thesis as follows:

In an ethnically plural society, social tension and conflict are in fact symptomatic of the power struggle between various groups. Theoretical justification for such conflicts on religious grounds constitutes the case of communalism as a political doctrine .. The acceptance of cultural pluralism within such a nation opens up immense possibilities for the different units to build up political fronts to safeguard their group interests (Dixit, 1974, pp. 1-3).

Put in other words, the communal problem is focused on in terms of socio-economic variables. It is believed that there are always inevitable economic compulsions behind the communalistic ideology, politics and tendencies. The political process of a specific area shapes and sharpens such a situation into organization of a conflict. Thus, by focusing on the economic compulsions behind communalism and political processes that shape communal conflict, Naidu intends "to bracket the question of the specific cultural differences which underpin conflict along communal lines and instead highlight as explanatory factors, the pattern and direction of the structural evolution of the political economy and the position of the communities in this pattern...." (Naidu, 1980, p. 22). Naidu states that the national assumption of

leadership is that communalism is a “primordial condition of the body politic which would vanish with economic and social development”.

There is also an opinion that warns against overemphasis on poor and poverty while discussing communal politics and violence but confirms the general tenor of arguments. Mukhia expresses this as follows:

.... it is not poverty or absolute scarcity of resources that leads to communal groupings and tensions; it is on the other hand an expression of opportunities that creates such tensions, for opportunities can never expand sufficiently to satisfy everyone's demands; and yet they create considerable upheavals by widening the gulf between groups ..... so long as we work in the present polity, we have to live with communalism ..... it can be handled effectively as a law and order problem at one locus and not-so-effectively at another; giving concessions to aggrieved party at one place might lead to the subsidence of passions there, although that itself might reinforce communal demands for more concessions elsewhere ..... This is the limited range of remedies to the communal problem in the given set-up (Mukhia, 1983, p. 1664).

In brief, different scholars have offered different explanations after looking at the problem of communalism from different ideological and academic positions. There exists a multiplicity of diverse descriptions and analysis of the phenomenon of communalism. Communalism is not only a religio-cultural phenomenon but an expression of a struggle for the fulfilment of politico-economic ambitions of elites of respective communities. The democratic politics and processes in India mainly involves the mobilization of people on the communal basis. The politico-economic issues are initiated, promoted, competed and decided on the strengths or weaknesses of communal bases. A certain personal economic gain can easily be procured from the political system if legitimizing support for it can be mobilized on communal lines. The nature of democratic and participative-politics is such that communal boundaries have been hardened.

For instance, masses of each community are mobilized for electoral gains or offices along these lines. Such a political strategy

works well and without any tension or violence only so long as there is enough economic space for operation and competition. But the availability of economic space is not always guaranteed in same measure, it, in fact, keeps shrinking with the increase in competition for a fewer goods that the system is capable of actually delivering. Mobilization of masses along communal lines for personal politico-economic ambitions requires raising the body of communitarian aspirations and converting them into political demands for better conditions of living. This sells well.

We shall try to link such a paradigm of communalism with an empirical situation in the following case study, where to repeat, an implicit and explicit attempt is made to show how masses have been mobilized along communal lines and used for narrow religious or economic gains by its leaders. We shall mainly deal with communal riots in Ahmedabad, Godhra and Baroda. However, the Baroda riots have been emphasized more and described in a bit greater detail.

### **COMMUNALISM IN GUJARAT: AHMEDABAD RIOTS**

Historically, Hindu-Muslim relations in Gujarat have passed through several phases both of violent clashes and peaceful co-existence. The dominant characteristic of this relationship however has been of mutual distrust and religious intolerance. Muslims had been rulers of most of the states of Gujarat in the past. During the Muslim rule, the many Hindus believe today, their places of worship were demolished. Gujaratis have even today the memory of Muslims as the invaders, anti-national, uncivilized raiders and destroyers of their religious glory at Somnath Temple in Saurashtra. A sizeable portion of Gujarati literature on historical writings reflects such sentiments and prejudiced portrayals of Muslim atrocities and attacks on Gujarat. Thus, the Hindus of Gujarat, in general, are deeply prejudiced against Muslims and roots of these prejudices can be traced back to history of Muslim rule in Gujarat (Ansari, 1970, p. 25, and Shah, 1970, p. 3).

Ahmedabad has been an oldest locus of communal riots in the state as it also had been a seat of Muslim power for long periods. In 1714-15, fierce and widespread communal riots occurred in Ahmedabad. In 1941 and 1946 too, large-scale riots between these two communities

took place (Shah, 1970, p. 3). The first decade of Indian Independence saw very few incidences of communal riots in Gujarat. There were, however, localized minor skirmishes between Vagharis and Muslims in Ahmedabad at a regular interval. This situation can not be termed as a communal riot because the reasons for such clashes were of highly personal nature — petty business competition or rivalry or eve-teasing etc. Such skirmishes were results of “conflict between localities rather than communities” (Shah, 1970).

In the second decade of Independence, i.e. between 1961-69, there was gradual to sudden rise in communal politics, tension and violence in Gujarat. In the later years of this decade riots were becoming more intensive. In a five year span between 1963 and 1968, Gujarat had recorded 29 incidents of communal violence. Of this, the incidence of communal riot at Veraval in Saurashtra region was very serious in intensity. This large-scale riot occurred in November 1968. Muslim shopkeepers and people in Veraval bore the burnt. This town of Junagadh district suffered a loss of nearly two crores. A few Muslim citizens were killed in this riot.

From here on, it can be said that, a major exercise in revivalist propoganda was let loose by the conservative sections from amongst the Hindus as well as Muslims. The Hindus, mainly from middle and upper classes, were “convinced” that Muslims had sided with Pakistan and were “spying” for her during 1965 Indo-Pak war. There were all sorts of anti-Muslim rumours in the State. For instance, it was rumoured that Muslims in Government offices and positions were spying for Pakistan. The Governor of the State was also said to be spying for it : In every major town, affected by communal violence, one would hear of a name of a local Muslim elite, branded as a Pakistani spy. The 1965 war with Pakistan, partly fought on the borders of Gujarat, had generated a great deal of anti-Muslim sentiments. This sentiment was further strengthened when the then Chief Minister Mehta’s plane was shot down by Pakistan near the border region in Gujarat. The deep-seated anti-Muslim biases surfaced again and caused communal clashes of varying degrees. In early 1969, the communal violence was breaking out in villages and towns of Kutchh, Saurashtra and South Gujarat. These riots were gathering momentum and were heading towards a final culmination i.e. the holocaust in September 1969 (Shah, 1970).

Massive politicization of cow-slaughter issue and mobilization of Hindu public support along religio-communal lines resulted in creation of tremendous communal tension in Gujarat. Actually, Gujarati Hindus had no reason to participate in this nation-wide anti-cow slaughter agitation as the practice was already banned in the state. Gujarati Muslims had not even opposed the ban. A number of Hindu revivalist practices came into vogue. Religious journals and leaflets did a brisk business. The **Sakha** attendances in towns and cities increased and became more intensive and regular (**Sakha** means a branch or a local unit of R.S.S., meant to train only Hindu youth in self-defence and used as forum for ideological indoctrination of young minds along communal lines). The R.S.S.-rallies were held in towns and cities literally showing off muscle power and raising signals indicating strong hatred against Muslims. Before this, the Muslims (Jamiat-Ul-Ulema) had organized one rally in Ahmedabad wherein 16 resolutions were passed demanding, among other things, facilities for Government employees for Friday prayers and also demanding status quo vis-a-vis Aligarh Muslim University.

Such kinds of demands enraged even secular Hindu intellectuals as they viewed such thinking as a threat to national intergration. The conservative Hindus used such opportunities for creating wild hue and cry against Muslims. They alleged that by making demands of such nature, the Muslims are bent upon converting India into a Muslim country where those facilities existed. 'Hindu **Rashtra**' is a RSS dream successfully sold to Hindus of Gujarat. RSS-activities of organizing public speeches and discussions received immense public support from Hindus. In early September 1969, the Muslims also organised religious procession probably as a reaction to Hindu revivalism, as in all cities and towns of Gujarat, the Muslims marched in protest against an incident of attack on the Al-Aqsa mosque in Egypt. It is also alleged that in some processions in a few towns pro-Pakistan slogans were shouted. All this was building up into a communal tension.

The Muslim leadership was surprised at this escalation of communal tension and did not know what to do. They saw some hope in the Congress, the political party of their trust for last nineteen years. But Congress leaders and workers in the state found it difficult to criticize or reprimand the communalist Hindus and could not contain the



rising anti-Muslim fervour. The municipal elections in March 1963 in Ahmedabad had further deepened the rift between these two communities. The Congress leaders in Gujarat and several secular writers too were playing hide and seek on the question of the safety of the Muslims in case riots break out. The Muslims felt insecure. The Muslims, in such a helpless and desperate situation withdrew their support to Congress and supported Majlis-e-Musha-warat in municipal elections. Congress had fielded eight Muslim candidates of which five were defeated by the Majlis efforts. It is very disappointing that there was hardly any choice for the Muslims. They then sided with Swatantra Party which was mainly composed of anti-Muslim elements. The conservative Muslim attitude was a snag to Swatantra Party leadership. For electoral purposes, the alliance between Swatantra and Majlis was worked out but it could not actually become operative on other issues. Social and political organization of Muslim community along the communal lines in Gujarat could not yield results.

This generated frustration among the Muslim community. The theme of Muslim insecurity began to be overplayed by Muslim leaders, parties and organizations. The muslim masses were in a helpless situation of confusion, insecurity, estrangement and therefore chose to retreat and to remain confined to the narrow Islamic Weltanschauung. It is quite rightly observed by Aloo Dastur that,

Communalism in India is not a religious problem, nor is it only a social problem. It was and continues to be a politico-economic problem . . . . . In a big way the political process is the major contributor to the injection of communalism . . . . . democracy involves elections . . . . . As elections approach the counting of communal heads begins. It is not the Indian voter who is approached. It is the community calculus that is considered . . . . . The Congress Party (during 1951-52) was at the pinnacle of its popularity . . . . . yet it lacked political courage to test its principles of a common nationality on the election anvil. The constitution had done away with communal electorates, the political process surreptitiously brought in the communal element (Engineer, 1984, pp. 752-53).

The role of state government was wrongly perceived by the people in Gujarat. They believed, the Congress party in the name of

its constitutional duties towards minorities, was encouraging and promoting Muslim communalism by tolerating their anti-national and anti-society acts for its own electoral gains. During Indo-Pak War in 1965, the state was gripped by rumours of all varieties and the state government could not convince the people about the missing truth in them. Similarly, it is popularly believed that, the Muslims are educationally backward and therefore less civilized in their public behaviour. In their view, such factors have contributed (the Muslim youth taking) to wrong course of becoming street bullies and criminals. They harass the innocent Hindu citizens, tease their females, run the liquor and gambling dens in their locality, and do the black-marketing of cinema tickets for livelihood etc. This is public perception of the Muslim society. Government policies and politicians are believed to be shielding these elements and do not take any action against them. This generated a sense of insecurity among the average Hindus and made them wrongly view the whole Muslim community as anti-social mass of people. On the other hand, the Muslim masses, in some cases rightly, got worked up by the anti-Hindu sentiments generated by the Muslim leadership of the day. Hindus were seen by them as anti-Muslim and were afraid of their personal as well as community's safety. Their frustrations with the political parties further deepened and pushed them to the corner.

It is such a type of intense and deepening fermentations along the conflicting lines of religio-communal politics and ideology that preceded the communal riots of 1969 in Ahmedabad and other places in Gujarat. Such an overspill of highly inflammatory situation requires only a spark to send the whole society up in flames. As it were to happen, in September 1969, the situation awaited a spark ! It came in the form of several incidents showing disrespect to the places of worship. Insulting remarks were made at each others' religious books and symbols resulting in attacks and counter-attacks. These riots spread throughout the major towns and villages of Gujarat. Muslims suffered heavily in terms of losses of lives and properties. Several members and office-bearers of political parties like the Congress, Jan Sangh (Now, Bharatiya Janta Party) and Swatantra took active part in these riots in cities and towns. The left parties did not participate in these riots and tried their best to prevent them.

Communal politics could not make any inroad into the cadres or leadership of Communist parties, though of small size. Some of these Hindu and Muslim workers tried to keep the situation in their areas undisturbed at great personal cost and risk as both, Hindus and Muslims became 'obstruction' to the rioters of either communities. In fact, some staunch communalists (of both communities) viewed the Gandhian and Communist opponents of riots as enemies of their particular community (Hindu or Muslim) as they obstructed the engineering of riots.

The areas within Ahmedabad city saw worst riots. The communal anguish found several routes of expression like destroying Muslim University students' hostel in Vadaj, burning copies of the **Koran** and **Ramayana**, looting and burning houses and shops, killing and burning alive persons of either sex and any age, force-parading naked women on road, raping, cutting womens' breast, mutilating sex organs, etc. These acts of violence were committed without any exception. Everything was reduced to communal identification and done on this basis. One survived or died because of his communal identity. The government, secular and social institutions, voluntary agencies, trade unions, teachers, journalists, office-colleagueship, university-friendship, political ideology and the police — everything failed to protect the attacked of either (though mainly Muslim) community because most of these socio-institutional constituents were direct or indirect parties to the riots.

About a thousand died during these riots. Thousands of people took refuge in their native villages. Relief camps were organized, accomodating fifteen thousand people. 3969 dwellings or shops were destroyed in fire and 2317 by other means. 6000 families lost their household belongings and shelter. Property worth several crores of rupees was gutted or destroyed. 10 days' curfew imposition in city cost it an income of Rs. 33.70 crores (Shah, 1970, p. 12, and Bhatt. 1969). The main participants of these riots were workers whose population in Ahmedabad is about 31.03 per cent. They are devoted to Jagannath temple from where riots started. Migrant labourers also participated in these riots. Besides, Vagharis, Harijans, Bhois and Kolis took greater part in these riots. Higher castes too actively

participated in the violence. The incidents of minor nature continued thereafter in Ahmedabad.

## COMMUNAL RIOTS IN GODHRA

Godhra enjoys a dubious distinction and reputation of being among the centres of communal riots in Gujarat. Godhra, a middle level city, has a fairly recent history of communal tension and occasional violence. An attempt is made here to briefly summarize the incidents of riots in Godhra based mainly on the studies of Engineer and Banu (Engineer, 1981, pp. 1638-1640, and Banu, 1984, pp. 228-237) and analyse the forces at play.

Godhra is situated in Panchmahal district on eastern side. It houses the district headquarters. It has a population of about 86,000 according to 1981 census. There is a controversy about the community-wise break-up of population in Godhra city. However its main constituents are Hindus and Muslims. According to one estimate, there are 35,000 Muslims, of which 20,000 are Ghanchis, 10,000 Bohras and 5,000 Syeds. As in other places, so here too Bohras are socio-culturally and economically more advanced than other Muslims. Godhra Muslims are not a singular homogeneous community as they are divided into separate groups with distinct cultural identities. The Ghanchis (henceforth all references mean Muslim Ghanchis only and not Hindu Ghanchis) are educationally backward and economically poor. Ghanchis are predominantly agriculturist but a section of them is also engaged in transport business. Ninety per cent of the city's truck transport business is monopolized by them. There is not a single Ghanchi doctor in Godhra but there are three advocates whereas there are five advocates, ten male doctors and five female doctors from Bohra community which is half one size of Ghanchis.

The Hindus in Godhra complain about the large-sized families of Ghanchis and consider it as an attempt to multiply faster. The Hindus feel they may be outnumbered by Ghanchi Muslims! In contrast, Bohras have small-sized families. The real conflict is, however, between the Ghanchis and Sindhis, mainly over petty business interests.

Sindhis are a small segment of city's total population. They are only 8,000. They are relatively recently settled in the city as

they migrated from periurban Karachi during the partition in 1947. The backward, less-educated and conservative section among them, known as Bhaiband, is mainly engaged in petty trade as compared to the **Amils** who are educated, professional and less conservative. A large section of Sindhis resembles Ghanchis in orthodox religious outlook and in having large families. The Sindhis have concentrated their trade cabins, shops and hawking spots around railway and bus stations. A section of Ghanchis has similar trade interests in the same areas, often producing confrontations and skirmishes over an issue of locating a hawking-spot or putting up of wooden cabins. The outbreak of 1980 communal riots in Godhra had its roots in this issue.

## **HISTORY OF COMMUNAL RIOTS IN GODHRA**

Historically speaking, Ghanchis were supporters of Muslim League and were militant and aggressive during pre-partition period. This was disliked by the Hindus in Godhra. The incoming Sindhi refugees from Pakistan in 1948, brought along with them a lot of gory details and stories of violence and sufferings of Hindus across the border. The Hindus of Godhra were keen on seeing Ghanchis flee to Pakistan. Vaman Rao Mukadam, a Hindu communalist organized and initiated a communal campaign of contempt against Ghanchis asking them to leave Godhra. A communal riot broke out in 1948 and huge number of Muslim properties, shops and houses was burnt or destroyed. This was a very major riot, still remembered by Muslims. Many Ghanchis ran away leaving their houses behind which Sindhis in turn occupied. In all there have been so far 5 major incidents of riots in Godhra since 1948. The ones of 1965 and 1980-81 were of major consequences.

In 1965, Sindhis began riots and burnt down about sixty houses of Muslim Ghanchis. Two Ghanchi Muslims were stabbed by rioters and two were shot by police. The Sindhis bought up the deserted properties of Ghanchis in "distress sale." Sindhis began these communal riots out of a situation of desperation and frustration. Ever since their arrival, they were not so favourably received by local population including Hindus. The arrival of Sindhis made the housing problem acute and shortage of housing accommodations began to be felt. They were also brazen and pushy in illegally

occupying the municipal or government land for erecting the cabins for petty trade. This had annoyed both the communities. Hindus were not giving housing accommodation on rent because of their being non-vegetarians and of low socio-economic status. As against this, there is no difference between Ghanchis and Sindhis. In fact, on several occasions the two have joined hands. The search for support has cut across communal animosities between them while capturing positions in cooperative banks or municipal offices. Abdul Rehman Khalpa of Congress (I) was supported by Sindhis.

Sindhis as such had no major problem of business or trade competition with Ghanchis as the occupational pursuits of both were different, hardly ever generating confrontation. Sindhis competed with Hindus and successfully captured the grain trade known as **Kirana**. Muslim Ghanchis also formed a major part of their clientele, as they sold grains on a bit cheaper rates than Hindus, mainly in order to achieve monopoly. Besides, Ghanchis have also been borrowers from Sindhi money-lenders. Their dwellings are also in close neighbourhoods. This economic and political collaboration between the two communities in 1970s minimized communal tension and there was no incidence of tension or riot. But this could not have lasted for long because there was also a third party interest involved, namely of Hindu businessmen. Hindus would not now fight a communal riot against Muslims in Godhra and therefore Sindhis were the only section left to be wooed. The Hindus succeeded in weakening the collaboration.

## **1980 RIOTS IN GODHRA**

These (October 1980) riots took place because of a quarrel between the Sindhi and Ghanchi handcart owners, mainly on an issue of positioning of their respective handcarts. This was again a spark which set the town ablaze on communal lines. The escalation of riot was equally contributed to by both. Properties, house and shops were burnt or destroyed. A five-member family of Sindhi money-lender was burnt alive along with its huge "unpartable" (Ghanchi rioters are said to have asked the Sindhi family to come out of house, but they did not heed) cash and valuables. A Sindhi under-

world trade kingpin, Lachhu, led a mob and retaliated under police protection causing immense destruction of properties of Ghanchis and Bohras. Police also played a partisan role in favour of Hindus. A constable shot at an innocent Muslim boy of 17, killing him and then getting honoured by Hindus with a purse of Rs. 1,000. The attacks were also made on Muslim places of worship, shops, schools, houses, etc.

Second bout of riot came in March 1981. The Sindhis collected funds for construction of trade premises of their fellow members. The scheme was to rebuild concrete constructions for converting the old wooden cabins into the pucca shops for Sindhis near railway station. Sindhi Panchayat had secured collective permission for construction. This was resented by Muslims because a Bohra trader was denied similar permission on the grounds of roadwidening plans. Before riots, the whole scheme was dropped by municipal authorities, but after riots it was approved, leaving out the sole Bohra businessman on untenable grounds. Nuruddin, the Bohra businessman, was ready to give up fifteen feet for roadwidening, but in vain. Nuruddin's shop originally was situated on a disputed piece of land. A Parsi, was given the land on lease for 99 years by a Hindu temple trust. The lease was soon to end and the temple trust after taking back the land wanted to construct a temple. The trust approached municipality for permission. Sindhis came out with an idea to construct a Gurudwara on the same land for the benefit of many Sikh truck-drivers who pass through daily on the national highway, although, in Godhra there were a very few Sikh families. Thus the real business or economic issues were hidden behind religious ones. The atmosphere of mutual distrust and politicking between Sindhis and Ghanchis continued, eluding them all of any real solution. The matters were dragged to courts and attempts were made for making some compromises but to no success.

In the arena of municipal politics, the communal politics manifested itself in the struggle for winning of support for the alliances securing the position of the municipal president. The voting was done purely on communal lines. In a municipal council of 35 members in 1981, there were 22 Hindus, 13 Muslims (of this 12 were Ghanchis and one was Bohra). Earlier to this, during the peaceful

collaboration between Sindhis and Ghanchis, they had aligned and elected their president. This had offended Hindus. This time it was decided without the Muslim consensus and quite before the election by meeting separately. This was disliked by the Muslim members and they walked out of the municipal proceedings in a joint meeting. This created intense animosity and as a result, the ensuing municipal by-election was fiercely contested in March 1981. The election campaign of Muslims was organized around two issues of municipal permission to Sindhi Panchayat for constructing pucca shops and the betrayal during the election of municipal president. The construction work of pucca shops was scheduled to start on by-election day in a mainly Ghanchi dominated locality. The crowds of voters had collected for voting in by-election. The Ghanchi voters came to know that the shops were being fitted with shutters etc. and immediately rushed to the spot and protested. The Sindhi and other councillors left the place. It soon developed into a riot. The Sindhi shops were looted. Attacks and counter-attacks followed. On June 1981, there was incidence of mob violence near civil hospital. Ghanchi and Hindu boys clashed over an issue of dairy-milk queue. In July-August, rumours were spread that the attacks were planned against the Muslims. It was feared curfew would be imposed resulting in prevention of the Id celebration. Again attacks and counter-attacks followed. There was a strong rumour in the city that the Muslim houses would be attacked while Muslim males are away for namaz. It is alleged that one police inspector Bhogal entered the mosque with his men to beat up the namazis. The police entered with shoes on and they insulted the Koran. Police entered at three places of worship and beat up or arrested the inmates. As it happens, Bhogal became a hero for Hindus and villain for Muslims. He was quite ruthless and terror to Muslim households, as he is said to have ordered SRP jawans in Muslim/Bohra houses to beat the ladies.

This situation was going on for almost a year and people on either side were tired of tension, roit and curfews. Both the communities had heavily suffered for so long and some mutual understanding was necessary to strike a formula for peace. By September 1981, they had arrived at a settlement and no more major skirmishes were reported. Though constitutionally Indian polity and democratic



process is secular, in real practice it is reduced to extremely communalistic considerations and decision-making. The Indian social structure reflects strong persistence of traditional, casteist, sectarian and communalist tendencies. The electoral process further encourages and strengthens them. The communal tension and riots in Godhra were preceded by communal politics involving economic competition and petty trade rivalries. The economic issues were sometimes implicitly and at times explicitly at play. However, it can not be denied that the religious factors are equally at play in determining intensity of violence and fury, although of secondary significance. Economic issues alone are not determinants of origin or course of a riot.

### **COMMUNAL RIOTS IN BARODA**

Baroda is a third biggest city with a population of 7.5 lakhs (1981 Census) in the state. It was a capital during Gaekwad rule. The citizens of Baroda even today regard Maharaja Sayaji Rao, III with awe and respect. He was known for his enlightened and popular rule. He was also famed for his radical socio-economic outlook and measures. Baroda today cherishes old memories in the form of several monumental and pioneering institutions. After Independence, Baroda passed through a phase of politics of a medium size city till 1965. During these fifteen years, the city did not achieve any important distinctions but carried on its civic affairs in the old tradition, often with nostalgic indulgence in local press and forums about the great old people-oriented rule of Gaekwads. Baroda is also known as a university town as it has fairly reputed residential Maharaja Sayajirao University with a teaching staff of about 2200 and 25,000 students, in about 80 departments of ten faculties. An institution of such a size can hardly be oblivious to the sociopolitical issues of the town. In fact, it is a forum and soundboard for many civic battles between local and state politicians.

The twin processes of industrialisation and urbanization since 1965 have changed the face of the city. The old social structure has given way to the new constituents. The local power structure has also greatly changed. It has now achieved an important distinction of a highly industrialized and the highest polluted region of the state

(Patel, 1982). The traditional arenas of political competitions in Baroda are witnessing new incumbents. The recent industrial growth has posed new challenges to the civic administration. The glorious past is now less and less referred to as the new requirements have out-sized the capabilities of old institutions proving them quite inadequate. Baroda mainly has population of Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Muslims, Sindhis, Harijans, Bhois etc. It essentially remains a city populated and dominated by middle classes. Comparatively, the Barodians are quite well politicized and are conscious of their civic and consumer rights. However, it is anti-Muslim and intolerant as far as the promotions of Hindus to the important positions or offices are concerned. It has strong bases for RSS among the middle class Maharashtrai, Gujarati and Sindhi communities. Before Independence in late thirties, there was surprisingly a communal riot between Gujaratis and Marathas. In 1969 too, Baroda was in flames alongwith state-wide breakout of communal riots. From September 1981 till December 1982, Baroda had the worst bout of communal tension and riots. The intensity varied from one incidence to the other and there were also spells of lull. For quite some time, it had also remained narrowly localized in a few areas of the city but a few major incidents were extremely disastrous and highly destructive.

## **SOCIO-COMMUNAL COMPOSITION OF BARODA**

We already made a mention of religious-linguistic composition in Baroda. Gujaratis and Marathas are predominant segments of Baroda population. Patidar, Bania and Brahmin are the dominant Gujarati castes. There are 52 per cent Gujaratis and 35 per cent Marathas as it was an erstwhile Maratha State. The Gujarat upper castes do not actively participate in riots. Marathas are traditional rivals of Muslims and they directly take part in riots. But this time it was not so. Bhois (also known as Kahars) were the main participants in the riots.

Muslims in Baroda, about 12 to 14 per cent of the total population, are extremely poor, backward and conservative. Bohras, as at other places, are quite advanced and well-to-do. Alvi and Dudhwala

Jamat, both sections of Bohras are in business (Engineer, 1982, p. 1845). About 75 to 85 per cent of the Muslims are extremely poor. The 1981-82 Baroda riots were not only between Hindus and Muslims but mainly were between Bhoi and Muslim anti-social or underworld elements, backed by rival political factions in ruling party as well as the opposition parties too. The task of explaining the forces behind Baroda communal riots necessitates tracing of a historical relationship between several actors like politicians and den-runners or illicit liquor-sellers, politicians and police and illicit liquor-sellers and police. The details of this relationship would be described in the next section.

Bhois or kahars need an introduction as they have a peculiar socio-economic history. They are said to have migrated from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. They are Hindus and were brought and settled in Baroda State by the former princely rulers of Baroda. They were palanquin-carriers in the palace. The Bhois are nonvegetarian and easy-going. Bhoi males are lazy and fond of gambling whereas Bhoi females are industrious and earn from fish-selling to a mix clientele of Marathas, Sindhis and Muslims. The old job of carrying palanquins in the palace did not last long as the mode of transport gradually changed for better. A section of Bhois continued working for other chores of the palace but the greater part of the community was left out for other jobs like fishing and selling the catch. They have today also come to be known as fishermen community. The Bhoi males get employment as daily wage labourers or workers, Bhois are numerically a very small segment of the city's population and therefore, are hardly able to make any significant impact on the electoral outcomes except in the local elections. Unlike, the Bhoi males, Bhoi females are more responsible to their household in the matters of regular working and earning. The Bhoi women, alongwith fish, also sell vegetables. Some work as maid-servants in Gujarati upper class households in the housing societies around their localities. The Bhoi involvement in liquor-trade is an interesting tale. Till last generation, there was hardly any education among Bhois, even today Bhois face tremendous socioeconomic backwardness.

At the same time it must also be mentioned that the Bhois have also taken to industrial jobs in local industries. Mr. Shital Prasad Bhoi, Secretary of Baroda District unit of Communist party of India

informs: "the Bhois are getting modernized, educated and 'civilized'. They are no more backward or lazy as generally believed by the people. They go to schools and colleges and take up competitive jobs". In Baroda, Bhois are concentrated mainly around Pani Darwaja, Navapura and on the periphery of Yakutpura, where Muslims are thickly concentrated. Bhois live in a highly congested, old and kuchha houses in clusters. There are also some Bhoi families which have cycle-repair and **pan-bidi** shops. Their involvement in the liquor-trade in one or the other capacity has brought about a substantial socio-economic changes modelled on the living standards, styles of higher castes. The objects and articles of middle class household consumption have begun to be seen in their homes. Several voluntary youth associations or street or area organizations have been formed to take care of communitarian concerns like organizing religious festivals and celebration among Bhois. Bhois have been under Sanskritizing influence of Marathas for two reasons. One that Marathas have been their customers for fish, liquor and sex (so were Muslims too). Secondly, Marathi life style and religious practices of celebrating Ganesh Festival were emulated by them. As they partly hailed from Maharashtra, the Bhois feel quite akin to Baroda-Marathas. Marathas were the former ruling class of Baroda and the members of the ex-ruling princely family are even today received in Bhoi residential areas with special significance and reverence, reflecting respect and regard for old ties with the palace. Economic breakthrough was achieved by Bhois from their involvement in making, transporting and selling illicit liquor.

## **LIQUOR-SELLERS, POLITICIANS AND POLICE :**

### **A PRE-RIOT PROFILE OF RELATIONSHIP**

It is a public knowledge that despite having prohibition policy in Gujarat, the production, consumption and smuggling in of illicit liquor in the state continues on a big scale. This is so mainly because of the protective backing from politician, press and police. In connivance with these three agencies, the transaction of illicit liquor trade has assumed gigantic scale in Baroda as well as in state. According to one police source, the alliance and understanding between these three was so close that by August 1981, there existed about 35 big

and 60 small dens of liquor in Baroda. Liquor worth Rs. 1 lakh was sold daily in Baroda city under the advance-negotiated and assured protection of police and politicians who in turn, got Rs. 60 lakhs a year as *Haftas* (periodically fixed amount). We shall briefly describe the growth of illicit liquor production, transportation and selling process vis-a-vis the communities involved. This we do because Baroda riots have their roots in the clashes that originated out of the shifting nature of and brutal competition in running liquor dens by socio-economically more or less at par communities of Bhois/Kahars, Muslims and Marathas. For a long time, the communal riots of Baroda were only a gang-war between rival liquor-trading and (politically) differently connected underworld groups. It was of small scale in terms of area and population involved. While the tension and violence continued intermittently, for most of the time, the larger parts of city were riot-free and normal. The local press was reporting the growing tension and regular incidents of gang-clashes between these groups before they took the form of a big riot. Police raids on rival dens of bootleggers had also increased. This was concomitant to the growing local and state level factional infights among the rival groups of dissidents and ruling factions of the Congress (I) party. The first incidence of communal riot was recorded on 13 September 1931. But it is interesting to know as to what happened before this date. A brief pre-riot profile of several forces at play in communal politics is attempted here.

Liquor-trade was a traditional monopoly of Jaiswals in Baroda who are also known as Kalal. They flourished till Independence. The policy of prohibition adversely affected them. Today only 3-5 per cent of trade is in their hands. An aged Kalal explained this change as below :

Prohibition (policy) brought our ruin. Open selling (of liquor) became impossible. Continuing the sale illegally was possible for a brief time but finally it invited lot of harassment from police. They would dishevel the whole household to unearth the hidden liquor and on top of that would beat us in public, handcuff or abuse us with the choicest selection which no male would like to hear in front of his womenfolk at home. This was very humiliating to us. Gradually, our control slipped

away in the hands of Bhoitas (for Bhois), Miya (Muslims) and Marathas who worked as our employees till then. These incultured people could swallow the insults and police assaults on their self-respect as well as body. They have made money with much worse quality product and played with the innocent lives. Kalals never did this. They made and sold liquor which was good to the health.

However, there were some Jaiswal families which carried on this business under political protection of an ex-Mayor and ex-MLA in Baroda. Election Money for fund used to compensate for such favours from politicians. Traditionally, Shiapura, Navapura, Yakutpura and Baranpura were the main areas of liquor-sale. One pashlo Bhoi, had made interesting arrangement with police. In Bavachawad near Pani Gate, he sold liquor just behind the Bavachawad police station in a broad day light. The secret of his success was that Pashabhai Bhoi was sort of a barman at the liquor-den. The den was owned and protected by a policeman in the police station. This policeman used to collect daily Rs. 400 to Rs. 500. In case of Ismail, such an arrangement could not become possible in the same area. And so he was driven out to rural outskirts. He began humbly but later captured some market in Baroda. The liquor in most of the cases, was produced outside and smuggled into the city for sale by human carriers on cycles, autorickshaw, state transport buses, carts, trucks, jeeps, or on foot. We shall further know about the socio-economic background of these human carriers of liquor.

Producing liquor in peripheral rural outskirts of the city was far easy and safe than bringing and selling it in the city. The city police was a formidable hurdle to cross successfully. In case of being caught, physical beatings, harassment and imprisonment followed. Illiterate and socially backward persons did this job. A greater number of these liquor-smugglers opted for this risky job because, in absence of any viable alternative, it assured them of greater rewards in time of unemployment. A case-experience of one Muslim liquor-seller is interesting and indicative of such a process at work. In early 1960s, he smuggled liquor on rented cycle. In mid 1960s, he took rickshaws to smuggle liquor on daily rental basis. This was stopped by rickshaw-owners as he was caught by police bringing liquor and

the owners of rickshaws were detained. He managed to purchase a rickshaw and carried on the smuggling till 1970. He purchased one more rickshaw and gave it on daily rent. He also found idling youngsters of his areas ready to do his work. He was convinced that selling liquor was a more stable, comfortable and rewarding job. So ultimately he became liquor-seller. He also procured "Sahablog's Daru". There was a windfall as he and his trade thrived. This whole process had finally brought him closer to the local police and municipal corporators of his areas. His status rose. He came to be known as Seth in his Mohalla and community. In early 1980s, he purchased a truck. He is also respected as a religious man as on appropriate religious occasions he presses his truck in community or Mohalla-service. This is a career-truck of a carrier or smuggler of liquor. He was also asked whether did he ever try for other respectable jobs in early young days. His reply was revealing :

Those days in Baroda, only Alembic, Sarabhai and Ajabdi (cloth) mill were there. Many in our Mohalla used to try for jobs at these places but were given temporary employment or were rejected. Everything goes well till they come to know that you are a "miyabhai". The practice in Baroda in other small industries is that the Sindhi employs Sindhi, Bania employs Bania, Patel employs Patels or other Hindus, but hardly Muslim job-seekers. I saw my liquor-carrying friends in neighbourhood, spending lavishly on gamble, liquor, films and eatables. I was initially drawn into it due to this temptation.

Some other Muslim respondent also said the same thing in different context. They would prefer their children to get into business like cycle-repair, pan-bidi shop, hotels, auto-garage, transport, rickshaw-driving etc. rather than wasting time in education and finally remaining jobless. A refined Muslim respondent, with upper middle class background and speaking chaste and pleasing Urdu, is owning a cycle-repair shop and he considers himself as a member of status society with having symbols of high-living like: T.V., music system, sparkling furniture, freeze, etc. All this was possible due to, as he informed, his smuggling in and supplying "phoren" liquor (does not mean produced out of country but made in any Indian state other than Gujarat).

By 1965, Jaiswals were losing the interest in trade. The carriers of liquor also saw a scope and prospect to rise if they could start selling liquor themselves. So a few of them opened up a small scale dens in their localities or houses. There was a constant upward occupational mobility among those involved in liquor-trade at the lower rungs. Many carriers emulated this shift-over from liquor-carrying to liquor-selling. Marathas were new traders alongwith a few Muslims. Bhois worked as carriers for both. Till mid-1970s Bhois and Muslims had excellent socio-economic relations. This was not on the basis of communal identity. Bhois, besides working for Muslims, also drank and gambled at Muslim dens. But in next ten years, this relationship changed into communally hostile and violent one. We shall briefly examine it.

Around mid-1970s, the Muslims and Marathas had established monopoly over liquor-selling and running gambling dens. Bhois are the oldest in trade. They too began expanding their trade. They opened up a few more dens in Muslim areas, adversely affecting the business of already existing Muslim dens. Muslims were offended at this. The Marathas managed to strike an understanding with Bhois and agreeably earmarked areas of mutual liquor-trade. Muslims sensed this plot. The Muslims suspected that Bhois were encouraged and wooed by Marathas to challenge their monopoly. One more development must be noted to understand this developing situation of Bhois' estrangement from Muslims.

Before September 1931, Gujarat witnessed caste-riots over an issue of reservations for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in educational and employment opportunities. This was essentially a Hindu-Harijan caste riot. Harijan conversions, in one or two instances, to Islam had infuriated the Hindus all over the country. Baroda Hindus, being sensitive, opposed and criticised the Muslims for using gulf money for conversions and wooing Harijans'. The middle class localities of Baroda were involved in these riots. At the end of these six-month caste riots the discussion had begun as to why Harijans should not become Muslims and remain with Hindus. In Baroda, the orthodox and higher caste Hindu bogy of professionals like university teachers — professors, doctors, lawyers,



industrial and government job-doers, though in minority, were worried about this development. Some Hindu ideologues of this variety saw Muslims as threats to Baroda in future, as a huge complex of religio-cultural nature was coming up in Baroda from the donations from Muslim countries. The fear was that this centre would be used for anti-national and anti-social purposes. One leading Hindu ideologue in Baroda reflected on this as follows :

Baroda's strategic importance has increased many-fold as it houses vital industries of the nation. Air-spacewise, it is quite within the striking-range of Pakistan Air Force. It is already known that the religious places are invariably used for political purposes when a particular community is in crisis. There are reports that *mazars* and *masjids* are used as hide-outs for weapons and its users as in Golden Temple in Punjab. If the cultural complex of Muslims comes up in Baroda, it will pose problems of national security because they can use the place for all sorts of anti-national objectives. Once the structure comes up, it would then be difficult to keep it under meaningful surveillance. The religious and secular sentiments would be evoked and the culprits would get away with the misdeeds.

Muslims in Baroda have begun to be viewed as future threats to Hindus. Maratha liquor-traders did not want Ehois to remain with Muslims. The Ehois were quite carefully "separated" from their one-time close Muslim partners. Yakutpura, a fully Muslim dominated and inhabited part of the city, was the main centre of riots. One boot-legger named Moosa was a terror to the area. He had secured the backing of the deputy Mayor of Baroda Municipal Corporation. His rise in liquor-trade was also phenomenal. His local political and police connections were his strength in the trade. He was with the anti-Solanki faction of the ruling party. Yakutpura was an assured vote-bank in local elections and therefore, vested political interests developed and thrived around it. Moosa is a local hero due to his reputation as a man of use to the community as he is well-connected. Vocationally, Moosa is only a door-keeper in a cinema house. However, he is a feared underworld character of the area. Bawamanpura is another centre of liquor-trade. Like Moosa and Muslims in Yakutpura, Gokul Kahar and Ehois are in this area. Both are

extremely poor sections engaged in such illegal activities as boot-legging, gambling, prostitution, narcotics and black-marketing of cinema tickets etc. Gokul reigns in this area in the same manner as Moosa in Yakutpura. Both have common political patrons and protectors. Both respected each other's trade-interests and did not interfere. Gradually, Gokul succeeded in building up relations with the local political heavyweights who are close to the ruling party and especially to pro-Solanki faction. This created rift between Moosa and Gokul.

According to one source, police, politicians and boot-leggers entered into such a deal of understanding that it created a conflict among ruling party members about the sharing of the income from boot-legger's "contributions". Bandukwala's version hints at this :

It is no wonder that Muslims and Ehois, both very poor, are involved as underlings in boot-legging activities. But the patronage and control extends far beyond them, usually in the hands of sophisticated and socially accepted figures. The daily turnover of each of these boot-legging centres runs into tens of thousands of rupees . . . . these addas are able to . . . . corrupt and control both the local police and the local youths . . . . To the tragedy of Baroda, this essential link for some control over these addas; collapsed with the rise to power of a person [Mr. Ashok Bhogilal Patel] with very intimate links with the Chief Minister on one side, and the boot-leggers of Baroda on the other. Since then . . . . these boot-leggers effectively control the Baroda police (Bandukwala, 1982, p. 3).

Shiva Kahar is yet another king of liquor-trade. He is most powerfully connected with the local politicians of pro-Solanki side. He was a terror even to co-traders like Moosa and Gokul. He was feared even by police officers of middle rank as he influenced their placements and transfers. Shiva is located in Bachucharwad. He is treated as a lord of all dens of liquor and gambling in Baroda. Eversince the rise of Mr. Solanki in the Congress (I) party, especially after 1977. Mr. Ashok Bhogilal Patel, a Patidar of Kheda district, also rose to heights of influence in Baroda. Ashok Bhogi's background is quite chequered and interesting. He was, as his one time

friends and neighbours inform, a pauper and did not have a house of his own in the city. He was a dullard at studies in college. But he inherited huge wealth and properties from his parents in Africa. He was living quiet life in Baroda. He became treasurer of Congress (I), namely of GPCC. This had infuriated several Congress (I) leaders of Baroda and the State, but due to his proximity to the then President of the GPCC (Mr. Solanki), he was tolerated. After the 1980 General Assembly elections, Mr. Solanki became Chief Minister of Gujarat. He faced dissent from within over several issues before and after the elections. The faction fight took several ugly forms, but Solanki faction always scored over its rival faction led by high caste Congress leaders from within the Government and Party. Sanat Mehta is one of the prominent dissenters from within the Government. He is number 2 in the state Cabinet. He belongs to anti-Solanki faction. Memon Muslims of Mugalwada and Wadi areas in Baroda are his traditional finance and vote-bases as he is a Baroda-product. Ashok Bhogi was removed from his position as the dissidents brought pressure from top on Mr. Solanki.

Solanki faction also wanted to hit at the base of his rivals. Sanat Mehta was allegedly singled out for this as there were other forces too in operation to create a riot situation and massive problems of law and order. Ashok Bhogi accelerated his underworld connections through one of his leading lackeys, Kisan Thakor, an idler and having a record of imprisonment for stoning Tazia in the past. He was a link between Ashok Bhogi and Shiva Kahar. Shiva Kahar was imprisoned for gang-violence in street and provided with all comforts including liquor in prison. He is alleged to have charged a good deal of money to ambitious police officers for postings of their choice. The boot-leggers were "charged" a sum for having in their areas such police officers who are conducive to their trade. This double-benefit scheme was a great success. Certain PSIs protected only Hindu den-runners, i.e. of Marathas and Bhois and raided the Muslim dens. They will catch the rickshaws of Muslim liquor-sellers and allow the other's to smuggle in liquor. Muslim den-runners found this suffocating as they were helpless. Thus, police became party to communal politics, not only for the anti-Muslim prejudices but also because of the economic rewards in the form of *Haftas*.

Narendra Tiwari, a Socialist Party worker and ex-leader of university students in Baroda, informed that a stiff competition among police officers of middle rank began like a rat-race for winning maximum political favour from politicians or from those who are close to them for securing lucrative postings. As a result, there was a massive erosion of police credibility among the people as well as the politicians and the den-runners. The policemen were taken for granted. As a result, the Baroda police stooped very low in public image. The small den-runners came out on the streets to sell their liquor and gambling dens were running almost openly. In certain areas, one invariably saw barrels or huge earthen pots of liquor kept on the streets. In a few areas citizens protested but were victimised and threatened with dire consequences. Police informed the local **dadas** (den-running hotheads) about such complaints coming in. In one case, a Bhoi den-runner was asked by a PSI to keep his trade-stuff (barrel, glasses etc.) inside the house and not on the street. This Bhoi immediately asked him whether **Haftas** reach him in time! Actually, the rival den-runners in the area had filed a complaint to the police to reduce the opponent's business. It was ironically understood that a visit of police officer means increase in **Haftas**!

Gujarati and Marathi police officers earned a very bad name among the Muslims. Muslims frankly feared the collaboration between police and the Marathi and Bhoi den-runners. They tried a few political levers to transfer communally oriented police officers and get some neutral police officers. They tried this through Mr. Gulam Mewan, a "fast friend" of a Cabinet Minister and Secretary, Gujarat Chapter of All-India Muslim Majlis-Mushawarat. Tremendous competition for liquor-sale grew. The police officers are said to have informed the Hindu den-runners about their transfer being demanded by Muslim den-runners. The raids on Muslim dens increased. This gave way to clashes between rival liquor-den owners, initially on a low-key. Police remained passive and uninvolved. In May 1981, Shiva Kahar was arrested for such group clashes. Shiva also was a handy tool in the hands of local Solanki faction men for inciting communal riots.

Thus, one sees that the whole organization of the liquor-trade had been on communal lines. The liquor-trade was peacefully con-

ducted so long as there was no economic shrinkage of markets for liquor. But increase in number of liquor-dens on one hand, and factional infights in the ruling party on the other hand, provided the ground for giving violent communal turn to the issue. For a long time these gangs were left to themselves for settling scores. This bred individualized and localized violence. Rival den-runners leaked out the rickshaw numbers (carrying liquor **Kheps** (cargo) ) to the Special Prohibition Squads, which began to strike and raid dens, surpassing the local police stations. This squads are usually ruthless and strict. Their raids created a lot of misunderstanding among the rival den-runners and police officers.

Before the election and around 1978-79, P. K. Dutta was DSP of Baroda City. He is a terror to illicit liquor trades. His image is that of a upright and unsparing police officer. Dutta is favourite among the Muslims as he is accepted as a neutral officer in a situation of communal riot. During his tenure, open gambling, liquor-selling and black-marketing of cinema tickets was minimum. Many dens had then folded up. He proved himself to be a virtual terror to anti-social elements of both the worlds, i.e. upper and under! This displeased many political and business vested interests around liquor-trade as well as in other trades. He came into confrontation with the head of anti-prohibition (AP) Squad in Baroda, who was very corrupt and anti-Muslim. This head of A.P. Squad bypassed the DSP and used to act on his own. Shortly, he became very rich. Dutta reprimanded him and finally sought his transfer, but in the process he got transferred. It is said that the A.P. Squad head had strong links with a member of State Ministers.

All that Dutta had done was quickly undone during the tenure of his successor Mr. M. M. Mehta, a Punjabi Hindu officer. According to the inner circles of liquor-trade in Baroda, unlike Dutta, Mehta was a relaxed and liberal man. Liquor-selling reached its peak-sale during his tenure. During his tenure, city police was re-organized into Police Commissionerate. On seniority promotion Mr. Mehta was transferred to Rajkot, and Mr. Rajeshwar Sibbal came as first Police Commissioner of Baroda. Liquor-lords did not want him. In fact, his posting to Baroda was opposed. Demand was made for retaining Mr. Mehta. But the lobby of Senior Police Officers

in Home Department at Gandhinagar pushed Mr. Sibbal to Baroda on seniority basis. He was in Baroda between 2-10-81 to 2-9-82. Sibbal was accepted by the city elites in Baroda but he rendered serious blow to the den-runners of Baroda. He proved to be non-cooperative and quickly his transfer was sought. Of the 18 incidents of communal riots in Baroda between September 1981 to December 1982, 12 occurred during Sibbal's tenure. On 2nd October '82, Baroda had Mr. Jaspal Singh as its second Police Commissioner. His was quite a short tenure of 101 days, which saw record breaking and worst incidents of communal tension and riots in Baroda. He objected to his transfer (from 13th December 1982) and was suspended. P. K. Dutta was brought back again in his capacity as Police Commissioner.

The communal politics of liquor-trade that went on between two tenures of Dutta, was primarily responsible for the riots. Factional activities in ruling party did influence content and course of communal politics and riots in Baroda. The Baroda communal riots are not so far described in detailed chronology of events. A brief mention is made of details of Baroda riots in the next section and Table-1 contains statistical data of death and destruction.

## **INCIDENTS OF RIOTS**

In the foregone pages, we reviewed the pre-riot political processes leading to personalized assaults, attacks and violence among the liquor-traders in the areas of Baroda where liquor and gambling dens were situated. Police played a partisan role. Stray incidents of violence were occurring on a highly localized scale between May-September, 1981. The celebration of religious festivals of Hindus and Muslims, one after the other, provided scope and reasons for riots. There were numerous sparks in the air. Idiotic and otherwise inconsequential incidents of highly personalized nature would immediately acquire the status of a community issue. A word of minor abuse, unintended and unmeant remark about a religious symbol, offending reference to personal habits, mischief in a religious procession, creating lawlessness to prevent celebration of a particular festival by "inviting" curfew-impositions, churning out highly imaginative rumours etc. are a few of the sparks that were at work in Baroda from time to time.

Rise of Muslims in local politics of Baroda was not tolerated by Hindus. We noted that the Muslim den-runners were failing to exert enough political leverage to protect trade from police harassment. The political avenues of Muslim representation were seriously split. The Muslim corporators in a 60 seat General Board of Baroda Municipal Corporation were split after the municipal elections over an issue of position-sharing. The Muslim deputy Mayor had supported a Hindu candidate for Mayorship. There were also a small internal struggle for deputy mayorship within these seven Muslim Councillors. The Hindu Mayor was not able to muster enough support for himself from non-Muslims, so he had agreed to a Muslim as deputy Mayor in return of their support (of all the Muslim Councillors). His position as Mayor, however, remained precarious. He granted civic concessions to the Muslims a bit lavishly. Municipal Corporation was one of the arenas of factional in-fight, wherein Solanki faction had underperformed. Factional rivalries at local level were mounting in the first half of 1981. Protection of minorities was one issue raised at state level to embarrass Solanki Ministry. Communal sentiment were played up in a very tacit manner.

Police and Press played an extremely anti-Muslim role during the riots and literally took part in riots, e.g. in the incidence of Jaspal Singh. He became extremely popular among the Hindus Nalbandwada atrocities. Police was also lionized during the tenure of Baroda. The riots remained uncontrolled for longer periods, causing immense damages to property and human life. The riots at times were one-sided affair. Muslims were angry with their leaders for their failure to help them. A novel feature of Muslim protest that came to fore needs to be highlighted.

Gandhian struggle was launched by the Young Muslim Action Committee under the leadership of Dr. J. S. Bandukwala, a reader in physics Department of M. S. University. They went on relay fast and mobilized the Muslims of both the sexes. They demanded, in brief, resignations, release of those arrested, financial assistance to the affected, and a thorough inquiry. This struggle was a unique feature of Baroda riots. Muslims effectively organized themselves for the first time in such a manner. During the relay fasts, the Police Commissioner was transferred. The post-transfer events are clouded

with many ambiguities. But furious mobs collected at different places and, at midnight, began rioting. This was the worst riot. It lasted for 2-3 days and could not be controlled. Finally, army was called in. The accompanying table shows that riots of 13th December '82 were the worst riots in which the composition of participants had changed as the middle class youth too was involved alongwith others.



**Table-1 : STATISTICS OF**

Phases	Sr. No.	Dates of incidents	Deaths		Injured during riots		
			by firing	by stab- bing	by firing	by stab- bing	by other weapons
I	1	13-9-81	1	3	—	41	74
II	2	16-12-81	—	—	—	—	8
	3	17-12-81	—	—	—	—	—
	4	17-3-82	—	2	—	—	19
	5	26-4-82	1	—	—	—	—
	6	4-5-82	—	—	—	—	1
	7	13-5-82	—	—	—	—	11
	8	19-5-82	2	1	4	—	16
	9	4-6-82	—	—	—	1	1
	10	12-6-82	—	—	—	1	4
	11	18-6-82	—	—	—	—	4
	12	19-6-82	—	—	—	2	—
	13	25-8-82	—	2	—	—	—
III	14	2-10-82	—	—	—	—	—
	15	23-10-82	—	—	22	—	12
	16	27-10-82	7	1	7	20	33
	17	7-12-82	—	1	—	3	—
	18	13-12-82	4	8	3	16	29
<b>TOTAL</b>			15	18	40	84	212

Source : Sandesh (Gujarati Newspaper, Baroda Edition),

## BARODA RIOTS AT A GLANCE

Destruction of properties worth Rs.	Name of the Head of the City Police force	Tenure in office
1,71,492	Mr. M. M. Mehta D.S.P.	Upto 2-10-81
500	Mr. R. Sibbal, (First) Police Commissioner	2-10-81 to 2-9-82
77,435	"	"
150	"	"
4,000	"	"
15,300	"	"
150	"	"
4,100	"	"
700	"	"
4,900	Mr. Jaspal Singh, Police Commissioner	3-9-82 to
3,20,198	"	13-12-82
7,700	"	"
61,00,000	"	"
67,06,621	—	—

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# IS THERE COMMUNALISM IN KASHMIR?

Abdul Ahad

Changes occurring in the realm of ideas, institutions and attitudes, due to unprecedented advances in science, technology and communication, seem to not in the least influence us most Indians. We continue to be wooden headed creatures, living in backwoods with our eyes shut and minds closed to new startling challenges about truth and reality, and refuse to modify our attitudes and institutions in the light of new scientific information.

Not being in the habit of realising our obligations as citizens of India we stick fast to those shameful prejudices<sup>1</sup> which, once upon a time, were introduced by the British to perpetuate their rule. The most shameful form of these prejudices is communalism, a crippling social disease which afflicts our society so vigorously that all strategies, including secularism,<sup>2</sup> fail to combat with it. Making a poor image of our country, the practisants of communalism thus reproduce and reinforce the social relations that prevailed during the *Raj*.

This is not to suggest that India was devoid of communalism before the British *Raj*. It could never have been, because the traditional socio-economic system of India depended mainly on villages which were organised on community basis.<sup>3</sup> In these communities people used and owned property, mainly, comprising land and cattle, collectively.

Being fraught with the consequences of hampering the growth of colonialism and mercantilism, the indigenous communalism was tailored, by the British, to suit their own interest and converted into loyalty to a socio-political grouping based on religious affiliations which strengthened the divide and rule policy.<sup>5</sup>

In the present context, however, communalism, is essentially Hindu-Muslim antagonism; a social phenomenon characterised by religious differences between the two communities often leading to acrimony, tension and even rioting between them. But in its silent form, communalism amounts to discrimination against a religious group in matters of employment, education commerce, politics etc.

Even though these forms of communalism are different enough to be categorised as violent and silent yet they can not be separated as both are based upon the recognition of the existence of separate communities. In both these forms the locus of communalism is placed at the point of tension, either in the shape of discrimination or in rioting, and the two together constitute a phenomenon which hampers the growth of secularism by leading to socio-economic suppression of a religious group. The presumption that one form of communalism is tolerable than another is, therefore, wrong.

Allowing a preference to silent over violent communalism is, in fact, a favourable predilection of most Indians, especially those indulging in politics and who are closely identified with "traditional" ethos. For this predilection — according to which silent communalism is imperceptible enough to produce desired results in a systematic manner without arousing the consciousness of the victim — these Indians are esteemed, and the national bourgeoisie is whole heartedly supporting them to develop it into an ideology.<sup>6</sup>

The ideology thus developed is used to deepen the perception of Indian Society in terms of Hindus and Muslims. The colonial model of knowledge through which is organised the process of education further strengthens this perception,<sup>7</sup> making the ideology more effective to inspire people to remain blindly attached to prejudices against a religious group.

This ideology, needless to say, provides an ideal opportunity to politicians to exploit Hindu-Muslim prejudices — and now Hindu-Sikh prejudices also — enabling them to divide the entire voting pattern on religious lines during elections.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, all political parties, barring a few, are motivated to recruit and reward party loyalists of the populist sort who are more closely identified with arousing communal passions, elevating terrorism into super religious cultures and acts of sabotage and arson.

There can be no better example of the successful working of the communalism than Punjab and Bombay where politicians have played havoc by systematically playing upon the religious susceptibilities of the people for petty political interests, where it has become almost difficult now to secularise politics by keeping it detached from

religion, and where rioting and subsequent killing of innocent people occurred due to politicians who freely mix religion with politics; and where religious fanaticism, obscurantism and jingoism reign supreme because of petty politicians who play their little games unmindful of the dreadful consequences for the rest of society; and where the escalation of communal conflict has resulted in an organised terrorism based on most sophisticated weapons, and where shrines have been converted into forts.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise the Bombay phenomenon was nothing but the offshoot of political rivalries operating there for the last few years. Loot, arson and the destruction of productive forces, which characterised Bombay during recent communal outburst, were all indicators of growing crisis fomented by politicians in alliance with the administrators, slumlords, smugglers and bootleggers.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps it will be no exaggeration to state that in India both communalism and nationalism work together in building up of our ethos, despite their standing as each other's negation. The political alliances between political parties, swearing by nationalism, and communal organisations are pointers to this growing state of affairs to which even class based parties fall prey.<sup>11</sup> This trend is, infact, a legacy of our nationalist movement which recognised communalism as a necessary concomitant of our struggle against colonialism. The Muslim league-congress manoeuvrings illustrate this trend.

We shall have to guard ourselves against this trend otherwise it would generate dangerous political bickerings and even disintegration the consequences of which we have already experienced in 1947.

## ( II )

While it is true that communalism finds its way, either in silent or violent form, in certain parts of the country often resulting in what is not mere law and order problem, it is equally true that it fails to strike its roots in other regions owing to socio-historical conditions obtaining there. Prominent among such regions is, however, the valley of Kashmir where people stick fast to what is called Hindu-Muslim *Jihad*; a phenomenon characteristic of specific social attitudes closely linked with indigenous mores and traditions which



colour people's perceptions and behavioural patterns in an order that negates communalism.

Structured over a long period of time and guarded by a peculiar geographical setting, these attitudes or complexes largely contribute to the making of Kashmir a happy valley; a real paradise on earth distinctly marked by the absence of crimes which play havoc with the most towns and cities of India by nurturing tensions of various dimensions. There are thus, hardly any smuggling dens, underworld hubbub, casteism, huddlum rackets and gangladers who in cities like Bombay are seen financing political, religious and communal organisation in order to obtain social respectability.<sup>12</sup>

Among these attitudes the most commonly held is that neither Muslims nor Pandits are the original inhabitants of Kashmir, the origin of which place is attributed not to Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism but to a long geological process, a process still remembered in the form of a legend.<sup>13</sup> This attitude and belief has resulted in deep longing for what is called *Kashmiriat*; a concept which actuates Kashmiris of all shades to oppose all that aims at wearing away their indigenous mores and complexes preserved by the Article 370,<sup>14</sup> and which perceives the society in terms of Kashmiris rather than Hindus and Muslims. Considering these dimensions of *Kashmiriat*, we shall be justified in arguing that to identify it with "Muslim Chauvinism" is as dangerous for the health of Indian policy as communalism.

The pragmatic concept of *Kashmiriat* which is intimately linked with indigenous ethos, manifests itself in the resentment felt by Kashmiris when history is distorted to highlight the demolition of temples as State Policy of the Sultans of Kashmir.<sup>15</sup> While condemning such distortions they do not hesitate to put the record straight by making it public that like King Harsha, Sultan Sikandar demolished temples for political and economic reasons only.<sup>16</sup> Like Muslims, Pandits bring into focus the examples of Muslim rulers who closed down mosques for public prayers and converted them into stables and stores.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, the tradition of holding shrines and *Khankahas* in great esteem is rooted in the past. Believing that these institutions

have greatly enriched the culture of Kashmir the people both pandits and muslims show great enthusiasm in their up-keep, making generous donations for their repair and decoration so that they remain rendezvouses and general meeting places for times to come. To what extent are these shrines and *Khankahas* venerable is shown by the fact that both Muslims and Pandits are often found swearing by the *Khankaha* of Makhdoom Sahib and the shrine of Tuillamulla; a fact which increasingly frustrates the fanatics and fundamentalists by integrating the two communities so closely that they co-exist as complementary and integral parts of a single common social system.

The resilience shown by Kashmiris, especially Muslims, in making offerings to the dead, in adopting children in case they have none, in tiding strings to shrines, in holding prayers to invoke the blessings of saints and in accepting the share of alms offered to famous Amarnath temple<sup>19</sup> draws our attention to the fact that indigenous social complexes exercise considerable influence on people impelling them to contradict the fundamentalist view of the beliefs and practices which a religious group must adhere to.

Even zealous missionaries of Islam could not conquer these traditions and consequently, they compromised with the circumstances allowing people to retain the local traditions and practices which, despite being heterodox, were validated even by orthodox sufis. Such a gesture inevitably paved the way for reconciliation between forms of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and it is this reconciliation that enables Kashmiri Muslims to dress, eat and behave in the manner that is not antagonistic to indigenous tradition<sup>20</sup>.

There is no denying that this reconciliation between orthodoxy and heterodoxy caused dissent and provoked reactionary elements, conspicuous being emperor Aurangzeb, to labell it as "Kuffor"<sup>21</sup>, but it did not affect the harmonious social relations. Nor did it result in the elimination of complexes responsible for forging a unique culture which expresses itself in coalescing Pandits and Muslims into one. To substantiate this it is pertinent to quote what Jahangir wrote in his Tuzk. He writes :<sup>22</sup>

"Kashmiri Muslims ally themselves with the Hindus and both give and take girls. Taking them is good, but giving them God forbid".

Highlighting the reality poetically, the emperor<sup>23</sup> adds :

“If there is paradise on earth, it is here (Kashmir) it is here”.

Many people overlook the essence of these poetic lines, but for the historian they are of central concern, showing clearly what contributed to the making of peculiar socio-geographical image of Kashmir; an image that continues to endear Kashmiris to those who are capable enough to understand the subtleties of this social reality and cause violent anger to orthodox people. Such anger is reflected in the following proverb frequently used by Punjabis to describe Kashmiris :

**Kashmiree be peere na manja na pir** (Kashmiris who are spiritually misguided, possess neither a cot nor a stool).

Even more contemptuous is the term — ‘bloody Brahmans at heart’ — used by Pakistani fundamentalists to describe the Kashmiris who vehemently protested against the assassination of Mr. Butto and put on the foil the endeavours of the Jamaat-i-Islami to mobilise public opinion in the Valley. If these fundamentalists happen to hear what is sung by women on weddings and other auspicious occasions they would perhaps not hesitate to denounce them as the makers of anti-Islamic culture. One of such songs reads thus :

“Urge on thy steed in every direction I will prepare thy seat in the garden pavilion. On thy right the Koran, on thy left the necklace. Thou art worthy to be called Lalla Gopal”.

Through this song Kashmiri women register ideas of conformity with other religious group. On hearing this Mr. Prinsep remarked :<sup>24</sup>

“Lalla Gopal, one of the names of Krishana, who was supposed to have been the type of loveliness, curious, this, when sung by a Mohammeden”.

Also, it may be borne in mind that Kashmiri Pandits are denounced, by Hindu fanatics and obscurantists, for not subscribing to **Dharama**. Thus, by not attaching any importance to Manus’ law and not agreeing to be divided into **Ksatriya, vaisya and sudra** castes<sup>25</sup> — they constitute a community the members of which are collectively called Pandits — Kashmir Pandits undermine the orthodox Hindu belief-systems and become, like Muslims, the core of a social system based on accretions drawn from the local environment.

To them cow slaughter does not cause any worry, nor do they abstain from eating **halal** meat<sup>26</sup>. Without reservations they employ Muslims as cooks, domestic servants, go-betweens and cremators and thus contradict the established conventions of Hinduism.

The implications of what we discussed above for the understanding of attitudes held by Kashmiris are obvious enough. It is quite clear that Kashmiris are resilient in spirits and impeccable in action and character. They subscribe to a philosophy of life that categorically rejects to accommodate communalism — a philosophy that subordinates institutions evolved in the historical process to a lively sense of living in harmony and makes people more and more Kashmiris and less and less Pandits and Muslims. Embodying potentialities that actualise themselves in situational context, this philosophy cuts at the roots of religious discrimination operating at different levels in certain parts of our country, and thus enables Kashmiris to put greater emphasis on humanism and wage war against inhumanism that gets expressed in communal riots.

It is interesting to know that in the 19th and the beginning of the present century the British strove to violate this philosophy; but they failed to do so because Kashmiris spurned what is called divide and rule policy and revolted against alien rulers<sup>27</sup>, the British<sup>1</sup> surrogates through whom colonialism operated in Kashmir. The fear that the Kashmiris revolt would destroy the alien rule impelled the British to direct their stooges not to hurt Kashmiri sentiments any more. Again it was mainly owing to the potentialities of this philosophy that Kashmiris converted the Muslim conference into the National Conference to seek freedom for betterment of life<sup>28</sup>. Without the unique embodiment of these potentialities of their social philosophy, Kashmiris would not have, perhaps, decided to accede to 'Hindu' India and fight against Muslim Pakistan. Their accession to India is, in fact, very significant for it shows as to how Kashmiris actualised their potentialities within the framework of history and appeared in contemporary history as the most liberal, rational and freedom loving people persistently devoted to what is called secularism. Had they not acceded to India their potentialities would have remained mere essences; essences without expression.

In the present context when the under current of communalism persists in the minds of most Indians, these potentialities manifest themselves in the Kashmiris (Muslims) unflinching hostility to the Jamaat-i-Islami, the Communal organisation wedded to 'erradicate **Kuffor** from the Valley of Kashmir'.

It is only recently that some attempts are being made to suggest that Kashmir has fallen a prey to communalism, and it still remains fashionable to describe Kashmiris as cessionists. Both these presumptions are false and they demonstrate nothing but political hob-nobbing of certain politicians especially those who have been rejected by the people in recent elections. In an attempt to acquire political importance and power, these politicians, are bent upon even describing the resentment felt by Kashmiris against the killings in Bombay as a manifestation of communalism.

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## REFERENCES

1. For these prejudices see Abdul Ahad, **Distortions, Prejudice Link**, New Delhi, April, 18, 1982, PP. 20-21.
2. Secularism is a modern ideology, owing to its misuse by politicians and historians it has lost its significance and meaning to a great extent. It is quite unhistorical to eulogise Akbar, Zin-ul. Abidin and Ranjit Singh as 'secular monarchs' for the term being recent is not applicable to medieval times. For more details see *ibid.*, p. 21.
3. This socio-economic organisation of pre-British India has been analysed by Karl Marx. He says that since remotest times India was characterised by a social system of particular features — the village system which was distinctly marked by the collective ownership of land. Comprising family communities, this system was based on domestic industry "in that particular combination of hand-weaving, hand-spinning and hand-tilling agriculture which gave them self-supporting power". **Marx Engles Lenin on India**, pp. 22-23 India 1975.

4. Ibid; Abdul Ahad, **Muslim Karkhanas of Medieval Kashmir, Islam And the Modern Age**, August, 1983, p. 215 and note 2.
5. In his article, the **British Rule in India and the Future Results of British Rule in India**, Marx has exposed this phenomenon. He states that the British broke the village community system which "had served as the vital link between agriculture and cottage industry". They destroyed it by "breaking up the native industry, by uprooting the native industry, and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction". **Marx Engles Lenin on India**, pp. 8, 28.
6. The national bourgeoisie comprises commercial bourgeoisie, the neo-rich and the professionals; these people support communalism and are always in alliance with orthodox religious leadership and communal organisations for they find them exceedingly useful for acquiring greater economic facilities and political importance.
7. In India education continues to be what it was during the British **Raj**, and education which, apart from producing clerks and deepening ignorance, laid the foundation for a communal interpretation of Indian history and thus provided the historical justification for the two-nation theory. The way intellectual workers are being trained in India is in no way better than the colonial model of education, and it is not therefore surprising that "only ignoramuses come out of them". How can these ignoramuses help to transform the existing conditions? These ignoramuses, who through this colonial model of education learn to become historians or writers, write books merely to deepen the perception of Indian society in terms of Hindus and Muslim. They do not even hesitate to hurt the religious sentiments of people by using derogatory remarks about the life of prophets and **Autars**. For such books see **India Today**, Nov. 30, 1983. pp. 133-34.
8. As a matter of fact politician have a vested interest in keeping people divided along communal lines. In order to perpetuate their class rule, they effectively impeded the unity of people by exploiting religion and by creating prejudices against other

religious groups. This is substantiated by what Prime Minister did at Jammu during the last elections. While playing a "Hindu Card in her speeches to garner Hindu Votes", she said that the resettlement Act would "enable the Muslims to come from that side of the border and occupy your homes and shops". Addressing a news conference, recently Mr. Justice H. M. Beg, Chairman of the minorities commission, said that under the existing political system in the country it was easy to "exploit" religious sentiments and create communal disharmony. That he thought was the root of the present troubles in the country. **Times of India, Delhi, 3 June, 1984.**

9. Analysing the happenings in Punjab Mr. Attar Singh writes : "The tragedy of Punjab lies in the fact that either there were no voices of dissent within the Hindu and the Sikh communities against communalisation of consciousness and politics or they were silenced by the escalation of communal conflict". **Seminar, No. 24 The Punjab Tangle.**
10. Commenting on the situation, Mr. Girilal Jain writes : "Maharashtra is no longer the well administered State it used to be. Politicians in power have played havoc with it especially in recent years. . . . . Bombay has in some ways been ready to move into the 21st Century. But it has political leaders who are straight out of the 18th Century. The two can not match". **The Times of India, Sunday, June 3, 1984.**
11. The left oriented parties eagerly enter into alliances with patently communal parties such as the Muslim League in Kerala, the Akali Dal in Punjab and Jan Sangh in U.P. and Bihar (in 1967).
12. See Giri Lal Jain, *op. cit.*
13. For this Legend see G. M. Sufi. **Kashir, I, India, 1974 (Reprint).**
14. Enumerating the purpose of Article 370, Pandit Nehru said in Parliament on August 5, 1952.  
 "Everybody in Kashmir, to whatever group or community he belongs, wants to uphold indigenous rules in regard to property relationship. Naturally, because they are for the benefit of the residents of Kashmir, whether Hindus or

Muslims. They are afraid that people from India or elsewhere rich people and others might come and buy up property there and thereby gradually all kinds of vested interests would grow up in property in Kashmir on behalf of the outside”.

15. See Abdul Ahad, **Distortions, Prejudices, op. cit.**
16. **Ibid.**
17. **Ibid.**
18. **Ibid, Kashmir Solidarity, Patroit, 13 August, 1973**
19. Abdul Ahad, **Islam in Kashmir : Problems & Prospects** Iqbal institute, Kashmir University (Hijri celebration), 1982-84.
20. **Ibid.**
21. **Ruqqati Alamgiri and Kalimat-i-Aurangzeb (MS), p.9, Vide R. K. Parmu, A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir p. 436, 1969 (India).**
22. **Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri (R&B), II, p.150 ; 1909-14 London.**
23. Jahangir was enamoured of Kashmir, of his unique interest in Kashmir and immense love of its people, it is said that when he lay on his death-bed and was asked to name anything which was dearest to his heart, he said ‘Kashmir’.  
“Az Shahi Jahangir dame nazah chu justand Ba Khawahish-i-dil Guft Ki Kashmir digar hech”.
24. Prinsep, vide Ishaq Khan, **History of Srinagar, p.98, Sgr. 1978.**
25. Caste-rules do not operate in Kashmir, from time immemorial, as they do in other parts of the country. For details see Kalhana, **Rajatarangini (Tr. Stein), Vols. I & II, India, 1975 (Reprint).**
26. **Kashmir : Solidarity, Op. cit.**
27. For this revolt, see Abdul Ahad, **The Origin of Shawl Industry, Chapt. Conclusion, Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University, Srinagar.**
28. Abdul Ahad, **Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Sheri-i-Kashmir Number, Cultural Academy, Srinagar 1983.**



# COMMUNAL POLITICS IN KASHMIR

By

RIYAZ PUNJABI

The Jammu and Kashmir State is constituted of three different regions. viz; Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The geo-political-cultural profile of one region varies from the other region. The three regions of the State merit separate studies regarding the study of communal politics in post independent era in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. However, this paper makes a brief appraisal of growth of communal politics in Kashmir valley alone.

Kashmir valley has a pre-dominant muslim community with a percentage of 94% of population who profess the faith of Islam. The valley holds a pivotal position geo-politically and it is the most homogenous region of the State socio-culturally. The 89% of the people of the valley have Kashmiri as their mother tongue. The features of Islam in Kashmir are quite different and unique than the features of Islam found elsewhere in the country. It is worthwhile to mention here that Maharaja Hari Singh — the last monarch of the State, Hindu Sabha of Jammu, Kisan Mazdoor Sabha (led by Pt. P. N. Bazaz), Kashmir Socialist Party, Radical Democratic Party of India (founded by M. N. Roy), Communist Party of India and Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference were all against the Kashmir's accession with India for their own different reasons. Kashmir, under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah acceded to India in 1947. Kashmir is the only State with such a pre-dominant muslim population which opted for Indian dominion.

Kashmir has no history of communal violence so far. During the communal holocaust of 1947, Kashmir maintained its proverbial communal amity which, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, provided a "Ray of Hope" in the dark sub-continent. Jammu region of the State did witness a large scale communal violence and even some Kashmiri muslims were massacred during these riots. However, these events had no repercussions in the Kashmir valley.

The dismissal of Sheikh Abdullah as Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State in 1953 changed the socio — political scenerio of the State and of the valley in particular. The estrangement of relations between Union and the State gave rise to a new political situation. However, the communal amity between the different communities was not disturbed inspite of tribulations in the valley.

### **Emergence of Jamiat-I-Islami :**

The early sixties witnessed the emergence of Jamiat-i-Islami as a cultural organization. Jamiat-i-Islami confined its activities to cultural and literary spheres in the beginning. The organization opened schools, libraries and study centres. It also conducted religious oriented seminars and discussions. In the meantime, the ruling party of the State, which had neither mass base nor any cadres among the people, was keen to potray 'democracy at work' in Kashmir. By manipulating such a situation the party wanted to give the semblance of democracy. It is also a fact that they wanted to make a dent in the popularity of National Conference and its leader Sheikh Abdullah. Therefore, Congress (I) started hobnobbing with Jamiat-i-Islami. With this, Jamiat-i-Islami emerged as a political force in Kashmir. They declared their intentions to contest the assembly election in 1971 and subsequently won five assembly seats with the connivance of Local Congress (I). The ex-Congress (I) Chief Minister of the State, Syed Mir Qasim makes no secret of this alliance and openly admits that these seats were conceded to Jamiat-i-Islami by Congress (I). The presence of members in the legislative assembly provided Jamiat-i-Islami with an opportunity to strengthen its cadres in rural as well as urban areas of Kashmir. Their youth wing become active and would, by one way or the other, make their persons felt in Schools, Colleges and University. The Jamiat was highly successful in penetrating among the ranks of educated youth in the valley. The communal riots in post independents India and the deplorable conditions of Indian Muslims was their common ploy to attract young educated Muslims to their cadres. The Jamiat-i-Islami was routed in 1977 assembly election when National Conference participated in the elections for the first time after 1953 episode. The participation of National Conference was a sequel to Indira-Abdullah Accord of 1975. However, in this election, Jamiat retained one seat

in one of its stronghold in Sopore town of Kashmir, Ironically, Local Congress (I) contested all other seats but did not contest this seat. The Vice-President of the Local Pradesh Congress (I), who had been the party candidate from this constituency all along, did not contest the election. It is worthwhile to mention here that the campaign carried on by different political parties did have communal overtones. This election put proverbial communal harmony in the valley under strain. But the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah, who had been the great champion of communal harmony, did not allow the relations to get worse.

### **Communal harmony under strain :**

In the All India perspective, it can be easily visualized that how the political parties sharpen the communal identities to their political advantage. The 1983 Assembly Election in the valley saw that some political parties sharpen these identities in Kashmir and put the historical communal harmony under strain. The political parties, particularly the Pradesh Congress (I) tried to communalize the situation to its advantage. The direction had been already provided by the Congress High Command two years ago when its leaders made a statement in Jammu alleging that minorities (meaning non-muslims) were not safe in Kashmir. Before these elections, an attempt was made to bring about electoral alliance between Congress (I) and National Conference. However, the alliance did not materialize. The election strategy was framed to divide the people on communal and ethical lines. The Local Congress (I) candidates were awarded tickets on the basis of communal population in a particular area. Thus, in Habbakadal constituency, a pre-dominantly non-muslim constituency, a non-muslim candidate was contesting on Congress (I) ticket. Similarly, the Pattan constituency, a pre-dominantly Shia Area, saw the Shia religious leader as the Congress (I) candidate.

The Local Congress (I) campaign had all the religious overtones. They saw to it that muslim leaders, even politicians sporting beards were brought from other parts of the country to address the election meetings. The election meetings were started with the recitation of verses from Holy Quran. It is ironical to note, that the lone CPI(M) candidate in the valley, had to face the wrath and

opposition from Congress (I) and Jamiat-i-Islami jointly. In one of the towns, the representative of both Congress (I) and Jamiat-i-Islami requested district magistrate that the CPI(M) candidate should not be allowed to address the public meeting. All this resulted in a great strain on communal amity among different communities living in the valley. It also resulted in the ethnic clashes between the people belonging to Shia and Sunni communities in the valley. During the clashes, huge property was destroyed. It is after many hundred years that such clashes have taken place in Kashmir.

### **Maulana Farooq Factor :**

Maulana Farooq represents the family of 'Mir Waiz' in the State. In fact, the dynasty has played a great role in the educational awakening of the people of Kashmir. The founder of this dynasty, Mir Waiz Rasul Shah Sahib established 'Anjuman Nusrat-ul-Islam' some eighty years ago. Under this Anjuman, thousands of schools are run. The Anjuman also publishes Islamic literature. The present Mir Waiz, Maulana Farooq may be an orthodox person but he is not communal. In fact, he represents typical muslim culture of Kashmir. He could be an answer to Jamiat-i-Islami's fundamental approach in Kashmir. The Maulana was dragged into politics by ex-Prime Minister, Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, during the Holy Relic agitation. He has been participating in Municipal Elections for quite sometime. In 1977, Morarji Desai visited Maulana and persuaded him to support Janata Party in the State. Maulana Farooq gladly obliged him by supporting Janata Party. Sh. Desai persuaded the Maulana to play a leading role in the muslim politics of the country. But, for his own reasons, Maulana Farooq did not move out of Kashmir valley. Maulana Farooq has many non-muslims as his followers and devotees.

The communal amity in the valley of Kashmir is under strain. The new emerging neo-rich classes of traders, industrialists, timber smugglers, opium smugglers, immoral politicians and corrupt bureaucrats are adding to the phenomenon of communalism in the valley. These classes, overtly or covertly, are slowly engaged in the process of sharpening the communal identities for their own advantage.

The scant regard for the democratic norms and institutions on the part of Union Government provides a golden opportunity to the communal elements in the valley to spread their venom. Whenever there is an onslaught on the democratic institutions in the valley, the communal elements dub it as an onslaught on the 'Muslim Kashmir' by Hindu India'. This accounts for the popularity of Jamiat-i-Islami among the middle class educated youth in urban areas of the valley.

The communal riots in the post-independence India also have the great psychological impact on the population of the valley. It is not very difficult for vested interests to encash this impact for their own ends.

All these factors are blurring the cultural mosaic which is the pride of Kashmir.

# COMMUNALISM IN PUNJAB : AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

M. S. Dhami

One sobering thought that recurs to a close observer of recent Hindu-Sikh communal tension in Punjab is the painful realisation how ineffective has been the role of liberal-secularist and left-oriented forces — despite their commendable effort — in stemming the tide of communalism. It may not be an exaggeration to say that at the moment these forces seem to be “socially marginal.”<sup>1</sup> Our purpose in highlighting this aspect is not to belittle the role of these forces but to plead for rethinking on their part for a more realistic understanding of this phenomenon.

The primary focus of this study is to explore some of the basic determinants of Hindu-Sikh communalism, and also to provide a tentative explanation of the recent escalation of communal tension.<sup>2</sup> Our broad explanatory framework is that communalism and heightened ethnic identities,<sup>3</sup> in this era of rapid social change, are sustained by socio-economic structure and the prevailing cultural ethos. In addition, competition among ethnic groups in the political arena for power, status and tangible economic benefits acts as an important contributory factor.<sup>4</sup> For analytical purposes we are treating political process as a separate category.

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1. The phrase is taken from, Satish Saberwal, “Societal Design in History: The West and India”, Occasional Paper Number 1, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi, nd. p. 8.
  2. For distinction between ‘Communal’ and ‘Communal tension’ see Bipan Chandra, **Communalism in Modern India**, New Delhi, Vikas, 1984, pp. 4-5.
  3. For our purposes we shall be using communal and ethnic identities interchangeably as we feel that communal identities are subclass of the broader term ethnic identities.
  4. It is believed by quite a number of political scientists that there has occurred an erosion of political institutions in India. It is difficult to gauge the extent of this erosion, but it seems fairly certain that the erosion of political institutions has aggravated communal problem in the country.

Before we discuss the substantive communal problem in Punjab, it will be fruitful to examine some of the important theoretical frameworks on communalism and ethnic conflict which may provide us useful insights in understanding Hindu-Sikh communal problem. It may be underlined that each individual ethnic problem has to be studied in its own specific socio-historical context — and Hindu-Sikh problem is no exception to this.

For the purpose of this study, we shall club the various studies on the subject under three overall perspectives. Firstly, we briefly examine the recent works of Bipan Chandra, P. C. Joshi and Asghar Ali Engineer.<sup>5</sup> And despite considerable variation in their treatment of the subject we characterise their approach as left-oriented perspective.<sup>6</sup> The second perspective is associated with the works of prominent Indian and Western sociologists and some historians who have tried to explain communalism through their insight into the social structure, cultural heritage and social change in India. Under this perspective we include the studies of Louis Dumont, Satish Saberwal, Francis Robinson and Ratna Naidu.<sup>7</sup> Dumont and Saberwal's sociological

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5. Bipan Chandra, *op. cit.*; P. C. Joshi, "Economic Background of Communalism in India—A Model of Analysis", in B. R. Nanda, ed., *Essays in Modern Indian History*, Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980, pp. 167-180; Asghar Ali Engineer, "A Theory of Communal Riots: Seminar, 291 (November 1983); — Theory of Communal Riots: Subtler Aspects", *Mainstream* Vol. XXII, No. 38 (18 May 1984), 15-21.
  6. From this it should not be construed that other two approaches are rightists or centrists. The criteria on which any approach is to be judged is its exploratory power as well as its sensitivity to certain cherished human values.
  7. Louis Dumont, "Nationalism and Communalism", in *Religion, Politics and History in India: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology*, Paris/Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1970 (reproduced from *Contribution to Indian Sociology*, Vol. VII, 1974), 89-110; Satish Saberwal, "Elements of Communalism I and II", *Mainstream*, Nos. 29 and 30, 21 and 23 March 1981; Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923*, Delhi: Vikas, 1975; Ratna Naidu, *Communal Edge to Plural Societies: India*

approach may be characterised as cultural-historical. Naidu's work is more definitive and she explains communalism in terms of 'polico-economic and cultural' factors. Finally, we may mention a few important studies of political scientists like Paul R. Brass and Joseph Rothschild<sup>8</sup> who treat the phenomenon of ethnic identities and ethnic conflict from political perspective, assigning primacy to political determinants, that is, to political elites or, 'political entrepreneurs,' party organisations in mobilising communal/ethnic consciousness among the competing groups.

With this skeletal depiction of these three perspectives, we examine in some detail a few selected studies which we feel will help us in clarifying our own perspective in studying communal problem in Punjab. We begin with the left-oriented perspective.

Bipan Chandra traces the growth of communal ideology and politics to the social framework provided by the colonial economy and polity. Further, colonial underdevelopment and crisis of the colonial economy resulted in widespread unemployment, which led to widespread scramble for jobs among middle classes. This according to Chandra 'helped communalism acquire its real mass base.' Further struggle between economic classes — when these happened to belong to different communities — assumed communal dimension. Chandra's panacea for these distortions is that agitations (during the period of national movement in India) should have been in terms of economic classes, and religious consciousness not allowed to develop in the process.<sup>9</sup> For Chandra the basic contradiction during the colonial period was between the Indian people and colonialism.

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and Malaysia, New Delhi: Vikas 1980.

8. Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework*, New York: Columbia, University Press, 1981; Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge: Cambridge Unvi. Press, 1974; Francis Robinson, "Nation Formation: The Brass Thesis and Muslim Separatism", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, Vol. XV, No. 3 (November 1977), 215-230.
9. Bipan Chandra, "Communalism in Retrospect", *Mainstream*, Vol. XXII, No. 51 (18 August 1984), p. 18.



And "the Hindu-Muslim contradiction" had no basis in reality and further it "was not an efficient (or 'real') causation of communalism."<sup>10</sup> Chandra favours two-pronged struggle to fight communalism: firstly political-ideological education of the people for promoting secular consciousness and treating communal consciousness as 'false consciousness' or something engineered by the exploiting classes to subvert their own interests; second, relate to changing the 'social reality,' or in other words fundamental reordering of the social structure. The two-pronged struggle involves two basic assumptions: that (i) such political ideological struggle would have taken root in the existing social structure and; (ii) stipulated change in the social structure would have been ushered in. Firstly, given the social base of the national movement — and Chandra is fully aware of this fact — such political-ideological struggle, if at all it got moving, would have made a marginal impact. As to the second assumption, the infra-structure for the fundamental social change did not exist. In this connection, Dumont's observation dealing with the post-independence period deserves serious attention. Referring to change in the social structure, more especially in the caste system, Dumont writes that contemporary literature "exaggerate" change. "One thing is certain: society as an overall framework has not changed there has been change in the society and not of the society<sup>12</sup>". One may mention that Dumont was certain not talking of radical change. So in view of the questionable nature of Chandra's assumptions, his arguments are far from convincing. This further underlines the fact that task for the liberal secularist and leftist in India is stupendous, atleast for quite sometime to come. And the

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10. Bipan Chandra, **Communalism in Modern India**, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

11. Bipan Chandra, "Communalism in Retrospect", *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

12. Quoted in T. N. Madan, "On the Nature of Caste in India: A Review Symposium on Louis Dumont's **Homo Hierarchicus**" **Contributions to Indian Sociology**, N. S., No. V (December 1971) p. 7; see also, Milton Singer, "Preface" in Milton Singer and Bernard Cohn, eds., **Structure and Change in Indian Society**, Chicago: Ardine, 1968, p. xi.

reality of community-based interests cannot be brushed aside in all cases, and these need to be treated with greater sensitivity and understanding. There may be cases where fears and anxieties of minority groups or even of majority — have basis in reality and are not far fetched.

P. C. Joshi, while discussing the causes which led to Muslim separation utilizes the model of “commulative causation.” For the Indian Muslims, the British colonial impact led to a set back in the economic and political sphere vis-a-vis the majority community. And this engendered in them the feeling of deprivation which ultimately prepared the ground for secessionist demands. Joshi, however, underplays pre-existing antipathies between the two communities.<sup>13</sup> In recent years Asghar Ali Engineer has written extensively on communalism and communal riots. On the whole, he views the subject from the Marxist perspective. He, however, recognises the great mobilizatory potential of religion.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, quite a number of his reports on communal riots are based on his personal field studies which have provided much needed empirical content to his treatment.<sup>15</sup>

Louis Dumont’s cultural-historical perspective provides useful insight into the Hindu-Muslim communal problem.<sup>16</sup> The more or less peaceful coexistence of the two communities after the Muslim conquest, according to Dumont, did not produce any “general ideological synthesis.” Lack of ideological synthesis created “lasting social heterogeneity of the two communities.” The British rule in the

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13. Joshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

14. Asghar Ali Engineer, “Socio-Economic Basis of Communalism”, *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January-June 1984, 54; Engineer, “A Theory of Communal Riots”, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

15. For instance, see Asghar Ali Engineer, “From Nationalism to Communalism: Transformation of Malegaon”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 29 (16 July 1983).

16. Dumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-110.

modern period led to the growth of revivalist moments among the two communities which further reaffirmed the traditional values. Subsequent growth of political parties too failed to transcend the traditional social structure and the associated value systems. So it is no wonder that in the matter of injecting religion into politics, Dumont treats both the Congress and Muslim League as complementary to each other, that is, equally responsible for it. Dumont's sociological view of the Congress provides a more balanced picture regarding its secular and national character.

It hardly needs to be recalled that, regarding the broad overt phenomena, the Congress appears essentially as a purely national movement . . . . Similarly, in the whole history of the Congress there is no trace of communalism proper. Quite to the contrary, the dominant tendency has been to refuse to take into considerations on the political level the religious distinctions found in Indian society. The question appears only when one leaves the level of principle for that of facts, and asks whether this attitude, which can be taken as mere political modernism did or did not correspond to particular political interest, did or did not mirror a tendency to identify the Indian nation with the dominant high-caste Hindus.<sup>17</sup>

After discussing this poser, Dumont concludes :

It is true that Gandhi did not oppose a separate electorate for the Muslims. It can be granted that those Congressmen who did so the most effectively were not religious but liberal-minded; and yet if we speak of the Congress as a whole, we have to blend diverse motivations and say that its refusal of such measures was tinged with communal motives, or might have appeared so to Muslims.

Dumont further argues that the failure of the Congress to forestall partition was due to the fact that its leaders disregarded the feeling of the Muslim being treated as socially distinct. And for a long intervening period the unity could have been built on the

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17. **Ibid.**, p. 103.

recognition of "their very separateness."<sup>18</sup>

Satish Saberwal in his perceptive analysis of communalism in India elaborates Dumont's views regarding the key role of ideas and traditions. Saberwal refers to general reluctance among social scientists — with few exceptions — "to take serious account of religious beliefs and institutions" for understanding communalism. He does not belittle the role of material interests; but argues that even when these interests are involved, the religious symbols may come to the fore by virtue merely of their mobilizational potential."<sup>19</sup> Saberwal also establishes the linkage of religious ideas and symbols to the social structure. Regarding the genesis of Hindu-Muslim communalism he concludes :

.... I am suggesting that the rise of communalism during the colonial period should perhaps be seen in relation to the long-standing separativeness of the religious network, the acute social distance expressing a high level of social antagonism between Muslims and Hindus .... and the growth of communally homogeneous neighbourhoods in the metropolitan centres.<sup>20</sup>

Ratna Naidu, being more sensitive to the sociological reality of Indian society prefers 'enlightened secularism' to straight-jacket secularism.<sup>21</sup> On the basis of her study of communal conflict in two Asian countries, India and Malaysia, she argues :

Where communal groups have distinct economic interests, political choices are also communally based. Most ethno-cultural groups in the ex-colonies of Asia and Africa do have competing economic and political interests both because historically they were suctioned into the modernizing net not as individuals but as ethno-cultural groups, and because they compete in strictly zero-sum game situation.

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18. *Ibid.* p. 109.

19. Saberwal, "Elements of Communalism-I", *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

20. Saberwal, "Elements of Communalism-II", *op. cit.*, p. 18.

21. Ratna Naidu, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

In comparing differing attitudes towards communal problem in Malaysia and India, she point outs that Indian leadership has always refused to concede the reality of communal interests. The Malaysian leadership, on the other hand, 'openly recognise community-based political interests, and recognition is considered half-way to its solution.<sup>22</sup> This, however, should not be taken to mean that there are not considerable areas where` common interest are there — or could be fostered through suitable socializing practices.<sup>23</sup> And even in those areas where real interests differ, these can be sorted out through suitable institutional devices. Perhaps the problem of national minorities which happen to be concentrated in one region can be tackled within the Indian federal set up. Despite this qualification, it must be realised that so long as there is no fundamental change in values of the competing ethnic groups, accompanied by corresponding change in the social structure, we have to give recognition to the reality highlighted by Ratna Naidu.

Our analysis of Hindu-Sikh communal problem assumes that at least for quite some time, we have to live with the prevailing social structure and the associated value systems. We reiterate the tentative and exploratory character of this exercise. We begin with the socio-historical context which led to the development of communal identities. The traditional and modern social and religious network which sustain these identities. The social background of the political elites and "cultural elites"<sup>24</sup> who provide ideological framework for these identities. The political elites propound political ideology, while cultural elites interpret, reformulate and propagate religious, traditions, ideals and symbols; and this to a great extent affect the political ideology as well. How religious and political ideals are formulated depend upon the socio-historical context and the interests of the

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22. Ratna Naidu, *op. cit.*, Chap. 3.

23. In the recent communal tension in Punjab, the leftist cadres of Communist parties and individuals with secular orientations did make a modest contribution in easing tension.

24. J. Rothschild, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.n.

social groups or classes the two set of elites represent.<sup>25</sup> In the later part we take up the changes in the social and political context in the post-independence Punjab, especially in the post-1966 period. In the pre-1966 period the communal consciousness was limited to those sections and classes which worked in the modern urban-based sector of the economy but in the subsequent period beginning perhaps from early 1970s its social universe widened which in 1980s assumed serious proportions.

### **Socio-Historical Context**

The Indian society the urges and aspirations of lower castes and the aspiring middle castes has taken the form of cultural renaissance or even "cultural rebellion".<sup>26</sup> As a result of encounter with Islam, the religious stirrings of fourteenth and fifteenth centuries represented such cultural renaissance through which the rigours and disabilities of the caste system were sought to be mitigated. This milieu gave birth to Sikh religion in sixteenth century. Sikh movement, through the lineage of ten gurus—tried to give this egalitarian urge and ethos a more permanent character. The growing following of the gurus in course of time brought them into conflict with the Mughal power. The resulting persecution at the hand of the ruling power changed the character of this hitherto pacific movement into a militant one. In a half century after the demise of tenth Guru Gobind Singh, Sikh guerrilla bands organised into **Misls** acquired territorial base which at the end of 18th century, with the occupation of Lahore by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, controlled the province of Lahore and some portion of Delhi, province. In the ensuing 19th century Ranjit Singh extended his control to the other adjacent territories to the north and north-western region. The **cis-Sutlej** Sikh rulers came under the suzerainty of the British rule in early 19th century while Sikh rule

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25. We do not subscribe to the view that elites can act in isolation (or autonomously) from the social groups whose interest they represent.

26. Mark Juergensmeyer, **Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in 20th century Punjab**, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982, pp. vii-viii.

in the trans-Sutlej territories continued till 1849.<sup>27</sup> Question may be posed: how far Sikh rule was able to weld the different religious groups into common Punjabi identity. Kushwant Singh answers that it led to the 'resurrection of the spirit of Punjabi nationalism which had almost been killed by Banda' Percival Spear takes a different position pointing out that 'no Punjab nation had been born. Punjabi unity was in fact further off than ever'.<sup>29</sup>

At the moment we are primarily concerned with the changes in the Punjabi society as a result of Sikh rule which in the core Sikh territories lasted for a maximum period of 90 years.<sup>30</sup> The establishment of the Sikh rule led to the replacement of Mughals and Afghans in the top echelon of the ruling classes. In the territories under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in the heyday of his rule, Sikhs occupied 60 per cent of the top positions (which included important **Jagirdars**), the remaining positions were shared by both Hindus and Muslims. At the lower rung of administration Muslims' representation was more or less in proportion to their population—Hindus perhaps were over represented, Sikhs, it may be mentioned formed less than 10 per cent of the total population.<sup>31</sup>

Under the Sikh rule, considerable revenue-free land, by way of charity (**dharmarth**), was assigned to the individuals and institutions

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27. Percival Spear, **A History of India**, Vol. 2, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, pp. 134-140; Kushwant Singh, **A History of the Sikhs, Vol. I: 1469-1839**, Delhi: Oxford U.P. (Indian edition); J. S. Grewal, **From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Essays in Sikh History**, Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1972.
  28. Kushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
  29. Spear, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
  30. Indu Banga, **Agrarian System of the Sikhs: Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century**, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1978, p. 1.
  31. Indu Banga, "The Ruling Class in the Kingdom of Lahore", **Journal of Regional History**, Vol. III, 1982, pp. 18-19.

for religious and charitable purposes. Assignees belonged to all the three major faiths, but those belonging to the Sikh faith received the largest measure of *dharmarth* (or *madad-i-ma ash*) grants. The most prominent of these grantees were Sodhis and Bedis.<sup>32</sup> The grants were also assigned to persons engaged in various types priestly services, such as *oranthis*, *ragis* (reciters and singers of holy hymns) etc. Grants were also assigned to *purohits* and *brahmanans* (Hindu priests), and also to *shaikhs* and *seyyids* (Muslim divines). Historical religious places too received the favours of the ruler. "The Sikh rulers alienated much larger share of their revenue in favour of the religious groups than their Mughal predecessors.<sup>33</sup> Some of these religious and charitable centres (including many in the farflung rural areas) also provided traditional type of education, especially through religious scriptures in vernacular languages.<sup>34</sup> This naturally provided a strong base for the development of traditional religious and social net work in the Punjabi society.

### **British Impact and the Development of Communal Identities**

The British annexation of Lahore kingdom in 1849 united the two parts of the Punjab.<sup>35</sup> At the moment, we are presenting an overview of the Punjab's social structure at the turn of the century—our main focus being Hindu and Sikh communities.

After nearly half a century of the British rule in the Punjab Muslim formed nearly half of the total population, Hindus were around 40 per cent and Sikhs little less than 9 per cent. There was a certain degree of overlap between Hindu and Sikh communities.

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32. Guru Nanak belonged to the Bedi sub-caste, and the last seven gurus belonged to Sodhi sub-caste.

33. Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-167.

34. Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, New Delhi: Manohar Publication, 1983 (revised ed.).

35. We are taking into account the territories of the British Punjab including princely states, but excluding North-Western Frontier province.



Sikh society was able to mitigate certain rigours of the caste system, it also provided considerable social mobility to peasant castes, especially to the Jats, and other backward castes; it also ensured certain degree of equality—Islam and British impact too helped this process—but still caste distinctions persisted in the Sikh society. According to the 1881 census Jat peasantry formed 2/3rd of the total Sikh population. The next in numerical importance being the artisan and servicing castes and outcastes. Among the higher castes, in the Hindu caste hierarchy, Khatri and Aroras together formed barely 4.5 per cent of the Sikh society.<sup>36</sup> Around 90 per cent of the Khatri and considerable majority of Aroras remained within Hindu fold. The other higher castes, such as, Brahman, Bania, Sud etc. were almost outside the Sikh society. In the next fifty years Sikh population increased among those castes which were already overrepresented in 1881.<sup>37</sup> This further divided the two communities along caste, class/and occupational lines as well.

In the early period of British rule, the introduction of money economy, new administrative and judicial set up had an adverse effect on the peasantry which in the central and western plains of the Punjab predominantly belonged to the Muslim and Sikh communities—in the south-eastern and hilly areas peasantry was mainly Hindu. In view of occasional crop failures, litigations in courts, usurious interest rates, peasantry got burdened with debt. And in the event of the non-payment of debts he has to mortgage his land to the money-lenders. The moneylenders generally belonged to the Hindu mercantile castes. Despite economic hardships, Sikh landowning peasant continued to be a dominant figure in the village society and remained free from the social tensions. It was only the lower castes who faced social disabilities as well as economic hardships.

Sikh community was predominantly rural and it formed less than five per cent of the Punjab's urban population. Its leading

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36. W.H. Macleod, **The Evolution of the Sikh Community : Five Essays**, Delhi : Oxford Univ. Press, 1975, p.93.

37. The artisan and servicing castes and outcastes proportion increased while that of Khatri and Arora castes in the Sikh society declined by 1931.

urban component comprised small Khatri and Arora mercantile class engaged in trade and professions, and a sprinkling of landed aristocrats. In the late 19th century, it is this small urban class which provided political and cultural leadership to the community. This class faced competition in trade, and job opportunities from the more numerous members of the other two communities. At the social level, the deeper kinship relations still operated within a particular caste or within a group of castes related to each other by similarity of occupations and life styles. For the small Sikh urban community belonging to Khatri-Arora and allied castes, these relations with their more numerous caste fellows still in the Hindu fold, suffered a setback as communal identities became the overriding loyalties. So for these highly literate Sikh caste groups, intra-class economic competition with other communities got compounded with social tensions arising from their unfavourable social situation in urban settings.<sup>38</sup> In such a situation they yearned for spiritual solace through a wider, and emotionally deeper religious brotherhood. The resurrection or reinterpretation of rich Sikh cultural heritage was attempted through Singh Sabha movement. There were other elements and sections in the Sikh community for whom this will strike a responsive chord.

The first Singh Sabha was established at Amritsar in 1873. It undertook to (i) restore Sikhism to pristine purity; (ii) edit and publish historical and religious books; (iii) propagate current knowledge, using Punjabi as the medium, and start magazine and newspapers in this language; (iv) reform and bring back into the Sikh fold the apostates . . . .'<sup>39</sup> In the next three decades many Singh Sabhas came into existence in various towns and even in some

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38. Kenneth W. Jones in explaining the rise of communal identities in late 19th century among the three competing communities traces it to the "alienation" and "marginality" of the newly educated classes of these communities. See his, "social change and Religious Movements in Nineteenth Century Punjab," in M. S. A. Rao (ed.), **Social Movements in India**, New Delhi : Manohar Publication, 1979, pp. 4-5.

39. Harbans Singh, "Sikhism : Challenge and Response (1849-1873)," **Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion**, Vol. II, No. 1 (April 1983), pp. 96-97.

villages. This culminated in the formation of a coordinating central body, Chief Khalsa Diwan at Amritsar. In 1908 Sikh Educational Conference was founded, and since then regular annual conference have been held. In the course of time most of the aims of the Singh Sabha movement were fulfilled. This brought about a cultural renaissance among the Sikhs through the creation of a network of educational institutions, magazines and pamphlets, and learned commentaries and expositions of Sikh religion, its tradition and history. At times, the band of preachers employed by the Diwan made references to the past glories of the Sikh nation and Sikh rule, by which they compared 'their present degraded condition to the hardship and oppression practiced on the Sikhs under Moghul rule'.<sup>40</sup>

In the rural areas the message of Singh Sabha was spontaneously carried by Sikh religious divines, more especially in the Cis-Sutlej Sikh princely states, and in the core areas of Lahore kingdom of Ranjit Singh. To elaborate the point that the seeds of the movement can be traced to the past history, we may mention the name of Sant Attar Singh (1866-1927), a most revered Sikh saint who devoted his whole life in spreading the message of Sikhism in the various parts of the Punjab, especially in the Malwa region, in the south-east of river Sutlej.<sup>41</sup>

In the rural plains of central Punjab, dominated by Sikh and Muslim peasantry, the leadership to the Hindu community was provided by the Hindu mercantile castes, Khatri, Bania, Arora, followed by ritually higher Brahman. These castes 'possessed a tradition of innovation, of creative response to cultural and political change.' In view of their higher educational attainments and skill,<sup>42</sup>

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40. D. Petrie, **Developments in Sikh Politics (1900-1911) — A Report to Government of India**, Amritsar : Chief Khalsa Diwan, nd., p. 32.

41. Teja Singh, **Jeewan Katha Gurmukh Piare Sant Attar Singh Ji Maharaj** (in Punjabi), Patiala : Language Department, Punjab, 1970.

42. Kenneth W. Jones, **Arya Dharam : Hindu Consciousness in 19th century Punjab**, New Delhi : Manohar Book Service, 1976, pp. 3-4 (also 1-27).

in literary and business acumen they had a lead over the other communities in business, commerce, administration and the professions. At the psychological level the Western impact created uneasiness about their cultural identity. Hindu rising elite got also scared by the 'nightmare' of conversion that 'struck at two segments of the Hindu social structure — outcaste and upper caste students attending the newly established Christian schools. The former threatened Hindu society at its weakest point. Already lost were masses of outcastes who had converted to Islam and Sikhism.'<sup>43</sup>

In this period of cultural uneasiness of the English educated Hindus, the message of Swami Daya Nand through the founding of Arya Samaj in Punjab in 1877, provided hope and pride in their Hindu heritage. The samaj preached that caste a person be determined on merit rather than birth. Further, the reformed Hinduism with its belief in monotheism (based on Vedas) and simplified ritual, free from 'orthodoxy and idol worship' made it more palatable to the Western educated Hindus.<sup>44</sup>

Of all the provinces in India Arya Samaj made the greatest impact in the Punjab. The expansion of the movement in the province led to the division of the movement into a moderate college party, which controlled the educational institutions, and the radical wing controlling the Samaj organisation, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. This division far from weakening the movement "did more to invigorate the movement."<sup>45</sup> The radical wing devoted its whole energy to 'Ved Prachar' and missionary activities. The militant wing carried **Shuddhi** or proselytizing activities more vigorously. The purpose of **Shuddhi** being to reclaim those who have recently been converted to other

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43. Kenneth W. Jones, "Communalism in the Punjab : The Arya Samaj Contribution," **The Journal of Asian Studies**, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 (November 1968), pp. 42-43.

44. Norman G. Barrier, "The Arya Samaj and Congress Politics in the Punjab, 1894-1903," **The Journal of Asian Studies**, Vol. XXVI, No. 3 (May 1967), pp. 363-364.

45. Kenneth W. Jones, **Arya Dharm**, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

religions, especially to Islam, and to prevent the conversion of outcastes by abolishing untouchability. In the early period of **Shuddhi** movement, Singh Sabha cooperated with the Arya Samaj, but soon this cooperation gave way to direct confrontation. In 1900, Aryas purified a group of outcastes Rahtia Sikhs into "pure caste Hindus." For the Sikh community this was "a direct threat, potentially as dangerous as Christian and Islamic conversion."<sup>46</sup> With the Muslims the confrontation took more serious dimension, at times taking the form of riots. With Muslims the **Shuddhi** movement acted "to reinforce existing communal separation." With Sikhs it was meant "to clarify overlapping identities."

Arya Samaj, like Singh Sabha movement provided organisational network for intra-communal solidarity and its assertion through publishing magazines, newspapers, religious treatises and commentaries. They also disseminated their new reinterpreted world-view through educational institutions, dedicated (and paid) band of preachers. Similar type of movements took shape among the Muslims as well. Some of the important leaders in the cultural sphere, the "cultural elites" also played or was to play important role in the political sphere as well. These elites were not acting autonomously, they in their own best judgement were serving the interests of the classes they represented.

Writing about the state of affairs at the turn of the century, Kenneth W. Jones writes :

Pattern of conflict became institutionalized; provocations produced set responses. What has been implicit in the nature of Punjab society now became explicit. Tensions might increase or decrease, but beneath the surface fears, suspicion and hatred remained. The existent divisions of Punjabi society between religion, language, and script deepened. By 1900 communalism became the dominant form of identity in Punjab.<sup>47</sup>

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46. Kenneth W. Jones, "Communalism in Punjab : The Arya Samaj Contribution," *op. cit.*, p. 50.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

In the political sphere Arya got activated on so many issues impinging on the economic interests of the Hindu urban classes. From 1899 onwards, Aryas joined the Congress in increasing numbers and, in a sense, it reinforced the Hindu character of the Punjab Congress.<sup>48</sup> At the national level Aryas and its leading figure, Lala Lajpat Rai, cooperated with the extremist wing of the Congress led by B. G. Tilak and his associates.

By 1907, the Arya leaders realised that their association with the Congress has not helped them in protecting their interests, and instead it has invited suspicion and discrimination from the government. So they again turned to the anchor of communal solidarity.

Some of the important events which led to this change of attitude may be mentioned. The indebtedness of the peasantry and mortgaging of their land to the moneylenders — who generally belonged to the Hindu mercantile castes — led to widespread discontent among the peasantry. In order to mitigate the discontent and to keep the loyalty of the landowning classes, the government passed the Land Alienation Act, 1900. In the words of P.H.M. Van den Dungen the Act in due course “had accomplished the main ends of its advocates.”<sup>49</sup> As the Act benefitted the scheduled agricultural castes, it “created serious discontent” among the Hindu trading castes.<sup>50</sup>

In 1907, the Punjab introduced the Colonisation Bill proposing stringent regulatory measures for the colonisers of the reclaimed land by the canal network in the Rechna and Bari Doabs. This led to peasant agitation spearheaded by Arya Samaj leaders, Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. Although the assent to the Bill was withheld by the Governor General, it led to the arrest and the deportation of the

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48. Barrier, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

49. P.H.M. Van den Dungen, **The Punjab Tradition : Influence and Authority in Nineteenth-Century India**, London : George Allen & Unwin, 1972, p. 286.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

two leaders.<sup>51</sup> On the heel of this event, new constitutional proposals announced separate electorates which the Punjabi Hindus viewed as concession to the Muslims. With a view to protect their interests Hindu elites took recourse to the development of Hindu cultural and political organisations. The Hindu Sabha took the place of district associations and the local Congress branches. "By the summer of 1903 each district had a Hindu Sabha affiliated with the Punjab Hindu Sabha in Lahore."<sup>52</sup> The Punjab Hindu Sabha spearheaded the movement which led to the founding of Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha. During the period of 1907 to 1914 five Hindu Sabha Conference were held in the major towns of Punjab.<sup>53</sup>

Uptill 1919, Chief Khalsa Diwan, which commanded a network of Sikh religious, educational and social organisations, was the only body which articulated Sikh political interests. It was due to the Diwan's strong representation that Sikhs too were accorded separate electorate (alongwith the Muslims) under the new Montford reforms (1919).

The first secular, nationalist and revolutionary movement under the name of "Hindustan Ghadar Party" was launched on the American-Canadian Pacific coast. The social base of the movement was based mostly on Sikh peasant immigrants of the central Punjab: although it included members from all the major communities. The uprising in India was launched in 1914-and despite its heroic saga of sacrifice and great suffering — the movement was crushed by the government in 1917.<sup>54</sup> The movement, however, left its impact in the rural areas of the central Punjab, which in the coming decades

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51. Master Hari Singh, **Punjab Peasant in Freedom Struggle**, Vol. 2, New Delhi : People's Publishing House, 1984. pp. 19-25.

52. Barrier, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-379.

53. C. Baxter, **The Jana Sangh : A Biography of An Indian Political Party**, Bombay : Oxford Univ. p., 1971, p.8.

54. Bhagat Singh Bilga, "Ghadar Movement", in Master Hari Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-74.

gave birth to the various left-secular groups and parties—probably the only genuine secular-nationalist elements in the province. These forces, however, proved to be quite weak as compared with the purely communal or nominally secular forces as the latter were more fully entrenched in the social structure.

### **Politicisation of Communal Identities, 1920-1947.**

In the socio-political realm, this period witnessed the emergence of a powerful anti-imperialist, reformist, and militant Gurdwara reform movement in early 1920s. Its dominant stream<sup>55</sup> in due course controlled the newly created Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and Shiromani Akali Dal. Through this 'stream' the small urban Sikh middle class was able to build a coalition with tradition-oriented rural masses, especially the Sikh peasantry. At the cultural level, the religio-political ideology propounded by the cultural-cum-political elites strengthened Sikh religious identity. It also effected the social structure in the central Punjab districts by strengthening the numerical proportion of the Sikhs in the rural areas through propagation of the Sikh faith that found ready acceptance<sup>56</sup>. Sikh population in the erstwhile Punjab increased from bare 9 per cent of the total population in 1901 to nearly 15 per cent in 1941.

The smaller stream of the Gurdwara reform movement was left-oriented, consistently pro-nationalist, and was represented by

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55. In this 'dominant stream', we are including various splinter Akali groups led by leaders like Baba Kharak Singh, Giani Sher Singh. The smaller stream totally separated from the Shiromani Akali Dal and formed left-oriented, genuinely nationalist groups, such as Kirti-Kisan Party, Naujawan Bharat Sabha etc.

56. The presence of Sikhs already in a particular caste-cum-occupation, especially among the well off sections, acted as a lodestone effect. Of course there were other influences such as the simple message of the Sikhism—a growth of the native soil—and further, preference in army recruitments to the Sikhs may also be one among other influences.



groups such as Kirti Kisan Party, Punjab Wing of the Communist Party of India etc.. Both the streams cooperated with the urban Hindu-based Punjab Congress Party, imparting a federal character to the national movement in the province.

**Religio-political ideology :** Let us briefly discuss the religio-political ideology of the Shiromani Akali Dal in the pre-independence period. It was obviously based on the rich heritage of the Sikhs exemplified by certain established traditions, ideals and practices. But how these ideals and traditions are interpreted by the party ideologues and cultural elites in modern is influenced, to a greater or lesser extent by the interests of the social classes the elites represent. This element operates unconsciously of which the well-meaning ideologue may not be aware of. Majority of these ideologues (both cultural and political) lived in urban locales where Sikhs happen to be a small minority. Incidentally only 5 per cent of the total Sikh population of Punjab lived in urban areas in 1921<sup>57</sup>. They feared, perhaps rightly, the absorption into the larger Hindu society. This seemed to be especially true of those urban castes, such as Khatri and Arora, whose large majority of caste fellows being Hindus might have exercised a lodestone effect. In the Sikh majority castes in the rural areas lodestone effect has generally operated in the opposite direction. This explains the persistence of Sikh 'little tradition' in the rural areas without leading to any fear of losing their Sikh identity among the rural Sikhs<sup>58</sup>.

The basic ideological framework of the Akali Dal revolves around the concept that Sikhs constitute a separate political entity. 'According to this Sikhism is not a religion like other religions. By religion others understand a relationship between the individual and God (whereas the Sikh religion concerns itself with the whole activity of man in the context of this world'.<sup>59</sup> Further, for the Sikhs,

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57. K. L. Tuteja, **Sikh Politics, 1920-1940**, Kurukshetra : Vishal Publications, 1984, p. 22.

58. Of course in recent years the Sikh 'great tradition' is under work in the rural areas as well.

59. Baldev Raj Nayar, **Minority Politics in the Punjab**, Princeton Univ. Press, 1966, p. 68.

religion is inseparable from politics. In a foreword written for a book Master Tara Singh argues, "there is not the least doubt that the Sikh religion can live only as long as the Panth exists as an organized entity".<sup>60</sup>

Unlike the past the modern attack is not on our persons but on our ideology. We are told for example that religion is a private matter for an individual. This single innocent looking sentence has done more harm to Sikhism and the Khalsa... than can be easily realized.... Except in corporate existence and solidarity the Khalsa, based as it is on Sikhism, has no meaning.<sup>61</sup>

This emphasis on Sikh solidarity, it may be argued, may provide a protective shield to a young religious community, and seems to be based on the traditional concept of Khalsa brotherhood. After all Hindu Mahasabha too laid emphasis on **Sangathan** (solidarity among Hindus through organisation of the community). Perhaps solidarity in a minority community may, in a sense, be defended. But if it is carried to its logical end, would it not violate basic human values of 'freedom' and 'reason'? And for some it may not even conform to the basic spirit of Sikhism. Would it not be counter-productive in a society where diverse communities and groups live? This author is not competent to answer these questions, but Sikh cultural elites must face these issues with social sensitiveness. How is it that in the past few decades reinterpreted Akali ideology in politics as practiced fails to appeal to the landless (Sikh) agricultural labourers—except in a few upward socially mobile individuals or groups? These questions need to be faced.

**Legislative Arena, 1920-1947 :** In the legislative politics, the major political parties were motivated by the community-based inte-

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60. Quoted from *Ibid.*, p.69.

61. Quoted from. Joyce Pattigrew, "A Description of Discrepancy between Sikh Political Ideals and Sikh Political Practice", in Myron J. Aronoff (ad.), **Political Anthropology Year Book**, Vol. I, New Brunswick : Transaction Books, 1980, pp. 161-162.

rests, and class interests taking the form of landowning rural classes versus the urban mercantile classes—the latter happened to be predominantly Hindu. The legislative arena for a greater part of this period was dominated by the National Unionist Party led by Fazl-i-Husain. It was a common forum for landed notables belonging to the three communities. Prior to early 1940s, it secured almost total support of the Muslim community. The party, naturally, protected the Muslim interests on the plea that the community is backward. The Hindu political groups and Akali Dal dubbed it as communal. It seems the party did have pro-Muslim bias in view of the overall communal consciousness.

Prior to 1937, the representation of Hindu communal groups and parties in the legislature far exceeded that of the Congress party. The Congress, and its ally the Akali Dal, on the aftermath of the 'Non-Cooperation' and Khalafat movements decided against office acceptance in the provincial executives under the Government of India Act, 1919. The Hindu political groups, however, opted for office acceptance in order to protect their community and class interests. It seems the leaders of these Hindu groups were more fully entrenched in the prevailing social structure. As to the support base of these leaders Gerald A. Heeger writes :

Most of these men were active in the various Hindu communal and sectarian associations which had sprung up in Punjab.... in the early part of the century—Hindu-Sabhas, the reformist Arva Samajes, the orthodox Sanatan Dharam Sabhas.

Despite sectarian differences these various bodies were united by their common concern for Hindu interests.<sup>62</sup>

Till 1930s Sikh political interests in the Punjab legislature were looked after by a few independents, and Sikh notables in the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The latter in due course extended its support

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62. Gerald A. Heeger, "The Growth of the Congress Movement in Punjab 1920-1940", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1 (November 1972), p. 41.

to the Unionist Party.<sup>63</sup>

In the first election, under the Government of India Act 1935, the Unionist Party won 95 seats (out of 175). In addition to the bulk of Muslim seats it included 13 Hindu Unionists, and 8 Hindu and Sikh scheduled castes. Chief Khalsa Diwan's political wing, the Khalsa National Party, with 14 members also joined the Unionist government. The urban Hindu representation was limited to one independent, Manohar Lal, and few of his personal supporters".<sup>64</sup>

For the first time, the Congress won 18 seats which included 11 Hindus, i.e. 1/4th of the total Hindu seats, including five Sikhs belonged to the various left-oriented groups or parties. By 1945, the Congress increased its strength to 33 members in the Assembly. The reason for the Congress growth being that its dominant faction led by Gopi Chand Bhargava strongly espoused urban Hindu interests. Secondly, the Unionist Party leader, Sikandar Hayat Khan, while maintaining the independent entity of the party, allowed its Muslim members to have Muslim League membership as well. This left the Hindu groups no alternative except the Congress.<sup>65</sup>

After the 1937 elections, Akali Dal joined the Congress Legislature Party. But in 1940, Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader, fearing that the Congress may accept the demand for Pakistan, and his concern for Sikh interests, led to his estrangement with the Congress Party. In 1942, the dominant faction of the Akali Dal entered into coalition with the Unionist Party. This led to the merging of the Khalsa National Party with the dominant Akali group—thus uniting the two major Sikh parties. A few pro-Congress Akalis, like P. S. Kairon, joined the Congress.

Akali Dal under Master Tara Singh leadership now adopted an increasingly independent stand in the matter of Sikh interests.

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63. Kushwant Singh, **A History of the Sikhs**, Vol. 2, **op. cit.**, pp. 221-225.

64. Stephen Oren, "The Sikhs, Congress and the Unionists in British Punjab, 1937-1945", **Modern Asian Studies**, Vol. 8, Part 3, pp. 397-418.

65. Heegar, **op. cit.**, p. 40.

This led to suspicion among the Hindus which found strident expression in the local vernacular press. Master Tara Singh in turn 'attacked the Punjabi Hindus' for trying to include Sikhs in the category of Hindus and he added the Sikhs did not wish to be dominated by the Muslims or absorbed by the Hindus'.<sup>66</sup>

The 1946 Punjab Assembly election results reflected polarisation of the communities on communal lines. The Congress still retained some support among the Sikhs, but mutual suspicion and distrust between the two communities persisted, and got further aggravated in the post-independence period.

### Post — Independence Developments

On the aftermath of partition, the demographic complexion of the Indian Punjab (then called East Punjab) underwent a radical change. The influx of Hindu-Sikh migrants from the Western Punjab increased the urban population of the Punjab. Hindus, with 64 per cent, formed a majority of the state population. Sikhs, concentrated in the central Punjab plains — more or less equivalent to the present Punjab state — were around 33 per cent.<sup>67</sup> Of the total Sikh population of the central Punjab plains over 88 per cent lived in the rural areas, and less than 12 per cent in the urban.<sup>68</sup>

The developments in the early years of post-partition had differential impact on different social groups and communities. At the moment, we are concerned with its impact on two leading groups of the Sikh society, small urban middle class and the Sikh peasantry. Majority of the Sikh peasantry in the canal colonies of the Western Punjab were migrants from the central Punjab plains on the Indian side. So after the partition these peasants were allotted Muslim evacuees land in or near their ancestral places. Naturally, they faced not

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66. Stephen Oren, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

67. This is based on the 1961 census figures.

68. Paul Wallace, "The Political Party System of Punjab, India : A Study of Factionalism", University of California, Berkeley, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1966, p. 74.

any great hardship in adjusting to the new situation. Khatri and Arora caste groups formed the leading section of the urban Sikh middle class. In the urban locales they found limited opportunities for trade. In trade, job opportunities in private and public sectors, they faced competition with the more numerous Hindus.<sup>69</sup> There were less visible difficulties at the social level. As the majority of their caste-fellows or those belonging to the related castes happened to be within the Hindu fold, the accident of difference in religion led to the weakening or even snapping of these traditional social ties, including deeper kinship relationships. In the elected legislative bodies at the state level and local bodies in the towns, they faced bleak prospect.

In the unfavourable socio-political milieu, this 'older Sikh urban middle class'<sup>70</sup> turned increasingly to religion for solace, and to the brotherhood of the larger religious community. Master Tara Singh and others, from this social segment, still occupied top leadership positions in the Akali Dal.<sup>71</sup> This social group also provided leadership to the Sikh community in the cultural sphere. The holders of these positions are called 'cultural elites'. They edited magazine, newspapers, wrote extensively on Sikh religion, history and politics; and through their literary works contributed significantly to the development of the Punjabi literature. In short the 'cultural elites' acted as opinion-builders for the Sikh community. Dominant section from this group pleaded for the maintenance of a separate political entity for the Sikhs. In this connection Joyce Pettigrew rightly observes: "what (older) urbanite gave to the Sikh community was a sense of identity. By elaborating aspects of Sikh traditions urbanite

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69. Kushwant Singh, *op cit.*, pp. 291-292.

70. The present Sikh middle class is more variegated as it also includes members from peasant and even artisan castes in addition to the trading castes. The term older 'Sikh middle class' relates to the latter.

71. Of course a few of his lieutenants later joined the Congress party.

intellectuals strengthened the community's sense of cultural homogeneity."<sup>72</sup>

In the changed situation the Congress party became the ruling party. Immediately after independence, and then again in 1956, Akali Dal's legislators in the Punjab Assembly joined the Congress party. This process strengthened the Congress base amongst the peasantry and other rural classes. As Sikh peasantry formed nearly 2/3rd of the total Sikh population, concentrated in compact area of central Punjab plains, this led to the rise of peasant leaders like Partap Singh Kairon, Giani Kartar Singh and Swaran Singh in the legislative arena. During Kairon's Chief Ministership of the state (1956-1964), rural development schemes were encouraged, and the peasantry also found a fair share of jobs in the administration. So till mid-1960s, peasantry, predominantly Jat Sikh, remained satisfied with the government.

Despite the aforementioned positive achievements of the government, the Congress failed to take principled stand on the communally sensitive issues, such as, reporting of the correct mother tongue in the decennial censuses in the Punjabi-speaking region, medium of instruction for the elementary education, and finally the reorganisation of the state on linguistic basis. These issues created divisions within the Congress on communal lines. In view of this state of affairs, P. C. Joshi, a veteran Communist leader, lamented that "the Congress in the Punjab, after independence, fought neither Sikh nor Hindu communalism, on any serious principled basis, but appeased both, by turns . . . ."<sup>73</sup>

Notwithstanding the ascendancy of the Congress party till mid-1960s, Akali Dal under Master Tara Singh leadership was able

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72. Joyce Pettigrew, "The Influence of Urban Sikhs on the Development of the Movement For a Punjabi-Speaking State", *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. V, No. 1 (February 1978), p. 163.

73. P. C. Joshi, "Triumph of a Just Cause", in *Punjabi Suba — A Symposium*, Delhi : National Book Club, nd., p. 91.

to build a coalition of urban Sikh middle classes with landed notables and the tradition-oriented peasantry. The former, especially the 'older middle classes', formulated the ideology of the party while the latter provided mass support. The religio-political ideology showed little concern with economic issues. In practice, it reflected the interests of the middle classes and the rural notables. This conservative stance of the party alienated the poorer sections, especially the landless scheduled castes from the party. And this partly explains the poor showing of the party in the legislative arena.<sup>74</sup> Its religio-political ideology views the whole Sikh community as a corporate entity. Here is a summary of Master Tara Singh's address to the Sikh Student Federation where he argued that 'power derived through the favour of the Congress would be no real power. The real power . . . could accrue only from the solidarity of the community. He urged for this purpose the retention of the independent character of the Sikh body politics. His appeal was openly in the name of the **Panth** and he drew upon images and symbols from Sikh tradition and history to buttress his argument.<sup>75</sup> Master Tara Singh also stressed the need of political power for the Sikhs: "We cannot gain political power without a firm faith in our religious heritage. Equally, our religious faith will wither away without political power."<sup>76</sup>

A brief comments on this religio-political ideology are submitted. From the point view of the defenders of this ideology, it is meant to provide a protective shield for the Sikh community so that its distinct cultural identity be maintained. But in a plural society inhabited by so many communities, would it not create misgivings and apprehensions among the members of other communities — and may be it turns out to be counter productive. In any interpretation of a doctrine, including the doctrines putatively based on religious ideals and traditions, human interests — including class and group

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74. The party, however, commands the allegiance of religiously devout, and upward mobile sections belonging to the lower castes.

75. Harbans Singh, **The Heritage of the Sikhs**, New Delhi : Manohar Publications, 1983, pp. 337-338.

76. Quoted in **Ibid.**, p. 343.



interests — inevitably intrude in. Further, the interpretation of a doctrine is also historically conditioned. Moreover, this may be based on partisan considerations, and may involve what Paul R. Brass calls symbol selection (and perhaps their 'manipulation').<sup>77</sup> One may also ask that in a stratified society when ideology is interpreted in the domain of practical politics would it serve the interests of all the strata or the interests represented by the dominant elements? These issues and questions posed need to be examined for the purpose of clarification and objectivity. We think the present difficulties faced by the Punjabis are no less due to the dismissive attitude in examining ideologies, especially when delicate questions of religious traditions and ideals are involved.

In the light of the Akali Dal's ideology, the genuine demand of the Punjabi-speaking state was also couched in religious idioms. One defence of this strategy is that in a society where political choices are made in terms of ethnic/communal considerations, the aggrieved ethnic groups are likely to resort to cultural protest. A state claiming to be secular need to provide secular infrastructure in the society itself. In India, we have not succeeded on this count, so there is greater urgency to solve ethnic problems through institutional devices — may be through adjusting the federal set up keeping in view the just aspirations of the concerned nationality group.

With this brief digression, we resume the discussion of the Akali Dal's demand for the Punjabi-speaking state. In 1962, the leadership of the dominant Akali Dal was assumed by a religious divine of peasant stock, Sant Fateh Singh.<sup>78</sup> He presented the demand purely on linguistic principle, though at the same time insinuating the government that its non-acceptance by it shows discrimination against the Sikhs. He also laid stress on Hindu-Sikh unity. Perhaps in view of his rural social background Sikh solidarity alone was not

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77. Paul R. Brass, **Language, Religion and Politics in North India**, London : Cambridge University Press, 1974, p. 280.

78. Some critics who are not quite sympathetic to Sant Fateh Singh attribute his rise (to leadership) to the manipulation of the ruling Congress party and the government.

the desideratum for him. This incidentally demonstrates that the way a particular ideology is formulated and interpreted is conditioned socially and depends upon historical circumstances. There is no such thing as, a priori, 'given' ideology.

After a great deal of Akali agitation and procrastination on the part of the government, it acceded to the demand of a Punjabi-speaking state in November 1966. With this background, we briefly take up the analysis of Akali agitation of 1980s which assumed the form of cultural protest.

### **From Legislative Politics to Cultural Protest**

In the post-1966 Punjab, Sikhs formed 60 per cent of the total population, and Hindus around 38 per cent.<sup>79</sup> In the new set up, Akali Dal led by peasant leadership followed a pragmatic policy in having electoral alliances first in 1967 with Jana Sangh and the Communist parties, and later with Janata party in 1977. They led the coalition governments but invariably the coalitions proved to be unstable. Among other reasons for this, the primary reason being the ideological incompatibilities between the Akali Dal and Hindu-dominated parties, such as Jana Sangh. Given the social configuration of the state, Akali Dal can not secure legislative majority on its own.

In view of the conservative nature of its policies, the party in the rural areas is generally equated with the interests of the land-owning peasantry. The scheduled castes, a large majority of whom are agricultural labourers do not vote for the Akali Dal in view of the class cleavage in the rural society. There are sections among the Sikhs, especially the peasantry, who support the two Communist parties. Till 1980, around 14 to 15 per cent peasantry, the backbone of the Akali Dal, too supported the Congress candidates. Obviously, given the Akali Dal's ideology it is unable to secure legislative majority on its own. This partly explains Akali Dal's switch from legislative politics to cultural protest. Till 1980, Akalis were mainly

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79. Figures are based on 1971 Census. It is surmised that Sikh population in 1981 is around 53 to 54 per cent. However, no official figures are available.

concerned with economic issues which related to Sikh peasantry or the Punjab state as a whole. But in view of the unhappy experience with this strategy they increasingly took to the in-built ideology of the Akali Dal formulated by older urban middle class political and 'cultural elites'.

The last two decades witnessed, especially since mid-1960s, rapid changes in the socio-economic structure of the state. In the first phase green revolution led to a considerable increase in the agricultural output followed later by the slowing of the growth rate. The prosperity on the part of the well-off peasantry and enterprising artisan class, led some of them to seek better opportunities in the urban locales. So the new migrants from the rural areas, in addition to economic competition, faced the problem of social adjustment. It may also be mentioned here that in the decade ending 1981, the proportion of urban population has increased from 23.7 to 27.7 per cent — a highest rate of increase since independence.

In the rural social structure, a large majority belonging to the artisan and servicing castes no longer follow their traditional occupations, this has lessened their dependence on the landowning classes. The growing prosperity in the rural areas led to the opening of new gurdwaras or Ravidas temples. In number of rural gurdwaras, regular paid *granthis* (reciter of holy scriptures), generally from lower castes, have been appointed. This has provided some persons fresh avenues of upward mobility through religious institutions.

Commercialisation of agriculture and increase in transport and educational facilities has lessened the urban and rural gap. Punjab villages, especially the bigger ones, now get regular delivery of the vernacular newspapers or even magazines, which generally overplay communal issues. All this has created a feeling, especially among the Sikh peasantry that the Congress party takes lesser interest in protecting the Punjab's interests.

Given the religious and social network and the mobilizatory potential of religion, the economic and political issues too take the form of cultural protest. The Akali leaders, predominantly belonging to the peasantry, in framing their important policy documents

and in deciding important issues take the help of 'cultural elites' with traditional orientations.<sup>80</sup> The latter generally belong to the urban middle classes (including both the older and new entrants from the rural areas). These cultural elites in view of their unfavourable social situation generally present a more dogmatic interpretation of the Akali Dal's religio-political ideology. The present confusion in the thinking of the Akali leaders is due to the limited perspective of the 'cultural elites'. For instance, Akali Dal has almost forgotten the moderate ideology of Sant Fateh Singh. Instead, they have resurrected the older ideology which under new circumstances should have suitably been amended.

As to the role of militant leader, Sant Bhindranwale, he only provided the leadership to various sections of the Sikhs who were earlier outside the power structure of the established Akali leaders.\* The All India Sikh Student Federation and various other youth bodies provided the organisation and the muscle power. The concomitant oppression of the state has further intensified the movement of cultural protest for which the necessary infrastructure already existed in the Punjabi society. The Punjabi Hindu and Sikh middle classes and the ruling Congress party have not learnt any lesson. In case this downhill movement is not prevented, it should be kept in mind that the thrust of such movements is generally 'towards "civil war" goals rather than "social revolutionary" goals'.<sup>81</sup>

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80. Field notes.

81. J. Rothschild, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.

\* It may be mentioned that Sant Bhindranwale made no change in the basic ideology of the Akali Dal; see Harminder Singh Sandhu, *A 7 India Sikh Students Federation : Annual Report*, (September 1983), Amritsar : AISSF.

# COMMUNALISM IN INDIAN LITERATURE

By

Mohammad Hasan

Communalism does not mean exclusive concern for the welfare and betterment of a particular community, nor it should be defined as search for cultural identity and anxiety for its preservation. Communalism may however be defined as an ideology of preaching hatred against other communities or of snatching amenities from other communities for the benefit of one's own community. Hence, to be religious, or to plan social welfare of a particular community can not be dubbed communalism till it does not preach hatred against other communities on the basis of race, religion or culture.

The definition will hold good for all communities. Hence, the communalism of majority community which can more aptly be described as national chauvinism and often passes as nationalism, or the often misleading phrase-national mainstream-is, in fact, the other side of the phenomenon called communalism, and necessarily much more dangerous than the latter because it is mostly the cause of defensive mechanism of the minority communities called communalism.

Communalism, in India, has a long and chequered history but for fruitful discussion, we would confine ourselves with the nature of present situation-which is qualitatively different from earlier phases. It must be noted in passing that, however, ghastly and fatal, the phenomenon may be, it is basically an urban in character and mainly restricted to the middle classes. The lower strata of peasants and workers as well as the higher strata of society is almost free from communalism, though the former heavily suffer in communal riots while the latter often benefit from them. It is also interesting to note that ignorant and the illiterate though much more religious than the educated middle classes are not communal in their in normal life-situations behaviour while the instigators of communal frenzy themselves are hardly religious in any respect.

Hence, it will not be improper to conclude that communal virus is injected much more effectively through the process of educa-

tion. which fortifies, communalism through a distortion of History, Philosophy and Culture. The subtlest among these are the values or prejudices spread, through Literature, which has been described as the 'unacknowledged legislator of mankind' and imperceptible weaver and transformer of national dreams and ideals of a nation and hence imparts to it both pride and prejudice.

Despite the pious declaration that Indian Literature is one, though written in various languages, the fact remains that literary values and particularly literary history in every Indian language has been distorted so as to emphasize communalism and to arouse communal hatred. When we speak of Indian Literature before foreign audiences or when we write for them, Indian Literature is often interpreted as Hindu Literature with an accent on Hindu mythology or Hindu theories of Spiritualism or occultism of different varieties. This has often been described as the identity of Indian Literature. Deep grounding of literature in mythological and even obscurantist rigmoral has been projected as its main distinguishing feature for this alone can cure the West of its materialism and provide true enlightenment of Hare Ram, Hare Krishna to the world.

Transmitted to the national audience, this view clearly alienates practically all non-Hindu writings and builds up alienation between communities. Again the simplistic theory that all Indian languages stem from Sansrit and all Indian scripts to the Devnagari heritage clearly carves a wedge between Hindi and its dialects, on one hand and Urdu, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Punjabi and South Indian Dravidian languages on the other. To characterise Indian Literature by tracing its early origins to Hindu mythology repeats the same error and strengthens the hands of chauvinists and communalists by placing prejudice above Linguistic and Literary History.

Communal prejudice manifests itself most crudely when Literary Histories of Indian languages deal with the advent of Muslim rule in India. They would like to ignore it either as a bad dream by attributing all elements of Indo-Iranian or Indo-Turkish synthesis to remote indigeneous factors or by emphasizing that the Muslim rulers were busy forcibly converting all Hindus to Islam, demolishing temples and perpetuating untold oppression upon Hindu citizens

which caused the reaction and the Hindu populace turned to Bhakti of gods to rekindle their faith in Hinduism and later on this resistance developed into the emergence of various heroes who fought against infidels and malach Muslims and saved the Hindu faith and the Hindu homeland from all pollution. These heroes range from Prithviraj to Rana Pratap and Shivaji.

I hold no brief for so-called Muslim kings but only wish to point out that to paint all cultures with the brush of religion is both erraneous and dangerous. In fact, all Muslim rulers or migrants were not from one cultural stock but belonged to different cultural milieu, hence their cultural heritage must be identified by their ethnic stock. They were either Afghans, Iranians, Turks or Central Asians and if their influences are analysed from their acceptance into the Indian fabric as a synthetical element and will expose the communal prejudice against all Muslims, who have been unwittingly held responsible for all the acts of omission and commission of these so-called Muslim rulers. Secondly, rulers of all religions carry on their administration according to their political expediency and not by religious precepts though their political actions are often presented in the garb of religious terminology to gain popularity. Muslim rulers were no exception. This attitude towards Muslim rulers creates antipathy to Indian Muslims in general and to their culture, language and religion in particular.

This discussion will take us far into the realm of History. Suffice it to say that Literature has woven a web of legends and myth round this distorted fiew of History-for instance, the interpretation of Chand Bardai's Prithviraj Rasa or the legend of Padimini and Alauddin Khilji or Sivaji's love affair with Zebun nisa.

On the other hand, in Urdu literature, which is relatively free from this obsurantist prejudice, the entire history of the language and literature has been traced with the coming of Muslims to India, ignoring the indigeneous development or language, thought and literate before that date. Identification of poets with the Muslim rulers is also not absent. Nusrati's Ali Nama describes the king Ali Adil Shah's exploits against Marahattas and lends it a communal colour. Later on Dastan writers identified the Hindus in India with

the pre-Islam Arab infidels and gave their villains the same cultural milieu. The idealisation of political adventurers like Mahmud Ghaznavi in the form of religious crusader and the marriages or romances of Muslim heroes with non-Muslim heroines also manifest the same communal prejudice.

In the British period, particularly after Fort William College communal division of literature and language started. Khari Boli in Dev Nagri script with Tat Sama Sansrit words became the language of the Hindus-or in words of Grierson, some sort of 'a lingua franca of the Hindus-while the same language with some intermingling of Arabic Persian and Turkish words and Persian script was declared to be the language of Indian Muslims. The bifurcation was so complete that despite the fact that a host of Hindu writers continued to write in Urdu till today, yet most of them till the 20th century adopted the Muslim idioms and the Muslim characters in their writings. For instance, Ratan Nath Sarshar in his four volume novel *Fasana-i-Azad* and Daya Shanker Nasim in his celebrated masnavi *Gulzar-i-Nasim* have not introduced even a single Hindu character. In fact, barring Insha's *Rani Ketki ki Kahani*, written in Khari Boli without using any Persian or Arabic word, no Urdu work of fiction has any Hindu character till the days of Prem chand.

The British challenge to the Indian Psyche was not only political but also cultural. Macaulay in 1835 challenged the entire Indian literature and openly remarked that the entire library of Indian literature is of much less in value than a shelf of books of Western knowledge. Coupled with the onslaught of the new ideas in the realm of religion and social behaviour, this challenge evoked strong reaction compelling different Indian communities to reinterpret their values in such a way as to provide an answer to the British challenge and to discover some redeeming features from the treasures of their past. Religion came handy and our writers took upon themselves the task of reinterpreting it in such a way as to appear rational enough to rebut the Western challenge. Bankim Chandra's *Anand Math* was perhaps written in the same spirit though the rebellion was against the so-called Muslim Nabob. The so-called religious sanyasis were trying to give Hindu religious thought a practical revolutionary political interpretation. The novel gave us the national anthem but



it also created or highlighted the communal cleavage between Hindus and Muslims. It is noteworthy that in all the novels and short stories of Bangla writers who include writers like Bankim Chandra, Sarat Chandra and Tagore there are only three Muslim characters, Zebunisa in Bankim, a Muslim peasant in Sarat and Kabuliwala in Tagore.

Steeped in religious and mythological and spiritual aroma, Bangla literature was, understandably but rather unjustly, described by the author of the Economic History of India as incomprehensible to non-Hindus and particularly to Muslims. No wonder then that even revolutionary Bangla Muslim writers like Nazrul Islam and Muzaffar Ahmad had to organise a separate organisation of Muslim Bangla Writers in the twenties and brought out their own journal.

In Hindi, which is now our official language, the situation happens to be particularly difficult. Practically all literary historians of repute have ascribed the rise of Bhakti Movement as a reaction against the forced conversions to Islam by Muslim rulers and the antidote to the tyranny of the Muslim rulers as well as to the challenge of Islam, though, in fact, Bhakti was merely a movement of cultural synthesis. Pandit Ram Chandra Shukla was the first to include the name of Syed Mohammad Jaisi in the list of Sufi Prem Margi Bhakti poets but his analysis of Bhakti remains the same-which naturally highlights poets like Tulsi Das and Sur Das as the poets of resurgence and preservation of the Hinduism and ignore the writings of Kabir and the Nirgunvadis, on the one hand, and Jaisi and others on the other hand, though both these trends have been included in the blanket term 'Bhakti' under different categories.

To continue our main argument, the British challenge accelerated our urge to idealise our past and to reinterpret some of its values as our befitting reply to the Western challenge of political slavery and cultural domination. This resulted in Tilak's reinterpretation of the Gita. Iqbal's reinterpretation of the teachings of Islam, Aurobindo's interpretation of the Upanishads and Mahatma Gandhi's interpretation of the Ahimsa and Ram Rajya. The urge to find something dazzling from our rich past to rebut the West was natural and perhaps born of national pride but it did result in creating false pride in each religious group and confronted it not only with the British but also

with other religious and cultural groups residing in India, thus providing fertile breeding ground for communal hatred and divisive tendencies. Tilak's Ganesh Utsav, though apart of revolutionary technique in its initial phase, became a separatist device. Iqbal's clarion call to Muslims to shed inaction and to ignite the torch of the Self to emerge supreme assumed communal proportions and no wonder, obscurantist and communal reactionary forces made use of them more easily despite its revolutionary content. Perhaps it can be taken as an axiom that the more forward looking a particular literature happens to be at a particular point of time, the less communal and obscurantist it will be. If more evidence is required, it may very easily be furnished by the non-communal nature of all literature produced under the inspiration of the Progressive Writers movement from 1936-1960. It may be said with some justified pride that despite the fact that the Muslim League movement politically succeeded in dividing the country into India and Pakistan, yet could not win over a single poet worth the name who could enthuse people for Partition. The entire movement had nothing to fall back upon in literature barring their own distortion of Iqbal.

Communal riots of 1946-1947 are part of recent history. Our writers felt restless and incessantly wrote about these unfortunate happenings. They even bestirred themselves into some sort of action. Peace processions were organised, statements issued but the riots continued. This was also accompanied with yellow writings of the variety specialised by Shri Guru Dutt which fan communal frenzy by portraying the historical and romantic victories of Hindu heroes over Muslim men and women. This brings us almost to the contemporary scene. It is not an insignificant fact that Indian writings in all the languages-barring Urdu-have almost forgotten the theme of communal riots. Barring Esham Sahni's Sahitya Akademi award winning novel, no Hindi novel on the theme has been written. Even perceptive writers like Yashpal, Amrit Lal Nagar and Markandev have left the theme out of their purview in their novels which present an authentic panorama of contemporary life. These include authors of Rag Durbari and Maila Anchal. For Agyeya and his friends, perhaps the problem never existed or, if did, it was not of any aesthetic consequence.

In Urdu, it has, on the other hand, become so pervasive that it may be said to be become a haunting obsession. Practically all

important novels and up either on the Partition of India or with the depiction of the communal holocaust and the end of the common 'Hindu-Muslim' culture brought about by it. To name only a few, Qurratul Ain's Aag Ra Darya, Qazi Abdus Sattar's Shab Gazida, Abdullah Husain's Udas Naslen, Khadija Mastur's Angan, Hayatullah Ansari's Lahu Ke Phool. The same is repeated in other genres. There is at least one poet, Kalim Ajiz, who has been exclusively writing all poetry on exclusively this theme. This obsession with the theme which has been incessantly occurring and recurring and thus disturbing the intellectual and artistic equilibrium of our writers has on the other hand, has now become an obstacle in their identification with the contemporary movements on the national scale which are likely to bring about revolutionary changes in our society. It is no incident that in Urdu literature which has been in the vanguard of the Progressive movement in the thirties and forties, no movement like Hungry Generation or Digambar Poetry or Dalit Poetry or Naxal Literature or any such trend of Protest Poetry exist today on any large scale.

In recent years, modernist trends have sought to ostracise literature from contemporary tensions of these sort. Under the garb of modernism, 'obscurantism' and revivalism is raising its head and communalism is manifesting itself as injured identity of a persecuted community thus depriving the minority of its opportunity to involve itself with the task of national reconstruction and handing it over under threat of insecurity to the obscurantists and fundamentalists of every variety. Indian Literature has, therefore, still to play the role of conjuring the image of a forward-looking society based on Rationalism, Humanism and cosmopolitanism, values which negate communalism and chauvinism and contribute not only to narrow national interests but also to the larger interests of humanity.

# A BRIEF NOTE ON COMMUNALISM AND MARATHI LITERATURE

By

Dinkar Sakrikar

The modern Marathi literature developed after the establishment of the English education. The study of the English language and literature brought people into contact with new political, economic and social concepts (developed) in the West. The ideas of individual freedom, the dignity of man, equality of men and women, government by the consent of people, freedom of press and expression all these began to exercise their powerful influence over the minds of English-educated people.

Simultaneously, there was yet another agency which sought to influence the people, to change their minds. Along with the British rulers came the christian missionaries who launched a vigorous religious propaganda. They attacked the Hindu rituals, the supersticians, the caste systems the child marriages the shavings of widows' heads and also the Hindu Polytheism. The Christian propaganda was having some effect on the Hindu Society and not only the poor illiterate, backward, untouchable masses but even men and women belonging to higher castes were impressed by the missionary work and embraced christianity. This naturally created a great disturbance amongst Hindu orthodoxy and gave birth to a revivalist movement. This movement had twin planks: one, an attack on Christianity itself and second a glorification of everything ancient and the Hindu past.

It was inevitable that both these trends the rationalists, humanitarian democratic thinking, and religious and cultural revivalism should find its reflection in the creative writing of the period. The pre-British literature was mostly limited to poetry. Its source of inspiration was Sanskrit. The prose writing really begins from the British period. While Poetry is thus an ancient and indigenous form of expression the prose form that developed later like essays, short-stories and fiction was borrowed from English. It is the prose which yielded more smoothly and naturally to inculcation of both reformists and revivalists' ideas.

Marathi stage from its very early period began to campaign against evil social customs like child marriage and equally so against blind imitation of the West. People who dressed like Europeans and took to drinking and allowed their women to join them in social circles were the targets of attacks. In prose the influence of Sir Walter Scott proved deeper and wider. In imitation of his historical novels several Marathi writers took to historicals. The most prominent amongst them were Hari Narayan Apte and Nath Madhav. The influence of Bengali writers like Bankim Chandra had also had its impact. His *Anand Math* was translated into Marathi and acquired an instant popularity. Most of these novelists who used history as their material, naturally selected themes from the recent past. The fall of Vijay Nagar Empire or the various exploits of Shivaji the heroism of Rana Pratap and similar episodes were exploited for the heroic narrations. All these, of course related to a period in which Muslim and Hindu kings were warring with each other for supremacy. In other words howsoever, the writers might have treated the material inevitably, the story essentially became that of confrontation between Muslims and Hindus; the Hindu hero, an idealist-inspired by sense of devotion to his religion, dedicated to the cause of its defence, and ready and capable of performing great heroic deeds, his muslim protagonists powerful, cunning good fighter, but always ready to resort to deceitful methods. These became almost the fixed images communicated from novel to novel writer to writer and is continued to be done so even now.

One point must be stressed here in regard to these historical novelists or playwrights. They chose this material with the ultimate object of arousing national sentiments and to create the urge to resist foreign domination. They were writing in a period which was surcharged with powerful patriotic currents released by the most dynamic and fiery leader of the times, Lokmanya Tilak. His thundering speeches and articles his courageous defiance of the British, his imprisonments were inspirations to them. As they could not directly take the theme of this combat between their own mighty hero and the British antagonists, they selected the themes from mythology, or history to communicate their message to the people. Khadilkar known as Shakespeare of the Marathi language presented this conflict between the nationalist Tilak and the imperialist Lyrzon in the play 'Kichakwadh'

in a very symbolic manner. The symbolism was so transparent that the British recognised it and the play was banned for sometime. There was no such risk in recreating historical situations either in a novel or a drama. Of course even in a historical play Shivaji's speeches could be loaded with double meaning and easily be related to a contemporary situation. But a general thrust of these plays was to present the Muslim as the foreign ruler and Shivaji or other Maratha heroes as fighters against oppression and tyranny. In the public mind these plays and these novels succeeded in creating willynilly, the old, now irrelevant antagonisms between the Muslim tyrant and the Hindu as the challenger. The subtle manner in which literature influences the consciousness of the people proved effective in this case too and people's minds have suffered a throw back in history where they continued to hover around old and dead relationships. The continued distrust and suspicions and hostility towards Muslims, if not entirely at least partly is due to the impact of this powerful historical literature.

It is amazing how Indian intellectuals especially the historians have tended to accept the British history of India as being objective and truthful. Researches conducted by institutions like Bharat Itihas Sanshodhan Mandal, Pune have produced evidence which completely contradicts what the British historians have written about the Hindu Muslim relations in the so called Muslim period. The Indian historians have failed to take the proper notice of this significant researches and our children continued to be taught highly prejudiced and biased accounts about Moghul rulers like Aurangzeb. Of course new and progressive trends are developing. When English education was started it was natural that Brahmins should monopolise it and consequently monopolize the cultural life of the people. In its history of fifty nine years only on two occasions a Maratha (by caste) was elected president of The All India Marathi literary conference and it was only this year for the first time that a Dalit writer was elected as the President. Now, the social base of the Marathi literature is widening, the Dalit writers have made a powerful impact and a very significant contribution to Marathi literature. Young people, both men and women, even from nomadic tribes are acquiring distinction as creative writers. It is something worth-nothing that the international recognition to Marathi writing in the form of Ford Foundation. Scholarship has been won by a Dalit writer Daya Pawar and another writer from a nomadic

tribe Laxman Mane. These new writers arising from the outcaste communities who are in revolt against the caste and communal establishment are a new vitality in their writing which is expanding the horizons of Marathi Literature.

It is hoped that there now writers would succeed in offering a new insight into the relationship of people in regional and national society, especially, between Hindu and Muslim. Some Hindu and some Muslim writers of Marathis are already doing this good work, and their number and influence is bound to increase.

# BOMBAY BHIWANDI RIOTS — A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

By

Asgar Ali Engineer.

The Bombay-Bhiwandi riots which shook the country for nearly ten days should not be traced merely as a local phenomenon although local factors are also of no less significance. Many journalists and some others have propounded various theories many of them quite shaky or based on doubtful evidence. The most talked about theory was the one involving smugglers and builders having financed these riots. While it is undoubtedly true that anti-social elements have played definite role in these riots it would be erroneous to ascribe principal organizing role to them. Moreover, a probe by this writer does not indicate any systematic involvement of builders or smugglers turned builders.

Propounding such theories, it must be remembered, diverts our attention from the political aspects of these riots which are far more important and of much graver implications. In the opinion of this writer these riots, like other major riots, must be viewed in the background of political developments in the country. The politicians are the principal and anti-social elements, at their back and call, the subsidiary agents in promoting and inciting communal violence. Those who tend to hold smugglers and builders as the principal agents forget, if not, tend to minimise, the role of politics and politicians.

It would be most rewarding to throw some light on the political situation in the country in order to understand the background of ever increasing communal violence. The makers of the Indian Constitution had adopted secularism as the sheet anchor of the state policy and it suited the emerging bourgeoisie excellently well. However, this could be spoken of only in an ideal sense. Putting secularism in practice and achieving national integration (economic integration in a country with myriads of religious, linguistic and other ethnic groups and the question of nationalities unresolved, is not easy to achieve without achieving political integration, at least on an ideal



plane) is not easy even at the best of times given uneven capitalist development and stresses and strains produced by it.

With the onset of capitalist development host of forces are released sharpening conflict between various regions, castes and communities. The Telangana, Assam and Punjab agitations on the one hand, and increased caste and communal violence on the other, are the result of this process of uneven capitalist development. The role of anti-social elements in caste, communal and regional violence should be treated, by serious social scientists, as contingent to the political consequences of the socio-economic developments taking place within the capitalist frame-work. Over simplifications would only confound the already confused situation. The fast emerging caste, communal and regional conflicts, also manifesting itself in the form of greater emphasis on ethnic identities, has created a great political crisis for the ruling classes. In view of this crisis the bourgeoisie really finds it difficult to fulfill its commitment to secularism, although it continues to pay lip service to it.

The ruling classes have, of late, sought to adopt the strategy of encouraging and making unabashed alliances with the rank communalists among the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. It is no secret now that Mrs. Indira Gandhi very subtly encouraged emergence of Vishwa Hindu Parishad and its blatant Hindu communalist stance. Emergence of Bhindranwale as a militant political force is too widely talked about to be repeated here.

In this connection one has to take note of an important development which has taken place over the years and which has brought about shift in the alliances within the ruling classes. The caste composition of the ruling classes is fast changing. When the country achieved freedom, the Brahmins and a few other top castes, comparatively much fewer in number, were totally dominant. The middle and other backward castes were totally subservient and did not play any crucial role. The ruling Congress, in order to widen its support base, wooed religious minorities, especially the Muslims, often exposing itself to the charge of appeasing them.

The middle and backward Hindu castes, until their political profile was low either did not resent the wooing of minorities by the

ruling Congress or even approved of it. In Maharashtra, for example, the tussle for power between the Brahmins and Marathas — a middle caste — began soon after independence. The struggle erupted in the open after the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. The Marathas even became sympathetic to the Muslims. It would thus be seen that the support base of Hindu communalism was mainly confined to the upper castes. The middle backward castes while undoubtedly sharing the Hindu ethos did not show active and political hostility. The alliance with the minorities, therefore, did not pose much of a problem for the ruling Congress (the chief representative of the ruling classes in control of state power) despite constant attacks on it from the Bharatiya Jana Sangha and other Hindu communalists for following the policy of appeasement towards Muslims.

The late sixties was a period of deep economic as well as political crisis. Mrs. Gandhi split the Congress widening her support base among the Muslims and the lower Hindu castes. By now the middle and backward castes had begun to assert themselves politically. The socio-economic transformation taking place both in rural and urban areas increased their aspirations and adult franchise helped them effectively bargain for share in economic and political power. Thus the middle and lower castes are acquiring greater political and economic clout. The political parties are now trying to widen their support base with the help of these castes. Yadavas, Jats, Bhoomihars, Ahirs, Marathas, Reddys, Patels and several other similar castes are becoming politically and economically predominant.

Among Muslims too a similar process is underway. Hitherto lower Muslim bradaris like Qureshis (those who deal in goats, buffaloes etc.), Ansaris, (weavers, loom owners, etc.) and similar other artisan bradaris are acquiring greater economic clout and consequently their political aspirations also soar high. The minorities as a rule tend to emphasise their religious identities which pay rich political dividend in view of their emotional appeal. The lower Muslim Bradaris are mainly concentrated in middle-sized towns like Bhiwandi, Malegaon, Moradabad, Meerut etc. These also happen to be the areas where the Hindu middle castes are prospering. The situation of confrontation develops between the Muslims and these Hindu castes and the Hindu middle castes are thus fast getting communalised.

In view of these developments it suits Mrs. Gandhi and her party better to win allies among these middle castes. Being more numerous, these castes can ensure greater mobilization of votes. The Muslims, on the other hand, for variety of reasons including greater political consciousness and consequent assertiveness are not in a mood to go whole hog with the ruling Congress. In view of all this there has been a perceptible shift in Mrs. Gandhi's electoral strategy. She is inclining to give greater weightage to Hindu upper caste and middle caste votes and minimising the significance of minority votes. She is even reported to have said in one of her speeches after the Bhiwandi-Bombay riots that the majority community also feelings which must be respected. Such a statement by her in late sixties was unthinkable. The army action in Punjab was also partly inspired by this changed electoral strategy. The Hindus of the North have welcomed the army action thus enhancing her a electoral appeal. She intends to successfully cut into the BJP votes. She did so successfully in the Jammu region with subtle RSS support and intends to repeat the performance in U.P. and Bihar.

The Bhiwandi-Bombay riots also must be seen in the same background. The Marathas in Maharashtra are an important support base for the ruling Congress. The Marathas, now a powerful ruling caste, have acquired arrogant caste and communal posture. It was Marathas who played principal role in organizing the Marathwada riots on the question of renaming the Marathwada University. The Maratha Mahasangh had played very active role in promoting the Pune-Solapur riots in 1982. The leaders of the Mahasangh had made virulent anti-Muslim speeches in the Pune-Solapur region before and during the riots.

It would not be wrong to maintain that the Bombay-Bhiwandi riots were incited mainly by Shiv Sena and were mainly between the Maharashtrian Hindus and the Muslims. The role of other Hindus was either passive or neutral, with some exceptions, of course. The ruling Congress and the State Government led by Vasant Dada Patil chose to remain rather silent spectators in view of the mounting offensive by Shiv Sena precisely because they could not afford to alienate Maratha sentiments roused by the communal fury. Mrs. Gandhi too remained silent on the issue refusing to blame anyone (restoration of

peace is more important than blaming anyone, she maintained in a press conference she addressed at the Raj Bhavan after touring the riot affected areas of Bhiwandi and Bombay) as she too did want to alienate the powerful sentiments of her political allies. If she really meant to check violence she could have asked the Chief Minister to swoop down on the culprits. The firm action did check communal violence when it erupted again in the Kherwadi area of Bandra East on 19th June. The arrest of 40 Shiv Sena Shakhā Pramukhs brought the situation under control. The second serious out break of communal violence making its position utterly ridiculous and hence its decision to put down the violence firmly.

The above discussion mainly focusses upon the national political scene and the changing alliances of the ruling party to suit its electrification strategy. The Indian bourgeoisie, it would thus be noted, is, despite its commitment to secularism which is essential requirement of economic integration of the country as a whole, resorting to casteist and communal politics in order to resolve emerging political crisis. The caste and communal violence occurring on ever increasing scale in the country must be primarily viewed in this background.

However, the above discussion should not make us oblivious of the local factors responsible for building up communal tension and finally causing the conflagration. In dealing with these factors the role of migrant labour population cannot be ignored. Bhiwandi is a fast developing powerloom centre. The majority of the looms are owned by U.P. Muslims and the workers are also Muslims from U.P. The Muslim population of Bhiwandi has been expanding due to migration from U.P. Also, sociologically speaking, these Muslims belong to lower Biradaris (mainly weaver caste known as Ansaris) and are religiously quite conservative. Some of these migrants are hard working and enterprising, soon succeed in raising their economic status and come to own a couple of powerlooms thus acquiring economic prosperity.

Some important consequences follow from the dynamics of this socio-economic situation. The propaganda by the Hindu communalists that the Muslims do not practice family planning and breed

much faster acquires credibility among general Hindus. In fact the immediate cause of provocation of these riots was the speech delivered by the Shiv Sena Chief Mr. Bal Thackeray on 22 April, 1984 wherein he described Muslims as a growing cancer in India and that this cancer required an operation. It is being said by the communalists that the Muslim population in India is around 17 crores (according to 1971 census it is little over 6 crores only) and even many Hindu advocates of Bhiwandi court dismiss the census figure and tend to believe the higher figure. Ironically even the Muslim communalists keep on complaining against deliberate suppression of Muslim population by the census authorities.

Since the migrant Muslims from U.P. being to lower Biradaris and are religiously quite conservative they spend more on religious rituals and other related activities on acquiring economic clout, they are perceived to be religiously aggressive and fundamentalist thus reinforcing another stereotype about Muslims. In view of all this the lower middle class Hindus easily swallow the Hindu communalist propaganda that the Muslims, if not checked in time, would succeed in carving out another Pakistan. In this connection it is interesting to note that the rioting in Bhiwandi began after the flag war on the eve of Muslim religious festival Shah Barat in which a few Muslim youngsters were involved. The flag war was projected as religious aggressiveness of the Muslims. It is also interesting to note that the youth involved in the flag war were mostly lumpen elements, connected with no organization or political party. The elderly Muslims, connected with different organizations and political parties, had exercised due caution and had resolved to check all the facts about Bal Thackeray's reported speech.

Un understanding genesis of a communal riot, apart from political factors at national level discussed above, it is also necessary to understand the sociology of religion in a developing industrial middle-sized town with its potential for attracting migrant labour, different classes it gives rise to and varying perceptions among these classes of their counterparts in the rival community. The communalists, pushing under carpet all these empirical facts, indulge in sweeping generalizations about the whole community.

Religion, it must be stressed, is not the causative factor but an instrumental factor. However, in common perception, on both the sides of the communal divide, it is taken to be a causative factor. It is highly necessary to combat this erroneous perception, if one intends to seriously strike at the root of the problem. It is necessary to throw some light on this in the context of the present riots also. In order to make religion appear as a causative factor, the Shiv Sena Shakha offices had put up boards saying "Koran Chodo or Hindustan Chodo" (leave either the Koran or India). This clearly implies that as long as the Muslims follow Koran, they cannot become part of national mainstream and the conflict with Hindus would remain. Thus religion becomes the main causative factor in the conflict between Hindus and Muslims.

The falsity of this approach becomes apparent if we examine the issue of Hindu-Sikh conflict in Punjab. The Sikhs follow the Guru Granth Sahib as their holy scripture. The Granth Sahib, unlike the holy Koran, is full of Hindu ethos and Hindu cultural and religious traditions. Sikhism is a separate religion yet not inimical to Hinduism, in any sense of the word. Despite this there has emerged a very sharp conflict between the Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab. Bhindranwale had even begun to talk of Sikh-Muslim united front in order to combat the Hindu hegemonistic designs. Had religion been a causative factor, such a sharp conflict between two non-antagonistic religions (they can be described even as harmonious in their spiritual ethos) and their followers should not have arisen. The root of the conflict, it would be seen if the Akali demands are closely examined lay in socio-economic factors.

It would thus be absurd to maintain that the conflict between Hindus and Muslims disappear if they give up the Koran and Hinduise themselves. Yet, despite its absurdity, the propaganda value of such slogan is very strong and invariably results in serious outbreak of violence. Such a propaganda evokes highly emotive response from the lower middle class Hindus and what is more unfortunate no serious attempt is made by the left and secular intellectuals to combat it systematically. The communal parties, on the other hand, are using highly emotive medieval symbolism to widen their emotional appeal. It would be seen in and around Bombay that the Shiv Sena

has given all its offices the appearance of Shivaji fort. The extensive use of swords in the recent riots - was also symbolic of Shivaji's weapon.

Communalism is a modern phenomenon with medieval trappings to enhance its emotional appeal. Use of medieval symbolism also ensures a relative autonomy to it. It also successfully creates the illusion in the minds of common people about the causative efficacy of religion in the whole conflict. The lower strain of society, in a developing socio-economic situation, are caught in a complex process of deprivation and dehumanization and are psychologically prone to ascribe their woes to the maliciousness of the rival religious community, especially if there has been such an historical tradition.

It was not accidental that both in Bhiwandi and Bombay the main sufferers in the riots were the poorest of the poor. These victims had hardly anything to do with religion, let alone being aware of the theological and metaphysical doctrinal differences, except being conscious of belonging to Islam or Hinduism. All they knew was that they are being killed, injured and looted because they belong to a particular community. It was the most synical exploitation of religion for its rich emotional value by the most irreligious politicians.

The pattern of communal violence in Bombay and its suburbs was slightly different. In Bhiwandi the main targets of attacks were the peripheral bastis (shanty towns) mostly inhabited by migrant Muslims and Hindus from U.P. and South and the assailants mainly came from the nearby villages who perceived these bastis as encroachment on their land by outsiders, among other things. There was no large scale involvement of criminals in these attacks, although their role cannot be altogether denied. In Bombay and its suburbs on the other hand, criminals and anti-social elements played the main role in eruption of communal violence.

The main trouble areas in Bombay, apart from the central part of the city, were large and crammed slums like Kherwadi (Bandra East), Majaswadi (Jogeshwari East), Govandi and Cheetah camp. The Shiv Sena in a planned and organised way mobilised

local criminals to launch attacks on Muslims. Of course local causes like rivalry over encroachments, water disputes, fight between owners of different gambling dens and similar other factors came handy to incite and provoke. But, it should not be forgotten, these were mere excuses. The Shiv Sena, it is clear from the evidence collected during investigation, had carefully planned the riots.

The important arises why the Sena launched itself on this collision course with the Muslims? It is not difficult to answer this question if the overall political situation is borne in mind. Deepening economic crisis has seriously weakened the political strength of bourgeoisie and also the forces of national integration. The crisis in Punjab, Assam, Kashmir and emergence of non-Congress governments on the wave of regional sentiments in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are very important indicators in this direction. In this crisis ridden situation the communal forces are consolidating their ranks with tacit support of bourgeoisie. The Shiv Sena tried to form the Hindu Ekta Manch with the help of other Hindu communalist organizations and he launched his virulent attack on Muslims from this platform on 21st April on Chowpatty, Bombay.

The Shiv Sena was not only trying to come out of its regional chauvinistic stigma but was also trying to reassert itself and consolidate its position both politically as well as among the underworld elements in and around Bombay. Keeping the underworld elements under its sway pays great economic and political dividends. The Sena has also tried to win respectability among the Maharashtrian lower middle classes through its strident communalist posture as it is in keeping with the ethos of these classes. The Sena has thus tried to achieve — and to an extent it did achieve — multiple objectives by inciting communal violence in the Bombay-Bhiwandi region. The object dependence of the ruling Congress in Maharashtra on the Sena was once again demonstrated in the election of the Deputy Chairman of Legislative Council. The Chief Minister met Bal Thackeray on 12th July and persuaded him to ask his party MLAs to abstain from voting in the election thus ensuring the success of the ruling Congress candidate. The Sena Chief readily obliged and in the bargain the Chief Minister released the Shiv Sena leaders arrested under NSA for inciting communal trouble. This very clearly demon-



strates, if any demonstration is needed, that the ruling party is actively conniving at the Sena activities.

In some areas of the Central Bombay some notorious anti-social elements among the Muslims threw themselves into the communal imbroglio by stabbing Hindus as a revenge. These elements tried to emerge as protectors of Muslims and win respectability in their eyes. However, there was neither any political motive behind it nor evidence of any political organization. The so-called Milli Secretariat is a thinly veiled attempt on the part of certain anti-social elements among Muslims to cover up their activities and win Muslim sympathies through emotionally loaded words like *millat* (the Muslim Community). Those among Muslims who talk of self defence should be aware of the danger of such anti-social elements taking the command and imposing goonda culture over the community. Communalism is a political phenomenon and can be fought only politically with the help of progressive secular forces. One must admit here the total failure of progressive secular forces in combating communal fascism but what has been lost on this front cannot be gained by imposing goonda culture. It is only through reassertion of political will and consolidation of secular forces that the problem can begin to be solved.

**Note :-** This analytical study on Bombay-Bhiwandi Riots is being circulated on behalf of the Institute of Islamic Studies and Ikhwanus Safa Trust.

The detailed report and documentation on Bombay-Bhiwandi Riots will be soon published and its price is Rs. 25/-. Those who are interested may place their orders at the following address :

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This volume brings together diverse essays on communal riots in Post-Independence India with an introduction by A.A. Engineer, the well known student of Indian politics, especially the politics of minorities. Of these, six essays are by Engineer himself. One of these deals with the causes of communal riots in India and the others are case studies of various riots. Besides these, four other case studies are also included. The definition of the term “Communal organization” by the Minorities Commission which appears at the end of the book will be found to be particularly useful. These essays as a whole form a judicious and well balanced choice and present (1) analytical views of the nature and causes of riots and (2) objective reports on various riots in different parts of the country. The reports are honest responsible and aim at clearing misconceptions and prejudices and clearly help, as the editor modestly hopes towards the promotion of a comprehensive theory of the problem. The essays are all informed by a rational and humanistic concern. The type of report which is all too common is marred by prejudice, special pleading and mischievous intent ; one community comes to be condemned and the other exonerated, whereas responsibility for the riot must be shared by both parties in varying degrees in each particular context. Yet, the very attempt to apportion guilt is vain and fruitless for it can only lead to a vicious circle of provocation and reprisal, without concern for the sanity of life. Casualty, loss of life and precious possessions do not cease to be positive calamities, no matter which community is the victim.

The analytical essays bring out the variegated nature and causation of communal riots. “On an analytical study of communal riots we will find that there are socio-economic, as well as religious

and political causes though in different ratios and proportions with reference to the historical and cultural background of states in North and South India". (Shaheen. 169). N.C. Saxena makes an excellent analysis of the complicated web of causes behind the phenomenon of communal violence (55-57; 65-67). Imtiaz Ahmed, with reference to the Shia-Sunni riots in Lucknow wisely observes: "I shall argue that a comparative approach to the communal problem as commonly understood can serve to delineate those institutional and structural characteristics which generate communal conflicts better than an attempt to view the relations between Hindus and Muslims in relative isolation from all other forms of social group conflicts". (132). While the description and analysis of the Shia-Sunni conflict is excellent, the reader misses the promised comparison. Had this been done and conclusions drawn, the essay would have been much more instructive. Another notable point made out by Ghanshyam Shah deserves particular emphasis: "We report events (Ahmedabad Riots, 1969) in some detail in order to bring out the point that the casual sequence in collective violence is not so much determined by the "first cause" as by certain intervening factors which transform a low tension situation into a high tension one" (184). All the essayists agree in denying the primacy that is commonly attached to religion as the single cause of communal riots but some of them tend to instal the economic-political factor in its place. "All the available data shows that political power in India has been a monopoly of the rich and the neo-rich... The neo-rich... control the centres of politics and economics. The neo-rich category by its very definition, carries some element of lumpenism and is characterised by ruthlessness, and the absence of political sophistication. It is devoid of all political niceties and values. This development strengthens the bourgeois character of Indian democracy. It has vested interest in communal and caste violence as a means of maintaining its position in the system by dividing the people and for diverting their attention from the real problems" (Shakir-101). Zoya Hasan's essay deserves particular mention for the crisp economic analysis of the problem.

The analytical essays in the collection are amply validated by the reports on different riots — while in some cases trivial causes like Kite flying (Ahmedabad) could spark off an explosion, in other

it was class war in a distorted form (Assam), local causes and factors (Tamil Nadu), Jamat-e-Islami (Kashmir), R.S.S. and B.J.P. (Jammu), V.H.P. (Solapur, Pune), the political more than the economic factor (Meerut) or the exploitation of communal factors by political parties in Hyderabad and elsewhere or political corruption pure and simple (Baroda). It is also revealed that there was no bitterness between communities in general in Meerut but that "on the contrary, the sufferers and sympathisers, bitterly complained against the P.A.C., the city police and district officials in league with some communal elements" (270). The role of the Press in instigating and exacerbating communal riots by biased reporting, or deliberate circulation of half-truths or blatant untruths and the absence of prompt refutation or timely correction has also been effectively brought out in Kolpe's essay.

The important point which these essays emphasize is that in times of riot civil administration and the police force have almost invariably proved inadequate to the situation. This is highlighted by the fact that the C.R.P., P.A.C. and the army have to be called in to bring situation under control. The police, and even more notoriously the P.A.C. have become infected with the communal virus. Apart from that the forces of law and order are also plagued by political interference and corruption and by vested interest in anti-social elements. The imposition of curfew on riot torn areas has often brought hardship on innocent citizens while letting loose a rapacious and licentious police force on a helpless community. This aspect has been well corroborated by a comment on the recent unrest in Hyderabad : "It is a sombne reflection on our culture and politics that throughout the period in which political controversy raged in Hyderabad not a thought was given to the fact that the government of Bhakara Rao could have a serious communal riot when he wanted it, enforce curfew when he wanted to prevent people from storming into Hyderabad, even call out the army to prepare the ground for an unfair political gamble." (K. F. Rustamji — Indian Express 19th Sept., 1984).

While long term measures are needed to eliminate the basic causes of communalism and communal tension, it is necessary to ensure that an important and efficient police force is available to

the government for the enforcement of law and order. Communalism is a constitutional malady which the body politic can overcome in the long run by wisdom and patience; communal violence which can suddenly convulse a community must be met with sufficient force, resolution and tact and forestalled by vigilance and preventive measures. But even in the worst of times entire communities are never wholly dehumanised and the number which indulges in murder, arson and loot is a small and demented fragment. But the suddenness and shock of the convulsion leaves the saner elements dazed and paralysed. It is these elements which must always stand together extend their ascendancy over the community and subdue the forces of anarchy. It is necessary to remind ourselves constantly that "when bad men combine, the good should associate" to strengthen the forces of goodwill.

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