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RSS—biggest threat to democracy

Once again the forces using terror and violence have prevailed over culture and tradition of reason, debate and discussion. It is a dark day in the history of Indian higher educational institutions. Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad, a name now becoming synonymous with vandalism on academic campuses, forced the cancellation of seminar on 'Cultures of Protest' organized by a literary society of the English Department at Ramjas College in Delhi on 21 February, 2017. Umar Khalid and Shehla Rashid of Jawaharlal Nehru University fame were two of the scheduled speakers. Others included Professor Bimol Akoijam, also of JNU, and filmmaker Sanjay Kak. ABVP was objecting to Umar Khalid as a speaker.

Why is the ABVP, student wing of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, averse to engaging in intellectual dialogue to express their different viewpoint if they think they have anything of substance to say? Merely raising 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' and 'Vande Mataram' slogans does not serve the purpose. Do Umar Khalid and Shehla Rashid as citizens of this country not have a right to express their opinion? Umar Khalid was organizer of the event on JNU

campus to commemorate last year the hanging of Afzal Guru when a huge controversy broke out. Khalid and four others Anirban Bhattacharya, Anant Prakash Narayan, Ashutosh Kumar and Rama Naga were charged with sedition. Shehla Rashid, former Vice President of JNU Students' Union, was part of the student agitation demanding their release. Umar Khalid is on bail. His charge has not been proved yet. How can he be called anti-national? Is he more anti-national than Dhruv Saxena, the Bhartiya Janata Party's Information Technology cell district coordinator of Bhopal recently arrested by Madhya Pradesh's Anti-Terrorist Squad for links with Inter State Intelligence, the Pakistani intelligence agency? Why doesn't ABVP protest against Dhruv Saxena who was a real threat to the country? Comparatively, Umar Khalid is a harmless intellectual.

ABVP and mainly its parent organization, the RSS, should reflect on what they are doing. By curbing academic freedom they want to produce individuals who would be either incapable of rational thinking or afraid of expressing their opinion, both of which will take the society intellectually backwards. There is no

genuine academic activity possible without the freedom to think. With the kind of parochial thinking and the arrogance of a legacy of some superior tradition that prevails in RSS, it can lead only to mediocrity. There will be no creation of new knowledge nor be any innovation. There will be no development of science and technology. We will continue harping on our great past and keep importing knowledge and technology from rich countries. The RSS is causing permanent damage to the autonomy and quality of academic institutions. They probably want institutions which can produce more of their type, who can at best parrot statements about some vague glorious past. After all, slogans and symbols can take you only so far. The proponents of the right wing ideology must think whether they want to remain limited only to exhibitionist display of knowledge or want the educated to acquire some depth in thinking?

This madness in the name of cultural nationalism must stop. The battered professors and students of

Ramjas College who have dared to stand up to this hooliganism have exhibited rare courage which is needed to protect the right to freedom of speech and expression, spirit of enquiry and culture of dissent, all of which are essential to existence of democracy as well as for an enlightened society.

How could we have achieved our freedom without a culture of protest? All the stalwarts of freedom struggle were engaged in dissent against the British government. Had there been no culture of protest Mahatma Gandhi could not have given a call for boycott of British goods, could not have taken out the Dandi march or Bhagat Singh could not have undertaken a revolutionary exercise. Nor could Dr. B. R. Ambedkar have been able to launch his Mahad movement for emancipation of dalits. There would have been no Civil Disobedience movement nor the Quit India movement. Neither Jayaprakash Narayan would have been able to free this country from the clutches of Emergency. The ideals of Justice,

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity embodied in our Constitution have informed our freedom movement. They are the foundation stones of Indian nation. Nationalism based on any other ideology contrary to these values is anti-Constitutional.

RSS and its various affiliates can never understand the importance of 'culture of protest' as they never participated in the freedom struggle and got a free ride during the JP movement. JP is criticized by some for having accorded legitimacy to the RSS. Now they have captured power using a democratic system which itself is a product of freedom struggle and now they want to stifle the soul of democracy. By cannily using an idea of religious nationalism they have confused the people in the process of mobilizing their support. So that people don't question their actions they have a system of doctrination for their cadres which conditions them to accept regimentation. It is hoped that people will see through this design otherwise democracy may become a history in our country.

Mayawati set to return in Uttar Pradesh

Six months prior to the 2017 assembly elections the battle for power in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh was seen as between Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) led by Mayawati and Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), which is presently ruling at the centre. BJP's chances had slightly dwindled after its state vice president Daya Shankar Singh made some inappropriate comments against the dalit leader of BSP. At this point Samajwadi Party, the party presently in power in the state, was predicted to be out of race.

Then after a series of family melodramatic incidents Akhilesh Yadav was catapulted from the status of half chief minister to a full chief minister and the sole leader of the party. Earlier he was often taunted to be half in the four and a half chief ministers UP had, his father Mulayam Singh Yadav, uncle Shivpal Yadav, another uncle Ram Gopal Yadav and senior leader Azam Khan being the four full chief ministers. There was an impression that since Mulayam Singh was publicly taking the side of his brother Shivpal, the party cadres would

remain loyal to Shivpal if it came to choosing between him and Akhilesh. However, Akhilesh proved everybody wrong and now is the undisputed claimant to the office of chief ministership on behalf of Samajwadi Party with Shivpal and even Mulayam having been marginalized. The state has witnessed a silent coup by a serving ruler who has been able to unshackle himself now.

There is a perception in the society that this was a drama masterly scripted and directed by Mulayam

Singh to end all challenges to his son from within and outside the party. There is no doubt that Akhilesh has emerged as a mature leader improving upon his 'please all' but weak image prior to the drama. Additional gain was free publicity in terms of the space taken up by family controversy in media to compete with the hi-tech campaign of his opponents.

Akhilesh Yadav started making public pronouncements even while the controversy was on that he would be able to win over 300 seats if he were to have an alliance with Congress Party, the fourth contender for power in the state. It is unusual for a bigger party to seek alliance with a smaller party, in terms of number of seats the two parties were expected to win. Whether it was the strategist Prashant Kishore working behind the scenes or the understanding that it would make easier for Muslims to choose between Bahujan Samaj Party and their alliance, Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi finally struck an alliance and immediately they were in the race for power.

Now BJP slipped to the third place and question was who would finish first, BSP or the SP-Congress alliance? The Muslims have belied the hopes of SP-Congress and chosen BSP as an instrument to decisively defeat BJP. The uncertainty in SP till the last moment before the election made them take an early decision to support BSP this time. Mayawati has not spared any efforts to get Muslims to her side by reassuring them that she will not enter into an alliance with BJP at any cost to form the government. In the event of BSP falling short of majority by some seats it is quite likely that Congress will break its alliance with

SP and offer support to it. Rahul Gandhi has already indicated that he respects Mayawati as the leader of dalits.

The reason BSP has an edge over SP-Congress is an allegation against SP that it did not do anything to prevent the communal riots in Muzaffarnagar in which Muslims were clearly the losers. President of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, Asduddin Owaisi has claimed that there was no difference between Gujarat in 2002 and Muzaffarnagar in 2013. About 50,000 people, mostly Muslims, were displaced from their villages, many of whom have not been able to return.

Akhilesh Yadav failed to prevent communal and criminal incidents, some of them involving his ministers, and thus rule of law did not always prevail in his regime. He was, however, forthcoming in disbursement of compensation after the incidents as a relief to the families of victims. He'll go down in history as a 'compensation chief minister'. He overdid the act and also gave awards to people who were openly flouting important laws like the Right to Free and Compulsory Education of Children. Bharti Gandhi, the owner of the largest commercial chain of schools in Lucknow, City Montessori School, received honours from the state after she and her husband Jagdish Gandhi refused admission to children from disadvantaged Valmiki community of sanitation workers on an official order. After 13 children from this community were admitted by a court order in 2015, Gandhis refused to again admit 58 students in 2016.

On the other hand BJP is suffering from the setback of change

of big denomination notes. UP is not like the home state of Prime Minister. In Gujarat people may not have an option and tolerate any inconvenience to them. But people in UP have been irritated by the ban on old Rs. 500 and 1000 notes because of the inconvenience it caused them. Long queues and repeated visits to Banks has been a humiliating experience for many. Moreover, the purpose of the exercise doesn't seem to have been fulfilled. Narendra Modi's closeness with emirs of United Arab Emirates and Qatar, when he and his party and parent organization, Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sanghare avowedly anti-Muslim, is perplexing.

Because of listless performances of Akhilesh Yadav in UP and Narendra Modi at the centre, it appears that people are not averse to giving another chance to Mayawati, who has dealt with law and order and communal situations with a heavy hand in the past, something which goes in her favour at this point.

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Between The Lines**Seeming peace on border****Kuldip Nayar**

The good news from the India-Pakistan boundary is that it is calm. Defence Minister Manohar Parikkar has said in an interview that “the temperature has come down on the border.” This could mean that India and Pakistan seem to be settling down to a relationship which was expected 70 years ago when partition took place.

If this is the case, both countries should cut down on the defence expenditure. We have not introduced the real cut which, at present, is only marginal. Unfortunately, the defence minister’s statement of “India much better armed than before” indicates how much we are still spending on the defence. Pakistan, too, has not made any significant reduction in its defence expenditure. This reminds me of cold war era when America made the Soviet Union to spend most of its resources on the defence. The result was that there was very little left for schools, hospitals and people’s councils.

This led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the country got divided into several parts. For example, Ukraine became independent. The Soviet President Vladimir Putin has said many a time that Ukraine is part of Russia. But the independence movement belies his statement. Most of the Russian troops are posted on that front.

The effect on Pakistan has been the dilution of whatever democracy exists there. Now the new Army

chief is superior to the elected Prime Minister. The pictures that show Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also depicts that the person in khaki is the real boss. The Pakistan Prime Minister has accepted the arrangement.

Islamabad’s worry is that the Taliban are using the soil of Afghanistan to attack Pakistan. Islamabad is no longer safe. Every second day, one incident of bombing or the other takes place in Pakistan, killing several innocent people. There has been exodus from the insecure Islamabad to other parts of Pakistan.

Thanks to UN pressure, China has agreed to declare Hafiz Saeed as a terrorist. Pakistan’s defence minister Khawaza Asif has admitted that Pakistan faces danger from terrorists like Saeed who is now under house arrest. This has been a sham so far but the number at the UN Security Council was predominantly for declaring him as a terrorist.

Now Islamabad has finally realized that Harif Saeed is linked with militancy in some way but it is to be seen how long Islamabad can keep him under house arrest. In fact, in 2008 the mastermind of Mumbai attacks was placed under house arrest but was freed by a court in 2009. The question before all of us is whether we should read too much into Pakistan’s arrest or take defence minister Asif’s statement seriously?

The observers in Pakistan are well aware that the action against the Lashkar-e-Taiba chief is not a new step or the most serious measure taken against him over the past two decades. Since 2001, the LeT chief has been in and out of detention at least on five occasions. If, indeed, Pakistan is too serious about the UN list, action against Saeed should have been initiated in 2008 itself when he and Jammat-ud-Dawa were put on the UN list of terrorists.

The recent action seems to have been timed for the Financial Action Task Force’s meeting to be held in Paris where the Pakistan’s terror funding record is likely to come up. Even otherwise, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif must be worried with the decision of US President Donald Trump who has banned travel from seven Muslim countries. For Pakistan, its nationals will be given visa only after a close scrutiny.

Muslims living in America are a worried lot because they could also be sent out if the President decides to include them on the banned list of Muslim countries. In the case of Indian Muslims, there is no apparent danger but the immigration officials may think different and tar them with the same brush. There are sad occasions when top Indian actor Shah Rukh Khan was stripped and the Indian embassy had to intervene to get his entry into the US.

I, too, had a tough time some years ago while entering the US from

the west coast. I had a diplomatic passport but still they insisted on searching me bodily. The immigration official explained that most of my visas stamped on the passport were to Pakistan and Bangladesh. He could not make out why I should be often visiting these countries.

I wish New Delhi has picked up the thread from where it had left off when Nawaz Sharif met Prime Minister Narendra Modi the last time in China. They were reported to have a positive dialogue. But

things have not moved further because New Delhi asked Islamabad to ensure that the Pakistani soil would not be used by the terrorists. But then incidents like Uri and Pathankot attacks have falsified hopes.

Now that Pakistan has detained Hafiz Saeed and Defence Minister Asif's admission of the dangers from terrorists like the LeT chief, the dialogue can probably resume between the two countries. To go forward, India may have to resile its position that it would have no talks

unless there was a foolproof guarantee on curbs against terrorists' operation from their soil.

Probably, India may wait and watch for a while before moving ahead. Even Israel has wished it. Nevertheless, it is in the interest of both India and Pakistan to sit across and thrash out the issues. Pakistan, on its part, should put the Kashmir issue on the backburner for the time being. They should, instead, address the immediate problems of poverty, hunger and unemployment.

Remembering Kaci Kullmann Five

B. Vivekanandan

Kaci Kullmann Five, Chairwoman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo, which annually awards Nobel Prizes to distinguished achievers in the world, is no more. She passed away on Sunday, 19 February 2017, in Oslo at 65. She is survived by her husband, Carsten O Five, and two children, Christine and Christian, and four grand-children.

My meeting with Kaci Kullmann Five was on 26 July 1985, during my first visit to the Scandinavian countries - Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland - for writing my book, *Pathfinders: Social Democrats of Scandinavia*. During that visit, she invited me to meet her, over lunch, in the *Storting* (Norwegian Parliament). She was, then, a 34-year old dazzling, young and up-and-coming Member of Parliament, with great promise, radiating enormous confidence, wisdom and humility, brimming with enthusiasm. At that time, she was

also the Deputy Chairman of the Norwegian Conservative Party.

As soon as I reached the *Storting* to meet her, she took me straight to the Parliament Canteen for lunch, where I got my first surprise. Unlike in the Canteen at the Parliament House in New Delhi, where a plethora of waiters are kept to take orders from MPs and serve them food on the table, like in a feudal set-up, this Parliament Canteen had a self-service system for MPs and their guests who had to collect their requirements themselves from the counters. After taking lunch together, we got into a serious discussion on the texture of Norwegian politics. Being a graduate in Political Science as well as in Law from the Oslo University, she had a good grasp of how the political system in Norway worked. That was the time when I saw the grace, wisdom and dignity of this charming woman member of parliament, who was equipping

herself to take-up higher responsibilities in Norway's national life. The sense of purpose in her basic approach to politics was very much discernible at that time itself. She vehemently championed the causes of gender equality and women's rights, and was quite active on issues pertaining to environment and ecology. She was a strong supporter of the Norwegian membership of the European Union.

During our discussion on Norway's party politics, she gave me an insight of how principal political parties in the country had given up taking extreme positions, and built-up an ethos of consensus politics, and how the Welfare State system got rooted in the country as a result. She made it clear that, by and large, these political parties had come down to the middle ground, to play centrist politics, with slight tilt towards right or left. This metamorphosis has considerably reduced, she said, the

gap between the Norwegian Labour Party (DNA) and the non-socialist parties on a number of important issues, including on the Welfare State system. By reeling out several examples, she summed up that, as a result, the differences between the Labour (DNA) and Conservative Parties in Norway are mainly on details, rather than on fundamentals. And, they accept the same infrastructure, including the Welfare State System.

My meeting with Kaci Kullmann Five took place long before she attained new heights in her career. It was much later that she became a Cabinet Minister (1989-90), the first Chairwoman of the Conservative

Party (1991-94), a decision maker in the Norwegian Nobel Committee (since 2003), and, finally, the first Chairwoman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee (2015). Since 2009, she was one of the seven key Board Members of the Nobel Foundation, which has the overall responsibility of all five Nobel Prizes. For 16 years, from 1981 to 1997, she was a Member of Parliament.

Though three decades have passed after my meeting with Kaci Kullmann Five in Oslo, the grace, the warmth, the humility, wisdom and vision which she radiated during our conversation remain fresh and green in my mind. Undoubtedly, she was an outstanding world stateswoman,

who could make a notable impact on developments in the world during the last four decades. As the Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg rightly said, "she was a role model for many young women" of our times. She was a wonderful human being, straightforward and unpretentious. There was no false touch in this great unifier. Though Cancer caused the untimely death of this great daughter of Norway, she will be remembered for long as a lodestar of generations to come.

From India, my heart-felt condolences to the bereaved family, and to the people of Norway, over the premature loss of this great world stateswoman.



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Veerendrakumar, now an octogenarian

Varughese George

M. P. Veerendrakumar, who was decisive in shaping the course of the socialist movement in Kerala for decades turned eighty years. His father, Padmaprabha, a planter was an activist of Socialist Party and the first to have started a branch of HMS in Wayanad. To rescue plantation workers from the exploitation of kankanis, who were ruthless supervisors, Padmaprabha organized plantation workers and widened the base of HMS. Wayanad was part of Madras which was a British Province and when the Madras government decided to evict farmers from their cultivable land in Noolpuzha, he organised the peasants and resisted it. When the peasants had launched an agitation in Muthukad in Calicut for ownership rights, Padmaprabha sent volunteers from Wayanad to Muthukad to help their struggle. Veerendrakumar's mother was Marutha Devi, a pious lady.

In the elections to the Madras legislature in 1952 Socialist Party delegated Padmaprabha to contest from Wayanad constituency. The Congress candidate was Kozhipurath Madhava Menon, a senior Congress leader and minister in Madras government. For this reason the contest attracted national attention and Jayaprakash Narayan came to Calicut to campaign for Padmaprabha. He was elected to Madras legislature for a majority of 18000 votes.

Veerendrakumar, after his higher studies in United States, also

became a full time activist of the Socialist Party taking a cue from his father. His house in wayanad was an amiable abode for socialist leaders including JP and Lohia during their sojourn in Malabar. Padmaprabha's death at the age of forty eight was a cause of great sorrow for the socialist community in Wayanad. The party itself was going through threefold split including PSP, SSP and ISP. In the elections to the Kerala legislature in 1970, these three parties together secured twelve seats. Veerendrakumar was elected to the national executive of SSP the same year and appointed the national treasurer.

After the formation of broad united front by the party in 1971, Veerendrakumar was asked to contest for Lok Sabha from Calicut though the chance was least. He accepted the decision of the party and contested unsuccessfully but this was the beginning of the joint opposition movement against the Congress and SSP candidates were the symbols of it. The three socialist parties that suffered heavy electoral defeats since then had realigned at the national level and formed the Socialist Party in 1971. In Kerala also the three parties united and formed an ad hoc committee of SP with P. Viswambharan as chairman and Veerendrakumar as secretary. In the first state conference of SP that was held in Calicut in 1973 this election was ratified.

In September 1973 SP and CPI(M) together decided to form a

united opposition at the national level to counter the authoritarian and capitalist policies of the Congress. In Kerala it was known as LDF and Veerendrakumar became its convener after P. Viswambharan. When national Emergency was declared the party asked Veerendrakumar to go underground and the government confiscated his house and estate. Later he was arrested and put in Central Jail, Kannur till the relaxation of emergency. Other socialist leaders including K.Chandrasekharan, K.K.Abu, P.K.Sankarankutty, V.Kuttykrishnan Nair, V.K. Achuthan, Abraham Manuel and K.P.Muhammad were also kept at the Kannur Central jail.

It was a decade since then Veerendrakumar stood for election and in 1987 he won with a huge majority from Kalpetta to the Kerala Legislative Assembly. He was sworn in as minister for forests in the E.K.Nayanar ministry. His first order was to ban tree felling from Kerala's depleted forests and he resigned within forty eight hours from the cabinet due to an internal rebellion of three legislators who were aspirants to that post of ministership. His close friend Ramakrishna Hegde was so sad that he had asked Veerendrakumar to withdraw the resignation, but he did not yield to the affable pressure.

In 1993 Veerendrakumar became the president of Kerala unit of Janata Dal. This was the launching period

(Continued on Page 10)

Voting choices are based on needs, greed and security

Irfan Engineer

The assembly elections in UP began on 11th February 2017 in several phases. The Samajwadi Party in alliance with Congress is hopeful of second term under the leadership of the incumbent Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav recently emerged victorious in the family feud sidelining his uncle Shivpal Yadav and leaving no option for his father but to hand over predominant role in running the party to him. The SP-Congress alliance is campaigning on the programme of development. The SP traditionally relied on the Muslim-Yadav social alliance with some other OBCs also being mobilized. Akhilesh seemed to have won over the bulk of support of the Yadavs as well as Muslims along with a section of youth, campaigning on the issue of development, implementation of welfare schemes like distribution of laptops, service of ambulances for the sick, etc.

The BJP, which had won in 71 out of the 80 Lok Sabha constituencies in the year 2014 in 16th General Elections and two more for its alliance partner - Apna Dal -, is fighting a tough challenge to win majority or near majority in this election, let alone repeating its performance in the General Elections. The BJP is trying every trick in the book — rubbishing the claims of development done by the SP government and asserting that it alone is capable of developing UP.

There seems to be a neat division of labour within the BJP. Prime Minister Modi talks of development

agenda in order to win over the youth. The Prime Minister also arouses aspirations of the people through *jumlas* to make a point that those benchmarks were not achieved by the incumbent government and that his party would fulfil them. For example, number of jobs, investments, infrastructure like roads, electricity, etc. Other BJP leaders and RSS — ideological parent of the BJP — indoctrinated leaders have been kicking up every possible issue to communally polarize the electorate since a while in run up to the Assembly elections. BJP MP Hukum Singh claimed that Hindus were forced to migrate out of Kairana, a Muslim majority town in Shamli, by Muslim gangsters and their extortion racket. Sakshi Maharaj has been problematizing higher population growth rate of Muslims which, according to them, would demographically marginalize Hindus. Sangeet Som and Suresh Rana, BJP MLAs from western UP stigmatized Muslims as cow slaughterers and supported the lynch mob of Dadri killing Mohammed Akhlaq and seriously injuring his son. They have been stigmatizing Muslim youth as eve-teasers, entrapping Hindu women into marital alliances for sexual exploitation and demographic advantage. BJP leaders have been exploiting the issue of triple talaq and promising Uniform Civil Code as a measure to “Hinduize” the Muslims. BJP has raised the issue of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya in order to assert the political hegemony of “Hindus” undermining the Constitutional pledge of equal citizenship.

Demonizing the Muslim community has led to high occurrence of communal violence in UP. The state of UP has the dubious reputation of highest number of communal violence every year and particularly as election approaches. There were several instances of communal violence, particularly in the western region of UP since 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots which resulted in 64 deaths and displacement of about 150,000 Muslims. In the year 2016, of the 8 deaths were reported in media monitored by CSSS in communal riots all over India. As many as 6 took place in UP alone. UP also returned highest number of incidents of communal violence reported in the media in the year 2016 — 18 out of 62. Most of these riots were in Western UP. Communal violence had led to rupture in the social fabric in Western UP, particularly between the jats and the Muslims. BJP leaders have been accused of abetting, instigating and/or leading the riots, e.g Sangeet Som in Muzaffarnagar and Ismaria Choudhary in Bijnor riots.

Projecting Muslim community as an existential threat to Hindus, the BJP intends to position itself as the defender of “Hindu interests” and mobilize votes of all castes without jeopardizing caste based hierarchy and hegemonic interests of elite of upper castes. In fact, by posing Muslims as existential threat to Hindus, the BJP undermines the struggle of the dalits and the oppressed sections of OBCs for equality and blunts their

consciousness despite having equal political rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The BSP is trying to achieve social alliance of Dalits and Muslims by distributing large number of tickets to Muslim leaders — over 98 out of 403 seats (more than 24% of seats) even though Muslims constitute 19% of the population.

Visit to Western UP

Our visit to Western UP on 4th and 5th February 2017 was undertaken to understand the electoral process, mobilization of communities and its impact on inter-relations between various communities. The exercise was neither to survey nor to predict electoral outcomes. We visited and talked to members of various castes and communities in groups to understand their perspectives and issues they thought were important influencing their voting choices.

The notion that Muslims constituted one community or the community behaved as a vote bank melted away in no time. The community neither voted as a vote bank in last elections nor did it appear it would do so in this election. The Muslim community is as diverse as any other community is — along caste lines as well as class lines and their electoral choices are influenced by their social location and not only on their religion. In the last Assembly elections, Suresh Rana, BJP won the Assembly elections from Thana Bhavana Constituency in Shamli District even though Muslims constitute about 55% of the electorate with a narrow margin of 265 votes! Muslim votes were divided between Rashtriya Lok Dal's Abdul Waris Khan and Samajwadi Party's Kiran Pal. The

Muslim community is divided along caste lines as well. Muslims are from Rajputs, Jats, Gujjars, and there are other backward biradarries among Muslims.

Talking to various members of the Muslim and Jat communities, it appeared that they have put the communal riots in 2013 behind them. The Jats said they were misled by the BJP leaders and recalled long history of fraternal bonds between the two communities. They remembered participation in each other's marriages, last rites and festivals and had shared cultural ethos. The shared cultural ethos includes keeping women in veil (the nature of veil may change), no marriages within the village, restricted liberties to women, etc. Both the communities were mobilized together on issues faced by the farmers.

The members of Jat community were perturbed by the demonetization in particular and marginalization of the peasantry in general. The fundamental issue for them was un-remunerative minimum support prices for farm produce or lack of it. Waiver of loans did not attract the Jats we talked to, on account of their inability to pay back loans as the incomes of the farmers had taken a big hit in the last 2-3 years. The Jats were certainly not inclined to support the BJP. They seemed to be divided on whom they would vote for — Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) seemed to the choice of majority but some were also supporting Sudhir Panwar, SP-Congress alliance candidate and a Jat himself.

The Muslims we talked to too seemed to have at least for now, and

for the purpose of this elections, put the communal conflict and violence associated with it behind them. They too, like the Jats did not buy the propaganda that demonetization would ultimately lead to benefits of any significance to the nation or the economy and underlined the hardships caused by the measure. We talked to two groups of Muslims — one were group of Rajput Muslims and some dalit Muslims. The Rajputs were staunchly supporting the Rashtriya Lok Dal party and desired Jat-Muslim unity to revive the RLD's fortunes as in the past.

However, there was equally strong voice in favour of SP-Congress alliance supporting the developmental work done by Akhilesh's Government. When asked what development the Govrment had done, they pointed out towards distribution of laptops, ambulance service, electric supply and better roads. Abdul Waris Khan's supporters were equally confident that Muslims would vote for them. Waris Khan is a Rajput Muslim contesting from the BSP. In the last elections in 2012, Waris Khan lost to BJP's Suresh Kumar Rana but polled 50001 votes whereas Suresh Kumar polled 53,719 votes and Ashraf Ali Khan of RLD had polled 53454 votes. Waris Khan won in 2007 contesting on RLD ticket. In 2012, Suresh Kumar of BJP won only by a thin margin of 265 votes as Muslim votes were divided between Waris Khan and Ashraf Ali Khan — both being Rajput Muslims.

The poorer and labouring class Muslims seemed to be supporting the BSP — seen as a dalit party. The upper caste Rajput Muslims nurture a separate community feeling and solidarity with the land owning Jats and Rajputs when there is absence

of communal polarisation whereas they seek solidarity of the backward caste Muslims when communal polarization is heightened.

When we visited SP-Congress alliance candidate — Sudhir Panwar's (a Jat) election tent in Thana Bhawan, we saw Jats, Muslims, Sainis in the tent planning for election campaign. The Muslims in the tent were sure overwhelming majority of them will be voting for the Alliance. The Jats in the tent too were confident of the Jats voting Sudhir Panwar who was contesting on the plank of communal harmony and peace as one amongst many others.

When we visited the upper caste Hindus — Sainis and Rajputs, their issues in the elections were different than that of the Muslims or Jats we met. They were problematizing regional issues. Western UP was kept backwards by the ruling dispensation as they were largely from the Eastern UP. They felt left out of the development agenda of the state. All the jobs went to the youth from Eastern UP and particularly to the Yadavs and Muslims. All the state contracts,

educational institutions, and other institutions were cornered by the other regions being represented by the politicians of the ruling clan in general and Yadav-Muslims in particular. They felt alienated and marginalized from the state power (though they appeared much better off in reality). The youth problematized reservations in jobs, education and other affirmative action. To them it was unfair discrimination against the upper caste youth and reservations should only be based on economic criteria. They supported BJP and trusted that BJP's victory would lead to development of Western UP on priority basis as political leaders from the west would dominate. There was no talk of justice or equality — only perceived injustice and aspiration of reversing the equations — belief that BJP's victory would lead to reverse discrimination. Now they needed to benefit from political nepotism with *their* leaders being in power. According to them, demonetization was a good action though it temporarily led to problems. In the long run, demonetization would check corruption, black money and counter terrorism.

Conclusion:

The above discourse shows that no community or caste is a vote bank. There is diversity and voting choices are dependent on variety of factors, including religious, socio-cultural and economic factors. Social location of the individual influences voting choices and not religion alone. There are three factors that can influence voting choices — need, greed and security. Those whose basic human needs are not met, they are dependent on welfare. State provides only a tiny fraction of social welfare needed by large sections of poor in the country. Through whom social welfare can be accessed may determine the choice of the needy voters — dalits, adivasis, landless, etc. Those whose needs are fulfilled, need social networks to access their aspiration for upward mobility and more riches and privileges. Which social network helps this objective may determine electoral choices for some. Victims of communal and caste violence and high handedness of security forces vote for the party or leader that promises security to them. These factors were playing the voting choices of the people we met and interacted with.

—*Secular pespective;*

(Continued from Page 7)

of the policies of globalization in India by the P.V.Narasimha Rao government. Veerendrakumar was a vociferous critic of globalization and the book he wrote along with Prof. P.A.Vasudevan, *GATT and its unseen ties* became the text book of anti-globalisation activists in Kerala. Hundreds of party men and women went to jail in Kerala protesting the policies of globalization.

In 1996 and 2004 Veerendrakumar was elected to Lok Sabha from Calicut Parliament constituency. He was also the deputy minister for finance and later minister for labour with independent charge in the Deve Gowda ministry. But when Deve Gowda's son H.D.Kumara Swamy made an alliance with BJP in Karnataka, the Kerala unit of the party immediately insulated its

relationship with Janata Dal (Secular) and Veerendrakumar took initiative in electing a new president, Surendra Mohan in a large gathering at Trivandrum. Since then the Kerala unit led by Veerendrakumar merged with Janata Dal (united) and presently he is a member of Rajya Sabha from Kerala. He is a versatile writer in Malayalam and a recipient of many distinguished awards including Kendra Sahitya Academy.

Non-violent Action and Socialist Radicalism: Narendra Deva in India's Freedom Movement—II

Anil Nauriya

6. Beyond Non-Violence

At this stage we may take a step back and consider Narendra Deva's positions in relation to Subhas Bose (1897—1945?) as these provide an interesting study in his political perspectives on modes of struggle. As Subhas Bose was a votary of militant and even armed struggle, the extent to which the socialists were or were not willing to ally with him, and he with them, is revealing. Gandhi had suggested the name of Narendra Deva, among others, for the Congress President towards the end of 1938 (for 1939). In January 1939 Subhas Bose also offered to withdraw from the contest for the Congress President if Narendra Deva were chosen.¹⁹⁶

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in February—March 1939:

Indeed, so far as Gandhiji was concerned, he expressed his wish repeatedly in my presence that he would like a socialist as President. Apart from my own name, he mentioned Acharya Narendra Deva's name. But... I did not like the idea of a socialist President at this stage.¹⁹⁷

Evidently, the contest for the presidency of the Congress between Bose and Pattabhi Sitaramayya in 1939 had been avoidable. It obviously weakened the Congress at a critical time in India's history. It is therefore

of significance that it was the socialist Narendra Deva on whose name the contending sides had been in agreement. Narendra Deva's own sympathies were initially with Bose. In a statement issued in January 1939 he said "(w)hen elders are not ready to take up the burden, Mr Subhas Chandra Bose seems clearly marked out for the Presidential *gaddi*".¹⁹⁸

At the Tripuri Congress session in 1939, Narendra Deva's approach differed with both groups. He was not prepared to accept the Bose group's description of certain members of the Working Committee as "Rightists". While not abjuring this usage in his own speeches and writings, Narendra Deva sought to relativise such expressions to the struggle at hand. According to the Press report of his speech at the Tripuri Congress on 9 March 1939:

Defining the Rightists, he said that they were those who were prepared to align with British Imperialism and if anybody could think that a member of the old Working Committee could be called a Rightist in that sense, there could be no hope of freedom for this country. They were not Rightists, they were anti-Imperialists to the core and revolutionaries. The question of Rightists and Leftists could only arise after there was a social revolution.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. 5, New Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, First edition, 1952, pp. 29—30.

NMML Occasional Paper

¹⁹⁷ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India: Collected Writings, 1937—40*, London, Lindsay Drummond, 1948, p. 127.

¹⁹⁸ "Statement on Congress Presidential Election", SW-AND-1, p. 148.

¹⁹⁹ "Speech at the Subjects Committee Meeting", SW-AND-1, p. 148. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote similarly to Subhas Bose on 4 February 1939:

There has been a lot of talk of Leftists and Rightists, of Federation etc., and yet, so far as I can remember, no vital matters affecting these questions have been discussed by us in the W.C. during your Presidentship. I do not know who you consider a Leftist and who a Rightist. The way these words, were used by you in your statements during the Presidential contest seemed to imply that Gandhiji and those considered as his group in the W.C. are the Rightist leaders. Their opponents, whoever they might be, are the Leftists. That seems to me an entirely wrong description. It seems to me that many of the so-called Leftists are more Right than the so-called Rightists. Strong language and a capacity to criticize the old Congress leadership is not a test of Leftism in politics. (Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, Second Edition, 1960, p. 318).

This caution against mechanical labeling is not infrequently encountered in the Congress context. Seven years later, in 1946, P.R. Ramachandra Rao, an artist, advocate, and progressive intellectual, was sent by V.V. Giri, then Minister for Planning in the Government of Madras, to tour Congress-ruled provinces and "make a report on their plans"; on his conversation with Keshav

Yet Narendra Deva had misgivings at the time about the Congress “high command”, which he set out in a letter to M.R. Masani, one of the founders of the CSP, written a few days later, on 19 March 1939:

Undue condemnation of Subhas Bose and praise of the High Command should be ruled out. I do not understand why we should go out of our way to praise them when we know that they have no consideration for us. Is it not clear to you that when they talk of purge they mean to eliminate the left-wing from the Congress?²⁰⁰

But Narendra Deva became increasingly critical of the positions taken by Subhas Bose thereafter. In 1940, a Congress Socialist tract by Narendra Deva offered this sharp comment:

It is difficult to grasp the theory that underlies the activities of Shree Subhas Chandra Bose...He talks of an immediate struggle and does all that lies in his power to make it difficult...If one were to believe him, the greater obstacle today is the present leadership of the Congress and not British imperialism.²⁰¹

There is in this tract a passage which may be quoted at greater length because it represents a point of view now seldom referred to:

It is difficult to say how much of his (Subhas—A.N.) anti-compromise talk is serious. It may, of course, just be a good stick to beat the Congress High Command with. Shree Subhas Chandra Bose has not always stood out against compromise like this. During his Presidentship he was for negotiations

with the British Government over the issue of the war. Today, he asserts that the Constituent Assembly can only be convened after the conquest of power.

But he conveniently forgets what he wrote in his organ, the *Forward Bloc* on September 9, under the caption ‘Lead from Wardha’. He says there that the ‘Congress must press the national demand on the government and insist on its immediate **fulfilment**’. In the same article he proceeds to observe: ‘Let not our leaders who are now deliberating at Wardha ask for a whit less than what is our inherent birthright. If they are called on to negotiate, let them do so honourably.’

A year back at the Malda Divisional Conference and the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Jalpaiguri, Subhas Babu framed a resolution which foreshadowed the possibility of the government conceding the demand of the Congress, in which event a Constituent Assembly was to be convoked for framing a Constitution to be embodied in a treaty of alliance between India and Great Britain. This, according to him, could happen very well without recourse to a struggle. How can he now condemn Gandhiji for meeting the Viceroy or negotiating with him?

It is [sad?] however, that such things appeal to the average Leftist. He has been fed upon slogans and his political education has been neglected. He is politically immature. He acts, therefore, as an unwise ally. Proper schooling of political workers and youngmen is the greatest need.²⁰²

Deva Malaviya, a leading radical Congressman from UP, Rao would write: “In U.P., he said, the Rightists were more Left than the Socialists...” (P.R. Ramachandra Rao, *First Person Singular*, Hyderabad, Akshara, 1989, p. 37). Whether this was actually so or not, Malaviya’s remark was a reflection of the fact that on kisan issues the mainstream, or “unlabelled”, Congress in UP (and many other provinces) was itself in the forefront of the struggle. It was often such leaders who had reached the peasantry first and organized it though not necessarily or always on a class basis. This is evident in the case of UP also from accounts even by CPI figures such as Z.A. Ahmad (see Z.A. Ahmad, *Mere Jeewan Ki Kuch Yadein*, Lucknow, Sankalpa Systems, 1997). The matter is not free from ambiguity and there is yet another aspect that may be worth bearing in mind in the context of Malaviya’s remark. A scholar of 20th century UP writes about the Narendra Deva, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Tandon relationship: “Acharya Narendra Deva and his band of followers, strangely enough, were closer to Tandon than to Kidwai.” (Paul Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh*, Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 39.) Had Brass expanded the geometry by adding Nehru, to whom too Narendra Deva was close, it might have puzzled him even more. If academic “types” or categories break down often, it may be because these are too rigidly applied in the pre-independence context, or because, alternatively, the “types” themselves might require greater scrutiny.

²⁰⁰ SW-AND-1, p. 151.

²⁰¹ “The Indian Struggle: Next Phase”, SW-AND-1, p. 219.

²⁰² SW-AND-1, pp. 223—224. The source has “said” in place of “sad” and is possibly an error.

Narendra Deva's critique of Bose in the 1940 tract centered on the need to maintain the unity of the Congress as an instrument of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle:

This is our grievance against Shree Subhas Chandra Bose. We had trusted that he would not try to break the integrity of the Congress. The passionate appeal for unity that he made at the outbreak of the war is still ringing in our ears. He opposed in the past the present leadership but never worked against the Congress itself. A great change has come over him since. He seems to be bent upon splitting the Congress now.

He wants the present Congress to be converted into a rightist Congress out and out and asks leftists to leave the Congress and help him in creating a new Congress of leftists. He seems to have taken a dangerous turning on the road to independence.²⁰³

In this tract Narendra Deva asserted that the "task is to move the entire Congress" and this required working for unity.²⁰⁴

Towards the end of the 1930s, Bose had desired that the national struggle be resumed early. As the Congress gradually veered around to this position in the next three years, Bose, and also Gandhi, came to a relatively greater appreciation of each other's role. This is reflected in their statements and particularly, on the part of Bose, from the time of his broadcasts from Tokyo and Bangkok on 24 June and 2 October 1943.²⁰⁵ In the 1940s, how did Narendra Deva view the struggle being conducted overseas? For much of this period Narendra Deva himself was in prison successively in Ahmednagar Fort, Bareilly, and Almora (1942—45). But we have his perspective on the war through a pamphlet he wrote in 1942.²⁰⁶ Here Narendra Deva refutes the people's war thesis:

A genuine people's war should lead to the destruction of both imperialism and of capitalist

democracy and of fascism. But he will indeed be a bold man who would say that the present war is being fought to destroy imperialism. That would mean that the British and the American governments are waging war to destroy themselves.²⁰⁷

He refers to a similar argument made at the time of the First World War and Lenin's refutation of it.²⁰⁸ Narendra Deva reiterated this view three days after his release from prison on 15 June 1945.

A couple of months later followed the report of Subhas Bose's death and Narendra Deva in his statement did not gloss over their differences. The whole nation mourned Bose, he said: "Though they did not agree with some of the methods of Mr Bose, nobody could question the purity of his motives. India would feel strengthened in the idea that the memory of Mr Bose would be cherished and the lessons of his life learnt."²⁰⁹

While with Bose there were differences in method, with the communists Narendra Deva's differences turned on their dismissive approach in treating the Congress organization as bourgeois in opposition to which another organisation was required to be built. Although he felt that a healthier Communist attitude towards the Congress had emerged after 1936—37, this too had undergone a relapse with the old communist line having resurfaced during the Second World War. Narendra Deva rejected as illogical the notion of "united front from below", that is unity with the Congress "rank and file as against the leaders".²¹⁰ He argued that "...it should be plain to the meanest understanding that it is impossible to call the Congress-minded masses to a common struggle without the co-operation of those to whom they give their confidence and look up for guidance".²¹¹ This idea, Narendra Deva pointed out, was self-defeating: "In short, they aspire today to acquire influence over the masses in the fold of the Congress by attacking the present leadership and trying to undermine its influence. They seem to stand

²⁰³ SW-AND-1, p. 223.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁰⁵ *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Publications Division, Government of India, New Delhi, 1962, pp. 170—173 and pp. 200—204.

²⁰⁶ "The War: Imperialist or People's", SW-AND-2, pp. 8—23.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17—18.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁰⁹ SW-AND-2, p. 80.

²¹⁰ "The Indian Struggle: Next Phase", Bombay, Congress Socialist Party, 1940, reproduced in SW-AND-1, p. 218.

²¹¹ *Idem.*

for an immediate struggle but, in effect, they produce disorganization in the forces of struggle.”²¹²

This understanding governed also Narendra Deva’s attitude towards M.N. Roy (1887—1954), a leading figure in international communism and intellectual who had on return to India gradually branched out to establish the Radical Democratic Party in 1940. At least till 1940 both Narendra Deva and Roy, so far as acceptance of the Congress as an instrument for struggle was concerned, seemed to be on the common ground “that ultimately by a process of transformation the Congress can become a fit instrument for the achievement of our objective”.²¹³ The vital difference between them was that Roy believed that no relentless struggle was possible until there was a change in the leadership of the Congress.²¹⁴ For Narendra Deva, on the contrary, it was the struggle itself that would throw up new leaders. In the socialist view as propounded by Narendra Deva, Roy appeared to disregard the impact and dynamics of mass struggle. Narendra Deva argued that:

The pressure for struggle releases forces that move and metamorphose the leadership. New leadership is created in the course of the struggle. A mass struggle always throws up new leaders of the masses. It is only by showing qualities of leadership, by leading the masses from victory to victory, that one can win their confidence and achieve a place in the national leadership.²¹⁵

A practical demonstration of this would come about in the next round of struggle in 1942 when socialists emerged as prominent leaders of the national movement. For Narendra Deva the Quit India movement of 1942 was an advance in the national struggle. He acknowledged also the role played by the Indian National Army (INA). In November 1945, he reportedly remarked:

...had the revolution of August 1942 not taken place, there would not have been so much enthusiasm in the country... He made particular reference to Mr Jai Prakash Narain, Dr Lohia and

others... (who) were subjected to various forms of torture... (He) made a feeling reference to the INA men and said that there was widespread resentment amongst all sections of people against their trial.²¹⁶

It was not of course a philosophical commitment to the idea of non-violent struggle that made Narendra Deva carefully mark out his positions in relation to Bose, the communists, and M.N. Roy, though of course, his preference was to accord primacy to the non-violent struggle. It would be relevant to recall Narendra Deva’s opposition at the time of the Bombay Congress in 1934 to the proposal that “truth and nonviolence” be substituted for “legitimate and peaceful means” in the Congress creed.²¹⁷ No one has ever suggested that falsehood ought to be part of our creed, he argued. Nonviolence, he maintained, was subject to varying interpretations and was a metaphysical concept. If in substance and meaning it did not differ from “peaceful means”, there was no need for the new phraseology. Three years after the Bombay Congress, Narendra Deva had written on 10 December 1937 to Jawaharlal Nehru: “Truth and nonviolence are noble ideas and as such every decent man must have high regard for them. But I feel that they are so much being misused today in India that the day is not far distant when they will begin to [stink] in our nostrils.”²¹⁸ Narendra Deva’s approach to the question of relations between the Congress and the kisan movement was different from that which characterized the movement in places like Bihar. He thought that both violence and consequent tensions between kisan organizations and the Congress could be avoided with some tact, sensitivity, and vigilance. In his letter to Nehru, Narendra Deva remarks:

So far as the agrarian situation is concerned I have every hope that with a little goodwill combined with firmness we can succeed in avoiding a conflict with the peasant organizations. The way in which some of our Behar Congressmen are proceeding is the sure way of inviting trouble which is bound to weaken the Congress organization.

²¹² “The Indian Struggle: Next Phase”, Bombay, Congress Socialist Party, 1940, reproduced in SW-AND-1, p. 219.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

²¹⁶ SW-AND-2, p. 97.

²¹⁷ *Congress Socialist*, 29 September 1934, SW-AND-1, p. 38.

²¹⁸ SW-AND-1, p. 106.

We can also easily prevent outbreaks of violence in the countryside if we only tighten up our organization & keep a watch on the activities of our workers.²¹⁹

Yet, so far as the colonial power was concerned, Narendra Deva was prepared to countenance a degree of violence. In his reminiscences Narendra Deva recalls telling Gandhi when he met him in Poona in 1945, after being released from Ahmednagar Fort Prison and Almora Jail, that while truth was fine, he did not think that state power could be snatched from the British without resort to a modicum of violence.²²⁰

7. Socialists and Constructive Work

Narendra Deva had given up his legal practice after the passage of the resolution on non-co-operation at the Nagpur session of the Congress in December 1920.²²¹ Associating himself with the reconstruction effort to nurture national educational institutions, he joined, at the suggestion of Jawaharlal Nehru, the faculty of the newly-established Kashi Vidyapith.²²² Narendra Deva found the work here more to his taste than the legal practice at Faizabad; later, in 1926, he would succeed Dr. Bhagvan Das as the head of this national institution. Although Narendra Deva had been involved with the educational aspects of the national movement, even as late as 1929 he had observed that “the constructive programme of the Congress is regarded as dull & tame” by many who “cared more for a live programme of immediate work”.²²³ This did not, however, prevent his involvement in these activities. For example,

in May 1930 he had himself organized charkha training classes in Banaras in support of the khadi, that is, hand-spun cloth, promotion programme.²²⁴ In this matter the socialists came gradually to be influenced by Gandhi. Likewise, Gandhi too kept evolving and expanding his conception of constructive work. Born essentially out of the non-co-operation movement of the 1920s, the programme was later explained in a small compendium by Gandhi in December 1941 listing activities connected with communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, khadi, other village industries, village sanitation, new or basic education, adult education, women, education in health and hygiene, leprosy, provincial languages, national language, that is, Hindustani (inclusive of Hindi and Urdu), economic equality, kisans, labour, adivasis, and students.²²⁵ This was further revised and enlarged in 1945.²²⁶ The political implications of such constructive activities were vividly underlined by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the “Frontier Gandhi” as he was known, at the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in 1934. Referring to his tour of Bengal, the leader from the North West Frontier Province said that in subdivisions where the khadi programme had reached, resulting in some increase in incomes howsoever small, people were willing to come forward to attend Congress meetings; the contrary was true in other subdivisions where *charkha* activities had not reached and where people were fearful of associating with Congress activities.²²⁷

It was Gandhi who had in 1934 initially drawn the attention of socialists through Narendra Deva to what

²¹⁹ SW-AND-1, pp. 107—108.

²²⁰ “Mere Sansmaran”, *Rashtriyata Aur Samajwad*, Banaras, Gyan Mandal, 1949, p. 691. An account of this visit to Pune by Narendra Deva, along with Suraj Prasad Awasthi, also an MLA, and some of this conversation with Gandhi in late August or early September 1945, appears in CWMG, Vol. 81, pp. 209—210. Narendra Deva and Awasthi had inquired whether the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh like the Indian National Congress could use the words “peaceful and legitimate” instead of “truth and nonviolence”. Gandhi told them that “truth and nonviolence” were also political terms though “in the political context, the words ‘peaceful and legitimate’ were considered to be more appropriate”. Reminding them that even these latter words had been introduced by him in the Congress constitution, Gandhi seemed to indicate, in answer to their query, a preference for the expression “truth and nonviolence” as, in a working class context, the “workers must be told in a straight and direct way as to what they should or should not do”.

²²¹ “Mere Sansmaran”, *Rashtriyata Aur Samajwad*, Benares, Gyan Mandal, 1949, p. 686. For the text of the non-co-operation resolution passed at the Nagpur session, see CWMG, Vol. 19, Appendix 1, New Delhi, Publications Division, 1966, pp. 576—578.

²²² “Mere Sansmaran”, *Rashtriyata Aur Samajwad*, op. cit., p. 686.

²²³ Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 9 February 1929, SW-AND-1, p. 3.

²²⁴ Jagdish Chandra Dikshit, *Acharya Narendra Deva*, Lucknow, Soochna Evam Jansampark Vibhag, Uttar Pradesh, 1989, p. 27.
²²⁵ CWMG, Vol. 75, pp. 146—166.

²²⁶ M.K. Gandhi, *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Trust, 1945.

²²⁷ Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s speech reproduced in *Report of the 48th Session of the Indian National Congress: Proceedings*, Bombay, 1934, pp. 111—112. By this time the spread of the movement for handspun cloth was widespread enough for the Viceroy Irwin to acknowledge after the Gandhi-Irwin pact that “although the boycott has been dropped as a political weapon, Lancashire must realize that the movement against foreign cloth has attained great influence which it is going to retain”. (Irwin to Viscount Goschen, 30 March 1931, National Archives of India, Halifax Papers, Microfilm, Accession No. 3898.)

he described as a “glaring omissions” from their draft programme; these omissions included, according to Gandhi, untouchability removal, communal unity, khaddar and prohibition.²²⁸ Having been more attentive to Gandhi and the evolution of his ideas than many writers and ideologues of the communist tradition, Narendra Deva, like most socialists of his time, was aware, for example, of Gandhi’s attempts at breaking social barriers and of his critique of caste.²²⁹ He pointed out that Gandhi advocated “interdining and intermarriage not only between different castes but between different communities”.²³⁰ Narendra Deva noted of Gandhi that “He is in no sense an orthodox Hindu. On the contrary, he breaks almost every rule and practice enjoined by orthodox Hinduism. He does not believe in the institution of caste and its observances and practices. He advocates widow marriage... He has devised his own marriage ritual and in this matter pays no regard to the existing laws.”²³¹

It is true, however, that leading socialists did not accord the importance to constructive work that many others in the Congress were prepared to give it. Years later Jayaprakash Narayan would recall:

Looking back it seems to me that we would have done well to associate ourselves with the constructive work of the Congress to a far greater extent than we did. We were responsible—and I more than others perhaps—in creating the feeling that all constructive work was unrevolutionary and, for socialists, a waste of time. I should like to put on record that that was an immature and mistaken

view. Possibly, if we had come into the field of constructive work we might have developed aspects or types of it that would perhaps have enriched it. But whether that would have happened or not there is no doubt that we have impoverished ourselves a great deal by keeping out of that valuable field of activity, which would have given us experience and wider mass contact and enabled us to understand rural India in a more intimate manner.²³²

Many aspects of the “constructive programme” formulated by Gandhi gained the support of Narendra Deva who was included in the body set up by the Congress to prepare a plan for the development of Hindustani.²³³ Narendra Deva urged also that the educational system be remodeled “on the lines suggested by the Wardha scheme”.²³⁴ This was the scheme drawn up, on Gandhi’s inspiration, by a Committee appointed in 1937 with Dr. Zakir Husain as its President, for free and compulsory education and with emphasis on handicraft/vocational training.²³⁵ This was reflected in Narendra Deva’s work on basic education in the United Provinces and in the report of the UP Primary and Secondary Education Reorganisation Committee (1938), headed by him. This report had potentially significant ramifications. The Committee came down heavily against the distinction between “vernacular” and “Anglo-vernacular education”.²³⁶ After the Committee submitted its report in February 1939, the United Provinces Government recorded in August that it had “already accepted the proposal of the Committee regarding the introduction of Basic Education—a term embracing education through

²²⁸ Letter to Narendra Deva, 2 August 1934, CWMG, Vol. 58, p. 274.

²²⁹ SW-AND-2, p. 119. See also Madhu Limaye’s work, *Manu, Gandhi and Ambedkar, And Other Essays*, New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 1995. One may make an instructive comparison between this work and B.T. Ranadive’s *Caste, Class and Property Relations*, Calcutta, National Book Agency, 1982. While Ranadive’s understanding of Gandhi’s position on untouchability, caste, and on *varna* distinctions remains frozen in the early 1930s, the socialist leader Limaye makes an attempt to understand the evolution of both Gandhi’s and Ambedkar’s ideas. In his *Atmakatha* (New Delhi, Bharatiya Prakashan Sansthan, 1998, p. 229), Limaye makes the point that the weaker Dalits, even in Maharashtra, which was Ambedkar’s base, were not against the Congress.

²³⁰ SW-AND-2, p. 119.

²³¹ *Idem*.

²³² Bimal Prasad (ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan Selected Works*, Volume 4, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library/Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003 pp. 229—230. More than forty years later this would be echoed by the socialist Limaye, who said of Gandhi: “Through his constructive programmes he penetrated the village India.” (Madhu Limaye, “Gandhi, Nehru and Quit India”, *Janata*, Quit India Number, Bombay, 1991, p. 13.)

²³³ See *Indian Annual Register*, 1938, Volume 2, p. 279.

²³⁴ SW-AND-1, p. 140.

²³⁵ The report of the (U.P.) Primary and Secondary Education Reorganisation Committee is a document of abiding relevance, even today, nearly eight decades later. Its observations on (i) compulsory and primary, that is, basic education, (ii) the unnatural distinctions between education intended for rural and urban populations, (iii) the examination system, and (iv) the high drop-out rate in schools, could have been made with today’s situation in mind.

²³⁶ Report of the Primary and Secondary Education Reorganisation Committee, Lucknow, Government of the United Provinces, Department of Education, 1939, p. 35.

concrete life situations and co-related with one or more forms of manual and productive work and the social and cultural environments of the child”.²³⁷ The first Basic School was established in Begumsarai near Allahabad and speaking at inauguration in August 1939, UP Premier Govind Ballabh Pant said: “Gandhiji must be thanked for the idea, and Acharya Narendra Deva for the scheme and Mr Sampurnanand for putting the system into practice in U.P.”²³⁸ The Committee’s proposals were actually not confined to U.P. alone but were formulated with a view to being useful for other Indian provinces as well. As the U.P. Government noted: “Among the several recommendations made by the Committee one of the most important is that compulsory primary education should be imparted on a nation-wide scale free of charge and should extend for a period of seven years beginning from the age of seven.”²³⁹ In the south, N.G. Ranga too accorded great significance to the constructive work movement and its impact. According to Ranga, “Gandhi and the nationalists outstripped the Liberals through revolutionary action and constructive work...”²⁴⁰ In Orissa, Malati Choudhury and Rama Devi had been active in the salt satyagraha and the former played an important role in establishing a branch of the Congress Socialist Party; Malati Choudhury was active also in the Kisan movement, presiding over various peasant conferences in 1938.²⁴¹ This positioning fitted well with Narendra Deva’s perspective. He appreciated and supported constructive work but felt that unless these activities were supplemented by mass organizations they could not lead to mass action.²⁴² The villages, according to him, needed to be the focus of a “New Life

Movement” that “should have in view the removal of the cultural backwardness of the people” so as to give them “new aims and aspirations and developing co-operative and democratic habits among them”.²⁴³

On the question of inter-communal relations, a cardinal element in the constructive programme, Narendra Deva, like Gandhi and Nehru, accorded importance to local neighbourhood-level work. Speaking in September 1946 at a meeting of Faizabad residents, Narendra Deva emphasized the need to organize Mohalla Committees: “...it was the poor people who suffered most during a communal riot. *Educated gentlemen goondas, more than anybody else, were responsible for riots.* It must be the concern of every Mohalla Committee to prevent communal disturbances from breaking out or extending to that Mohalla” (emphasis added).²⁴⁴ The importance of such neighbourhood groups has been neglected in recent decades as was evident yet again in the events in Muzaffarnagar in 2013 where neighbours were incited to turn upon their neighbours.

8. The Socialist Departure from the Congress

Soon after Indian independence in August 1947, the All India Congress Committee met in November at Delhi where the then Congress President, Acharya Kripalani announced his resignation. Gandhi, who attended the Working Committee meeting at which the new President was to be chosen, suggested Narendra Deva’s name as Kripalani’s successor.²⁴⁵ It was the second time that Gandhi had proposed Narendra Deva’s name, the first

²³⁷ Paragraph 4 of the Government of U.P., Education Dept resolution, 4 August 1939.

²³⁸ B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Volume 9, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 250.

²³⁹ Paragraph 5 of the Government of U.P., Education Dept. resolution, 4 August 1939.

²⁴⁰ N.G. Ranga, *Outlines of National Revolutionary Path*, Bombay, Hind Kitabs, 1945, p. 132.

²⁴¹ Bina Kumari Sarma, *Indian Historical Review*, Volume XXI, Numbers 1—2, pp. 78—112 at p. 94.

²⁴² The Swarajists in the 1920s had taken a similar position though without the emphasis on mass action that Narendra Deva had in mind. Motilal Nehru wrote in 1924: “We believe in the Constructive Programme, but we do not believe that by itself and without any other activity it will or can lead to Swaraj within a reasonable period of time.” See Ravinder Kumar and Hari Dev Sharma (eds), *Selected Works of Motilal Nehru*, Volume 4, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library/Vikas Publishing House, 1986, p. 223. Such reservations served to explain the focus of interest evinced by particular groups but do not appear to be moot or germane as Gandhi’s own political activities made it amply clear that he himself did not believe that the constructive programme, *by itself*, would bring about swaraj.

²⁴³ Acharya Narendra Deva [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)], *Socialism and The National Revolution*; Padma Publications, Bombay, 1946, p. 183.

²⁴⁴ SW-AND-1, p. 117. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Shah Nawaz Khan make similar suggestions. See (i) *Harijan*, 2 April 1938, 18 June 1938, and 15 September 1940; extracts compiled in M.K. Gandhi, *The Way to Communal Harmony*, Navajivan Trust 1963, pp. 288—291; and (ii) Jawaharlal Nehru’s and Shah Nawaz Khan’s statements after the Calcutta riots in 1946, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (SWJN), Volume 15, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1982, p. 316 and *Indian Annual Register*, 1946, Volume II, pp. 112—113.

²⁴⁵ D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Volume 8, New Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Edition, 1963, p. 191.

occasion having been in the late 1930s. This episode and Gandhi's reasoning are recorded by his secretary and biographer, Pyarelal:

Gandhiji would have liked a Congress Socialist to be the President as there was no outstanding Congress leader outside the Government to take charge and he did not want the Congress to be turned into a mere rubber-stamp of the Government in power. He suggested the name of Acharya Narendra Deva but it was not acceptable to the Congress leaders.²⁴⁶

According to Kripalani's own account, this time Gandhi's choice of Narendra Deva had been supported by Nehru but was opposed by Sardar Patel.²⁴⁷

What kind of India was to be built? Tensions between the socialists and Sardar Patel in particular had been mounting. The Congress Socialists were usually in dissonance with Patel and resented his influence over the Congress organizational machinery. As Narendra Deva appeared to have foreseen, there was a symbiotic relation between the Left-wing propensity to plough their own respective furrows, in isolation from the national struggles, and the growth in "right-wing" influence within the movement and party. On his part, Patel viewed the socialists as the "sappers and miners of the Communist Party" in the context of the united front the socialists had formed with the communist group at the end of the 1930s.²⁴⁸ The widespread resentment that came about within the Congress on account of the attitude of the Communist Party of India both on the Pakistan question and on the Quit India movement of 1942, came ironically to be translated into a resentment against the socialists as well even though the latter by now shared the negative sentiment towards the communists in even greater measure than did the rest of the Congress.

Gandhi was assassinated on 30 January 1948. Barely eight or nine weeks after the assassination, the socialists resigned from the Indian National

Congress. Jayaprakash Narayan had charged Home Minister Patel with communal bias and also with neglect of Gandhi's security.²⁴⁹ Meanwhile, the changes in the Congress constitution ensured that though persons belonging to non-communal organizations could enrol as members of the Congress, they could not hold any office in it. The socialists saw this as affecting their influence in the party.²⁵⁰ Instead of resisting and seeking to reverse this change, they decided to quit the Congress. On the eve of the socialists' departure, the Sixth Annual Conference of the Socialist Party was held at Nasik from 19 to 21 March 1948. Narendra Deva spoke his mind:

There is a vast disparity between what the Congress stands for and what the Congress governments do. The Congress claims that communalists have no place in it. And yet rank communalists are members of the government. Sardar Vallabhai Patel assures the capitalists by telling them that Shanmukham Chetty (the Union Finance Minister—A.N.) is their representative and therefore they need have no apprehensions. He wants the Leaguers to disband the League and join the Congress. He welcomes Hindu Mahasabhaites into the Congress. He pats the RSS and welcomes them too. By one door the Congress expels the socialists. Through another, it admits in capitalists and communalists. God alone can save the Congress.²⁵¹

One who was a strong defender of the Congress as the country's premier anti-imperial organization was now preparing to sever his ties with it. Eight years earlier, Narendra Deva had cautioned some of those in favour of leaving the Congress that as a result of their actions the party could be "converted into a rightist Congress out and out".²⁵² Now he was on the verge of following suit. The logic of his politics so far had implied that once British power was removed, the Congress including the socialists would fashion the country along the lines of the economic programme that they had conceived and

²⁴⁶ Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Part 2 [Volume XI], Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, First Edition, 1958; Reprint, 1997, p. 520.

²⁴⁷ J.B. Kripalani, *Gandhi: His Life and Thought*, New Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Revised Edition, 1991, p. 297.

²⁴⁸ M.R. Masani, *Bliss Was It in That Dawn ...: A Political Memoir Upto Independence*, 1977, New Delhi, Arnold-Heinemann, p. 96.

²⁴⁹ Jayaprakash Narayan's speech at Surat, 29 February 1948, reproduced in Bimal Prasad (ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan Selected Works*, Volume 4, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library/Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003, pp. 219—221.

²⁵⁰ Hari Kishore Singh, *A History of the Praja Socialist Party*, Lucknow, Narendra Prakashan, 1959, p. 99.

²⁵¹ SW-AND-2, p. 225.

²⁵² "The Indian Struggle: Next Phase", Bombay, Congress Socialist Party, 1940, reproduced in SW-AND-1, p. 223.

supported. The socialists had emerged as nationally acclaimed personalities, especially after the Quit India struggle. Had they dug in their heels, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to dislodge them from the Congress. Yet Narendra Deva's strategy of 'moving the entire Congress' had apparently come to naught, perhaps not for any intrinsic fault of his own but for causes and reasons that he was unable to control, effectively influence or perhaps even foresee.

In the couple of years immediately before independence, the Congress leadership had been in talks seeking to bridge the gulf even with the CPI; suggestions had been made by both Nehru and Patel that if the CPI's Pakistan line could be given up, past issues such as differences over the Quit India movement, would be put aside leaving little to hinder normal relations between the CPI and the Congress.²⁵³ These efforts did not fructify as the CPI appeared to be unwilling to change its line. But considering the fact of this approach towards even the CPI, a question arises as to what precipitated the breach between the Congress and the Socialists and whether this breach need necessarily have resulted in an organizational rupture.

Apart from Sardar Patel's general resentment towards the Left-wing as a whole, differences between him and the Socialists had been growing over individual issues in the post-war period. In August 1946 there were reports that some workers' unions affiliated to the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, which was committed to non-

violence, were resorting to violent methods in Jamshedpur. Sardar Patel wrote to the Socialist and trade unionist, Prof. Abdul Bari, cautioning him about this.²⁵⁴ Prof. Bari was not only a founder, along with Rahul Sankrityayan, Jayaprakash Narayan, and others, of the Bihar Socialist Party formed in July 1931, but was also the first President of this party, a precursor of the Congress Socialist Party.²⁵⁵ Sardar Patel appears to have had a high opinion of Prof. Bari.²⁵⁶ Apparently, Prof. Bari had developed differences with Jayaprakash Narayan and Bari's appointment as President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee in 1946 became a sore point with Narayan in his relations with Patel.²⁵⁷ Incidentally, Prof. Bari was assassinated in March 1947 in an unconnected incident.²⁵⁸ Sardar Patel appears also to have accepted official reports that the Congress Socialists were undermining police discipline in Bihar and felt embarrassed by these as a member of the Interim Government.²⁵⁹ As prospects for independence grew, Patel took an interest in efforts to bring the non-communist trade unions together under one platform and this led to the formation of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. In this connection he appears to have been put out by the fact that "Socialists, except Pandit Harihar Nath Shastri of Cawnpore, have not been able to make up their mind to join the INTUC".²⁶⁰ The matter seems to have assumed some importance for Patel as a week later he wrote to the Congress General Secretary about it and referred to "the direct or indirect hostility" of the socialist group.²⁶¹ A few weeks later Patel wrote to Sampurnanand, a socialist and at the time Minister of

²⁵³ Javeed Ashraf, "Pakistan Movement and the CPI", *Secular Democracy*, March 1997, pp. 13—18.

²⁵⁴ Sardar Patel to Prof. Abdul Bari, 15 August 1946, in G.M. Nandurkar (ed.), *Sardar's Letters—Mostly Unknown*, Volume IV, Ahmedabad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Smarak Bhavan, 1977, p. 288.

²⁵⁵ Hari Dev Sharma, "The Formation of the Congress Socialist Party", *Samata Era*, 1984, Volume 4, Nos 5—7 (Special Issue on Fifty Years of Socialist Movement in India), pp. 1—13, at p. 2.

²⁵⁶ For Sardar Patel's opinion of Bari and his work, see letter from Patel to Jayaprakash Narayan, 15 August 1946, reproduced in Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Volume 2, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1972, p. 400 and letter from Patel to Bari, 12 June 1946, reproduced in G.M. Nandurkar (ed.), *Sardar's Letters—Mostly Unknown-I*, Ahmedabad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Smarak Bhavan, 1977, p. 287. On the establishment of the Bihar Socialist Party in 1931, see Hari Dev Sharma, "Acharya Narendra Deva: A Biographical Sketch", in SW-AND-1, p. xxix.

²⁵⁷ See Jayaprakash Narayan to Patel, 29 May 1947, in Bimal Prasad (ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan Selected Works*, Volume 4, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library/Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003, pp. 153—158. Clearly, the Patel—Socialists' dispute had wheels within wheels.

²⁵⁸ For Gandhi's warm tribute to Prof. Abdul Bari on 29 March 1947 upon his death earlier in the month, see *Harijan*, 13 April 1947, CWMG, Volume 87, pp. 177—178; see also Bimal Prasad (ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan Selected Works*, Volume 4, op. cit., p. 156n. Earlier, the internment on 28 January 1945 of Abdul Bari (who was then Deputy Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly), along with some other Bihar leaders, "on the charge of open preparation for another struggle" had led to an eloquent defence of Bari and others by Gandhi who said they were only carrying out the constructive programme (see CWMG, Volume 79, pp. 129—132).

²⁵⁹ Sardar Patel to Lord Mountbatten, 8 May 1947 and Sardar Patel to Sri Krishna Sinha, 8 May 1947 in Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Volume 5, pp. 100—101 and pp. 102—103.

²⁶⁰ Sardar Patel to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, 14 May 1947, in Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Volume 5, p. 330.

²⁶¹ Sardar Patel to Shankarrao Deo, 22 May 1947, in Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Volume 4, p. 98.

Education and Finance in U.P.: “If our friend Narendra Dev could be persuaded to change his attitude, the Socialist Party would throw in its weight” in favour of the INTUC.²⁶² Apart from such organizational matters, the socialists had also been in disagreement with Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel over the attitude to be taken towards the proposals made by the British Cabinet Mission to India in the summer of 1946.²⁶³ The socialists were not enthused by the proposals or by the kind of Constituent Assembly that was under consideration; they therefore wanted to prepare for another round of struggle.²⁶⁴ Even in February 1947, Narendra Deva insisted that it was “by pinning our faith on the organized strength of the masses and not in negotiations that we shall win”.²⁶⁵ In July 1946 Sardar Patel in a letter to D.P. Mishra, a Congress leader from the Central Provinces, had remarked sarcastically in an obvious reference to some of the Socialists and their role in 1942: “The underground variety of Congressmen, who call themselves ‘Augusters’, think they created the August revolution. Like a dog walking under a fully loaded cart they feel that the whole load is on their shoulders and they are dragging the whole cart”.²⁶⁶

With the approach of independence, pressure was brought upon the socialists to make certain changes in their organizational functioning. Changes were made at the Annual Party Conference of the Socialists that took place at Kanpur in late February and early March 1947 after a gap of nine years. The word “Congress” was now dropped from the name of the Congress Socialist Party and a decision was taken to admit non-Congressmen also into the party. At the same time it was claimed by Jayaprakash Narayan on behalf of the socialists that “(o)ur relation with the Congress will remain the same as before and, and the question of snapping the bonds of the Socialists with the Congress

has not arisen”.²⁶⁷ The Kanpur decisions do not appear to have been thought through and were obviously self-contradictory. The changes were made in the wake of criticism that the socialists were acting contrary to Congress policies. If the Socialists wished to retain the Congress connection as before the decision to admit non-Congressmen into the party was quite illogical. The decision to drop the appellation “Congress” and to admit non-Congressmen was consistent only with preparing to break the organizational link with the Congress. That break came at Nasik a year after the Socialists’ Kanpur session of February—March 1947. The resolution passed by the socialists at Nasik referred to the “role of the Congress as a joint front of the Indian people” as having come to an end and also maintained that the “new constitution of the Congress specifically outlaws, for the first time in its historic career, organized groups and parties from functioning in the Congress”.²⁶⁸ Though the onus for the break was sought to be placed in Nasik largely on constitutional change within the Congress, Kanpur had already paved the way for it. How did Narendra Deva, given his ideological understanding throughout the years of struggle, countenance the internal inconsistency of the Kanpur decisions taken a year earlier? Narendra Deva’s speech as chairman of the reception committee at Kanpur furnishes no clue to this as it focuses primarily on the question of democracy being consistent with socialism and on problems of socialist unity.²⁶⁹ The socialist Madhu Limaye who was present at the Kanpur session has shed some further light on Narendra Deva’s position. Replying to the debate at Kanpur on the question of continuing relations with the Congress, Narendra Deva had denied that the decisions being taken there were a first step towards leaving the Congress.²⁷⁰ According to him the reference to the Congress was being deleted from the name of the

²⁶² Sardar Patel to Sampurnanand, 18 June 1947, in Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel’s Correspondence*, Volume 5, pp. 331—332.

²⁶³ Bimal Prasad (ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan Selected Works*, Volume 4, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library/Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003, p. 18.

²⁶⁴ Jayaprakash Narayan’s speech at Public Meeting, Bombay, 11 May 1946 reproduced in Bimal Prasad (ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan Selected Works*, Volume 4, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library/Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003 pp. 11—12.

²⁶⁵ Narendra Deva’s interview to the Press, *National Herald*, 24 February 1947, reproduced in SW-AND-2, p. 159.

²⁶⁶ Sardar Patel to D.P. Mishra, 29 July 1946 in Durga Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel’s Correspondence*, Volume 3, p. 155.

²⁶⁷ Bimal Prasad (ed.), *Jayaprakash Narayan Selected Works*, Volume 4, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library/Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003, pp. 117—118.

²⁶⁸ *Report of the Sixth Annual Conference held at Kotwalnagar, Nasik, March 19th to March 21st, 1948*, Bombay, Socialist Party, pp. 39—40.

²⁶⁹ *Address of Acharya Narendra Deva, Chairman, Reception Committee, Fifth Annual Congress Socialist Party Conference, Cawnpore, 1st March 1947*, reproduced in SW-AND-2, pp. 160—165.

²⁷⁰ Madhu Limaye, *Atmakatha*, New Delhi, Bharatiya Prakashan Sansthan, 1998, p. 492.

Party only because some Congress members had said that socialists tend to misuse the Congress name; he indicated also that the change was being made after consultation with leading Congress figures.²⁷¹ Narendra Deva in fact maintained at Kanpur that the Congress still had great capacity to serve as a vehicle for change and for running the state in a proper manner.²⁷² Madhu Limaye records that listening to Narendra Deva at Kanpur he understood the meaning of the whole of Narendra Deva's speech; but Limaye himself doubted whether the fast-changing situation would permit the socialists to remain in the Congress for long.²⁷³ Clearly, Narendra Deva was not inclined towards the socialists leaving the Congress. There were other forces pushing and pulling in that direction. Minoo Masani, who tried in vain to prevent a split, hinted at this in a letter to Patel requesting him to ensure that a lack of contact between Patel and the socialists did not result in a new alignment which "would be unfortunate for both the Congress and the country".²⁷⁴ At this time Patel was pre-occupied with negotiations that would lead to the partition of India itself. Indeed, the acceptance of the Mountbatten plan would also become a point of contention between the socialists and the Congress leadership, particularly Patel. Gandhi told the socialists that the need of the hour was to counter communalism, not create new parties: "You have simply not understood what socialism means.... Even in Russia their policies have not succeeded completely. Why don't you try to save the country from the calamity that has befallen it today? So long as this communal virus has not been eradicated, socialism will never come."²⁷⁵ He asked them to talk things over, writing in July 1947: "If we do not unite and work together, I think neither the Congress nor the Socialists will succeed."²⁷⁶

In the following year Narendra Deva in his speech at the Nasik session of the Socialists would say:

It is not that we are in a hurry to quit the Congress. The Congress is compelling us to get out of it. Once the Congress President asked us to drop the prefix 'Congress' from our Party name. He also pleaded that our Party doors be thrown open to non-Congressmen. He suggested that this would enable us to continue in the Congress. We did all that at Kanpur. Today they have adopted a constitution which has left us no other alternative.²⁷⁷

If Narendra Deva did not wish to leave the Congress, it was apparently a somewhat strange and counter-intuitive piece of advice for him and the socialists to have accepted from the then Congress President, J.B. Kripalani, resulting in the changes made at Kanpur. As Limaye's account of Narendra Deva's speech at Kanpur indicates, Narendra Deva was in fact reluctant to part company with the Congress. It went against what he had stood for; yet he ultimately went along with the dominant view among socialists as represented by Jayaprakash Narayan who had by now burnt his boats with Patel and the organizational machine of the parent party. Later Narendra Deva would write that it was the new rule that was sought to be introduced in the Congress constitution that made him decide to quit; for him that became the litmus test after which "all my doubts cleared up".²⁷⁸ Years later Jayaprakash Narayan would have second thoughts. He was reported in July 1964, a few weeks after Nehru's death, to have said that "leaving the Congress in 1948 to form the Socialist Party" was a mistake committed on account of "the wrong assessment of the character of the Congress".²⁷⁹ According to him "(m)ost of his partymen thought at that time that the Congress would slowly develop into a conservative-cum-liberal party just like 'what the Swatantra Party is today'. But history belied this assessment".²⁸⁰ Ironically, the then assessment may have provided an accurate description of the *later*

²⁷¹ Idem.

²⁷² Madhu Limaye, *Atmakatha*, op. cit., pp. 492—493.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 493.

²⁷⁴ Minoo Masani to Sardar Patel, 26 May 1947, reproduced in Ganesh M. Nandurkar (ed.), *Sardar's Letters—Mostly Unknown*, Part 2, Ahmedabad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Smarak Bhavan, 1980, pp. 214—215.

²⁷⁵ Discussion with Socialist Workers, 7 June 1947, CWMG, Volume 88, pp. 96—97.

²⁷⁶ Letter dated 22 July 1947, CWMG, Volume 88, p. 396.

²⁷⁷ SW-AND-2, p. 224.

²⁷⁸ Narendra Dev, "My Recollections", in B.V. Keskar and V.K.N. Menon (eds), *Acharya Narendra Deva: A Commemoration Volume*, New Delhi, National Book Trust, 1971, p. 16. This piece is a translation of Narendra Deva's article, "Mere Sansmaran" published in *Janvani*, in September 1948.

²⁷⁹ *The Hindustan Times*, 4 July 1964, cited in Girja Shankar, *Socialist Trends in the Indian National Movement*, Meerut, Twenty-First Century Publishers, 1987, p. 294n.

²⁸⁰ Idem.

Congress towards the last two decades of the twentieth century. By then, several possibilities and alternate policies the socialists could have meaningfully expanded and expounded and to which they might conceivably have made a greater contribution, were lost to them.

9. Some Further Post-Independence Developments

Not all socialists left the Congress. Many stayed on but this is not the place to trace their story. We may conclude this essay, without going into subsequent organizational and electoral twists and turns, with a brief reference to such post-independence developments as may be necessary to appreciate how socialist politics came subsequently to stand in the context of Narendra Deva's ideas. Narendra Deva reiterated the relevance of non-violent struggle and Satyagraha even in the post-independence years. In 1949, on the occasion of the agitation carried on by Ram Manohar Lohia in favour of the democratic forces in Nepal, Narendra Deva commended Lohia not only for the peaceful satyagraha that Lohia led outside the Nepal embassy in Delhi; he backed Lohia also on the civil liberties questions about the way the protest was handled by Delhi's Police.²⁸¹ In later years too, Narendra Deva lent support to Lohia on various civil liberties issues such as those related to the Farrukhabad peasants' agitation and the struggle for democratic rights in Manipur in India's north-east in 1954.²⁸² The differences between them over a political crisis that arose in Travancore-Cochin and on other matters that soon followed were also marked. Some of these issues, which assumed an organizational-disciplinary form, have been dealt with adequately elsewhere and do not fall within the scope of this essay.²⁸³ In post-independence Indian socialism, Lohia was the principal figure associated with the socialist retreat from Marxism and the attempt

to offer another ideological framework which came to be associated with later Indian socialists. The principal intellectual reason for this retreat was the increasing material that was becoming available on political intolerance and restriction of individual liberty within the Soviet Union. The Pachmarhi Convention of the socialists in May 1952 which was presided over by Lohia can be said to mark the socialist break with Marxism.

Narendra Deva and Lohia had had close personal relations from the days of the latter's father Hiralal Lohia who had been jailed in various nationalist struggles.²⁸⁴ In his writings, such as *Saptakranti*, or "seven revolutions", published in 1963, Lohia may be seen in relation to Narendra Deva somewhat as Antonio Gramsci may be in relation to Karl Marx, that is, in certain respects, an extension, though by no means a replacement.²⁸⁵ Narendra Deva (and Lohia in such writings), placed emphasis on the dissolution of caste which the former quite clearly regarded as an anti-democratic institution. Both believed that in a socialist society civil liberties ought to be deepened, not curtailed. In actual policy and praxis the differences between the approaches represented by them become further marked for, in his anti-Congressism, Lohia later sought and pursued alliances even with forces that Narendra Deva had shunned.

Both Narendra Deva and Lohia had come into close contact with Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. But Lohia has left behind among his followers a largely post-independence legacy of often bitter anti-Nehruism, which tendency is absent in Narendra Deva. With Narendra Deva's political life in the pre-independence Congress entwined with Nehru's, the two remained personally close even after the socialists as a party left the Congress in 1948.²⁸⁶ On their geopolitical

²⁸¹ Narendra Deva, "The Weapon of Satyagraha", *National Herald*, 26 June 1949, reproduced in Acharya Narendra Deva, *Towards Socialist Society* [Brahmanand (ed.)], New Delhi, Centre of Applied Politics, pp. 362—364.

²⁸² "Statement on Dr Lohia's Arrest", *National Herald*, 28 July 1954, SW-AND-4, pp. 67—68; "Statement on Manipur Satyagraha", 24 December 1954, published in *Janata*, 2 January 1955, SW-AND-4, pp. 84—86.

²⁸³ See, for example, Hari Kishore Singh, *A History of the Praja Socialist Party*, Lucknow, Narendra Prakashan, 1959, pp. 200—215 and Hari Dev Sharma, "Acharya Narendra Deva: A Biographical Sketch", in SW-AND-1, pp. xl-xliv for two interpretations of the events that led to an internal split among the socialists.

²⁸⁴ SW-AND-2, p. 98.

²⁸⁵ For a broad summary of some of the ideas in Lohia's *Saptakranti*, see "Seven Revolutions", *Janata*, 9 August 2009 (excerpted from the latter part of the preface to Lohia's, *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*, Hyderabad, Rammanohar Lohia Samata Vidyala Nyasa, 1963). He refers to various "revolutions", including that for national freedom, the *satyagraha* against weapons and armed might, the social revolution, including the struggle for gender equality, and the struggles against caste and against racial and colour discrimination, the economic struggle of the poor against the rich and the "revolution" aiming to protect privacy against encroachment by the collective.

²⁸⁶ See also in this connection Narendra Deva's article on Nehru, written in April 1949 more than a year after the former's departure from the Congress: SW-AND-3, pp. 147—154.

perspectives, the differences between Narendra Deva's ideas and those of Ram Manohar Lohia can, of course, be discerned in their stated ideological positions; but these become more visibly evident in the actual post-Narendra Deva political trajectory of the socialists. Narendra Deva was not inclined to embrace the Western alliance even as a response to what he saw as some grave provocations to Indian nationalism and Indian socialism from the pre-independence Indian communist movement which had sought simultaneously to claim a sole-spokesmanship on behalf of Marxism. Although a critic of certain aspects of Soviet development, Narendra Deva was emphatic that socialist criticism of the Soviet Union must be friendly and must not lower her image in the eyes of the world. This did not, of course mean that he was uncritical of the Soviet Union. For example, in his presidential address at the Bihar Congress Socialist Party Conference on 16 February 1947 he had referred disapprovingly to the "undemocratic nature of the Soviet Russian administration".²⁸⁷ Two weeks later, in his address at the Kanpur session of the socialists on 1 March 1947, Narendra Deva was again critical of the absence of political freedom in Soviet Russia.²⁸⁸ As Narendra Deva died a few days before Khrushchev's disclosures in February 1956, this has given rise to hypothetical propositions about how he would have reacted to these; but given the criticisms he had already made, it is

implausible to utilize Khrushchev's revelations to set Narendra Deva on a posthumous path of anti-Marxism and pro-Americanism of the kind that a section of later Indian socialists took. He had made a sharp critique of American imperialism and, in his correspondence with Asoka Mehta, had also made it clear that he would rather leave the party than give up Marxism. Narendra Deva's article in *Janvani* on "America's New Imperialism" was published in 1947.²⁸⁹ Even prior to Indian independence, when the United States had appeared in the 1940s to be pressuring Winston Churchill on Indian independence, Narendra Deva cautioned against relying too much on the US: "The tendency exhibited during the war to count too much on the goodwill and support of the USA is to be deprecated. It seems as if in the days to come the USA would more and more refuse to interfere in the domestic affairs of the British Empire."²⁹⁰ In like manner, though Narendra Deva left the Congress in 1948, he was not prepared to be pushed on the rebound into unsavoury alliances or platforms that could encourage or politically strengthen the sectarianism of any religious community or other group whether for electoral or for other tactical purposes. He had understood also the complexities of peasant movements and warned against acquiescing in the development of these struggles along casteist or religious-communal lines.

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²⁸⁷ SW-AND-2, p. 158.

²⁸⁸ SW-AND-2, pp. 162—163.

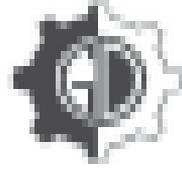
²⁸⁹ An English translation was published decades later. See Narendra Deva, "American Imperialism", *Janata*, Bombay, 15 January 1989. The 1947 article, *America Ka Naya Samrajyavad*, was translated from the Hindi by H.B. Mehndiratta.

²⁹⁰ Narendra Deva, "India and the Post-War World", *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Annual Puja Number, 1945, reproduced in Yusuf Meherally (ed.), op. cit., pp. 162—167, at p. 164.

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