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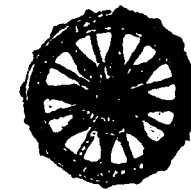
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SOCIAL ANALYSIS**



Edited by :

B. C. Ray

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EDITORIAL

A society in the form of a state based on either capitalistic or communistic ideology, shall have to take cognizance of the undercurrent of social forces occasionally emerging to the surface, throwing new challenges, due to varieties of compelling internal and external factors. This is not merely a question of the past; the process is invariably applicable to all human societies for the present and also the future. Such a situation arose when the social progress, deliberately and continuously, stagnated, regimented and petrified under the exploiting British imperialistic regime, exploded in to the eruption of a powerful nationalism, to force the British to leave India. Then after Indian independence, it was the first programme suggesting efforts for the removal of socio-economic anomaly and disparity which was initiated by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru with his socialistic thought of Indian pattern. But the message of Aurobindo reverberates in the minds of Indians to the effect that India's efforts for integration would face problems if they do go "without morality, tact, taste delicacy and intuition".

The vigour as well as the spirit of the Youth, as a powerful force has to be used in right direction, to meet the challenge of the day affecting the unity and integrity of the nation. If such a powerful force is misused and utilised to serve the narrow and politically prejudiced parochial end, it, with other disturbing factors may lead to creation of fissiparous and separatist tendency, contrary to the solid national unity and integration of a country.

These are some basic issues which directly or indirectly emerge from the discussions in the learned articles and naturally they provoke some thoughts as to what shall have to be done to meet effectively these challenging new problems.

This we wish to add here that we are indeed grateful to the learned writers for their valuable articles for this volume. We are also thankful to the subscribers for their help and cooperation.

B. C. Ray
Editor

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SOCIALISTIC IDEAS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Dr. Hari Hara Das*

Jawaharlal Nehru, the great son of an equally great and glorious father, Pandit Motilal Nehru, was destined to shape the future of India in a mould, which was the product of his scientific and socialistic mind. He had a short but effective political apprenticeship under his father and Mahatma Gandhi and very soon he could make his mark as a leader of outstanding ability with a keen understanding of the problems of the people. He played a dynamic role in the freedom struggle of India and despite the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress movement became identified with Jawaharlal, who will remain one of those rare personages who form an inseparable part of their age.¹ His birth in one of the most affluent and reputed families, his Westernized training from the early childhood under European tutors and governesses², his education at Harrow and Cambridge, his father's reputation as an advocate and as a front-ranking leader of the Congress, above all his erudition and his personal charm and glamour, created an aura around his personality which was denied to most of the other leaders of the Congress.

Jawaharlal's father Pandit Motilal Nehru, was a prosperous lawyer of Allahabad and the prosperity of the family was extremely pronounced.³ Referring to this affluence, Jawaharlal said in his later life, "I am a typical bourgeois, brought up in bourgeois surroundings with all the early prejudices that this training has given me. Communists have called me a petty bourgeois with perfect justification." Jawaharlal was very much conscious of his family background for which he was very much criticised by his adversaries. But it is highly conjectural to think that a person born in a rich and prosperous family would always subscribe to capitalistic ideas and would have no commitment for the cause of the poor and the downtrodden. It is difficult to say as to what would have happened to the personality of Jawaharlal had he not joined the national movement for India's freedom. He may or may not have shone so brilliantly as a champion of a new kind of socialism — Democratic Socialism—which represented a harmonious blending

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of the rights of the individual and the needs of social justice. But the freedom movement which aimed at the liberation of the millions of the poor, oppressed and exploited Indians not only from the shackles of British imperialism, but also from the feudalistic exploitation of their own countrymen, transformed the personality of Jawaharlal and the other leaders of the Congress irrespective of their family connections and economic background.

Nehru's ideological inclinations towards socialism may be traced to his connections with the Fabian Socialists in Great Britain and the study of the utopian socialist doctrines. But all these were merely temperamental and he did not develop any genuine commitment for these ideas in England. There was nothing very significant about him as a student in England. He acquired all that was prevalent in the intellectual atmosphere without getting committed to anything. As a student, he was attracted towards the ideas of Fabian Socialism. Due to his long and close contacts with the West his thoughts and approach to life were "more akin to what is called Western than Eastern". In his mental makeup and certain habits of mind, he was thoroughly Western, and as a result, he lost his 'Indianhood'. After his return to India, Jawaharlal made the sincere effort to rediscover India and to regain his lost identity. The poverty, misery and squalor of the millions of his countrymen and the inhuman exploitation of the rural poor in the hands of the British bureaucracy and the local feudal elements, attracted Jawaharlal more and more to join politics with a view to ameliorating the conditions of the people.⁴ His socialist ideas were nurtured in this atmosphere of pre-independence politics and were translated into action after independence when he continued in power for a period of nearly seventeen years as the Prime Minister and the undisputed leader of India.

Political Scenario :

In 1912, Jawaharlal returned to India with a law degree from England and decided to follow the foot-steps of his illustrious father. But he did not find much interest in the legal profession. During this period, for the first time he came in contact with some of the Moderate leaders of the Indian National Congress. Although he was not impressed by the philosophy of political moderation, he had great appreciation for Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the Servants of India Society started by him. He met Gandhiji in the

year 1916 and this contact was to bear fruit after some year. His study of utopian and humanitarian socialism, initially provided him the required inspiration to work for the poor and the downtrodden people of India. He was gradually attracted towards the political life. He undertook intensive and extensive tour of the rural areas in order to have close contact with the poor, exploited and oppressed people of India and acquire first hand information about them.

The Jallianwalla Bagh Tragedy of 1919 was a turning point in the life of Jawaharlal Nehru.⁵ The misery of the Indians and the reign of terror let loose by the British in the Punjab and the other parts of the country, greatly influenced him to join nationalist politics. There was a significant impact of this tragedy on the development of his thought and personality. In a sincere bid to rediscover India, with which he had lost contact due to his Westernization, he undertook a whirlwind tour of rural India to have intimate contact with the poor peasants. He has made a frank confession : "But somehow I had not fully realised what they were and what they meant to India. Like most of us I took them for granted. This realization came to me during the Pratapgarh visits and ever since then my mental picture of India always contains this naked, hungry mass. Perhaps there was some kind of electricity in the air, perhaps I was in a receptive frame of mind and the pictures I saw and the impressions I gathered were indelibly impressed on my mind".

The poverty and squalor of the Indians due to oppression and exploitation by the British, the land lords and the intermediaries, strengthened the ideological convictions of Jawaharlal in socialism. He wanted to work wholeheartedly to promote the common social, economic and political interests of the people and to give them a fair deal. He was convinced that socialism was the only panacea for the problems of India, but it was not going to achieve any result as long as India continued under the imperial rule of Great Britain. Thus the first and foremost requirement was to fight against the British imperial power to liberate India from the shackles of its control. He therefore, jumped headlong into the Indian freedom struggle and accepted Gandhiji as his leader, inspite of their differences.⁶

Gandhiji appointed Jawaharlal Nehru as his political heir, although he was aware that Nehru did not share all his views and

ideas.⁷ Nehru had great admiration for Gandhiji and despite his ideological differences with him, accepted him as the undisputed leader of the country. He writes : "We feel that we knew him quite well enough to realize that he was a great and unique man and a glorious leader and having put over faith in him, we gave him an almost blank cheque, for the time being at least". On his part Gandhiji gave several concessions to Nehru and reiterated that after he was no longer there, Jawaharlal would speak his language.⁸ He tried to dismiss their differences as mere temperamental. But their differences cannot be dismissed as merely temperamental⁹ as these were basic and fundamental. Both the leaders had different premises and approaches to the problems confronting the country. However, ultimately Nehru was completely won over by Mahatma Gandhi and was separated from his radical and socialist colleagues.¹⁰ He continued to be a close associate of Gandhiji for many years and said, "We were associated (with him) seldom in logical debate and argument or philosophical discourses, we were associated in action".

Nehru's visit to Europe in 1926, proved to be a turning point in his political career. It was the period for the formation of his 'independent thought and personality' free from the oppressive control of his father Pandit Motilal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. In Europe Nehru came in contact with the problems of the oppressed, exploited and the downtrodden people. He was convinced that the problems which India faced were not very much different from the problems of most people in other parts of the world. As the representative of the Indian National Congress, he attended the Congress of the oppressed Nations held in Brussels and was gradually attracted towards Communism. His inclination towards Communism was further strengthened after his visit to Soviet Union in 1927.

The U. P. Provincial Congress Committee drew up a mild Socialist Programme in 1926, at the instance of Jawaharlal Nehru : "We declare that there should be no intermediaries between the state and the cultivator. We had to proceed cautiously, as we were moving, in an atmosphere, which was, till then, unused to such ideas".

In the year 1927, during the Madras session of the Congress Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, had come closer to each other as both the leaders shared the same ideas and ideologies. At the

Calcutta session of the Congress, under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress intended to pass a resolution declaring complete independence as the goal of India. But due to the intervention of Gandhiji, Dominion status was declared as the goal of India. The resolution supported by Bose and Nehru was defeated. After this incident, however, Jawaharlal was won over by Gandhiji and there was no major rift between the two, despite their ideological differences.

But despite his nomination by Gandhiji as his political heir, Jawaharlal did not make any compromise on fundamental policy and ideological issues, although he moderated some of them not to cause any embarrassment to Gandhiji his political mentor. In 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru was elected President of the Indian National Congress as well as the President of the Trade Union Congress. He expressed his hope that he would be able to act as a link between the two organizations and bring them closer to each other - "the National Congress to become more socialistic, more proletarian, and organised labour to join the national struggle". The Lahore Congress session was historic as in this session, under the dynamic Presidentship of Jawaharlal, the 'Independence Resolution' which he had initiated a year before, along with Subhas Chandra Bose and which was opposed by Gandhiji, was unanimously passed and Gandhiji gave his support to this resolution.

Nehru, became the most influential leader of the Congress, next only to Gandhiji and was instrumental in adopting a new strategy for the Congress in fighting a more aggressive battle against the foreign imperial power.¹¹ He gave equal importance to fighting the war of liberation against the imperial power of Britain as well as fighting against the Indian vested interest, to save millions of people from appalling poverty and squalor. Nehru wanted to establish an egalitarian society based on just and equal socio-economic order. He believed that socialism was the only solution to India's problems of poverty and inequality. He was convinced that for the removal of socio-economic disparities and inequalities it was necessary to establish a highly modern society with all the benefits of industrialisation, science and technology. He had a secular and socialistic approach to various problems confronted by the people of India and throughout his life fought against the evils of casteism, communalism, poverty and ignorance. He dedicated himself to the cause

of human dignity and self-respect. He stood for unqualified and unconditional welfare of the people.¹²

Under the dynamic leadership of Jawaharlal and the impact of his socialistic views, in 1929, the All India Congress Committee at Bombay passed a resolution saying, "In the opinion of this Committee, the great poverty and the misery of the Indian people are due not only to the foreign exploitation of India but also to the economic structure of society, which the rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order, therefore, to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities."

The Soviet Influence on Nehru's Socialism :

Ever since his visit to Soviet Union, which had become a revolutionary centre of activity for the peasants and the workers¹³ (1927), Jawaharlal Nehru was immensely impressed by its economic and political developments and he adopted a friendly attitude towards this socialistic state. He also favourably influenced the attitude of the other Congress leaders towards Soviet Union. In November, 1927, he visited Soviet Union and came back as its "enthusiastic, though not uncritical admirer".¹⁴ After a few months of his Soviet visit, he wrote that, "the impressions I carried back with me from Moscow were very favourable."¹⁵

In his Autobiography, written in Jail between June 1934 and February 1935, Nehru wrote : "I had long been drawn to socialism and communism, and Russia had appealed to me". Nehru had a genuine dislike for violence and he was critical of both the Western and the Soviet systems for the violence perpetrated by them and he thought that it "was common in both" the systems. But while the violence of the capitalist order seemed inherent in it, the violence of Russia, bad though it was, aimed at a new order based on peace and co-operation and real freedom for the masses. This attitude led him to condone the violence of the Soviet system as it was devoted to the making of a new social order based upon socialism. He argued, "In the Soviet country a great new world is being built up before our eyes . . . In the balance, therefore, I was all in favour of Russia". Jawaharlal had conceded that, "Russia

apart, the theory and philosophy of Marxism lightened up many a dark corner of my mind."¹⁶ In his book 'The Discovery of India', which was written during his prison term in the Ahmadnagar Fort from April to September 1944, Jawaharlal has admitted the powerful effect on his mind, of the ideas of Mark and Lenin and "also tremendously impressive practical achievements of the Soviet Union".¹⁷ It was due to his predilection for the socialist ideology, he showed a clear preference for the Soviet Union in comparison to the capitalist system of the U.S.A., although the factor of geographical proximity in such consideration may not be ruled out. Thus Nehru's sympathy and preference for Soviet Russia continued and remained unchanged, till his death in May 1964. In the nation-building process of India, he always pursued the Soviet example as he thought it to be the ideal model.

Jawaharlal and The Congress Socialist Party :

The Congress Socialist Party was formed within the Congress in 1934, as a splinter group with a separate ideological identity. The members of the Congress Socialist Party were organised on Marxist-Leninist lines of thought and had limited but selected members. The influence of the Marxists was very vital, although majority of members of the party were non-Marxists. The Commitment of the Party to democracy and nationalism was extremely pronounced and despite the influence of the Marxists, it was neither permitted to be called a Marxist-Leninist party, dedicated to the dictatorship of the proletariat, nor to be Communist International.

The Congress Socialist Party was organised within the Congress by a group of educated and progressive leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, Yusuf Meherally, N. G. Goray and S. M. Joshi, who wanted to provide a dynamic and radical leadership to the Congress in its fight against British imperialism. At a later stage of the socialist movement, with the joining of Acharya Narendra Deva, Sampurnanda and Sri Prakash, the Congress Socialist Party acquired a rare prestige and it aimed at giving a new orientation to the freedom movement launched under the Congress banner. The emergence of the Congress Socialist Party owed its origin to the widespread feeling that there was something fundamentally wrong with the struggle for independence by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji. The formation of the Congress Socialist Party within the Congress was a historical

necessity. It united the radical elements in the Congress on Marxist but democratic and nationalistic principles.¹⁸ It interpreted Indian cultural nationalism within a new frame work, which was consistent with Western norms and concepts of socialism.

Since Jawaharlal was also a prominent socialist leader of the time, it is interesting to analyse his interactions with the Congress Socialist Party. Although ideologically closest to the C.S.P., Jawaharlal was not a member of this party.¹⁹ It is significant that very often he styled himself as a republican and a socialist and provided financial and moral support to the founder leaders of the Party in the early years of its formation. Nehru shared the radical and socialist ideas of the C.S.P. and as a matter of fact most of the members of this party were his followers and admirers. Jawaharlal was one of the most prominent advocates of the Marxist theory and the socialist philosophy and the radicals in the Congress Party were charmed by his personality and political ideology. Most of these people joined the C. S. P. at some stage or the other, but Nehru did not associate himself officially with this party. He was of the opinion that the formation of the Congress Socialist Party would weaken the Congress and divert the attention from the goal of political independence.²⁰ Jawaharlal was opposed to any kind of sectarian and factional politics within the Congress and in the formation of the C.S.P., he could see dangerous portents of factionalism. Despite the fact that Jawaharlal was not a member of the C.S.P., the party looked to him for inspiration and Nehru utilised the various forums of the party to further his socialistic programme.²¹ He condemned the hostile attitude of the Congress Working Committee towards the C.S.P. and expressed his feelings to Mahatma Gandhi in one of his letters. But gradually the rift between the C.S.P. and the Rightist elements in the Congress became very acute and probably under the influence of Gandhiji, Jawaharlal had to take a more stiff attitude towards the C.S.P. By 1938 his attitude towards the Congress Socialists was characterised by hostility and he refused to have anything with them. He openly criticised the socialist group for creating opposition for those who did not fall in line with them. He was convinced that it had become an opportunist group of power-seekers who had deviated from the path of socialism. In 1939, Jawaharlal opposed the nomination of Acharya Narendra Deva for the Presidentship of the Congress. Despite his ideological proximity with the Congress Socialists, Jawaharlal was aware that

he owed his power and influence in the Congress to the support of the Rightists under the benign blessings of Gandhiji, who had already nominated him as his political heir. Gandhiji had stated that when he would no more be there, Jawaharlal would speak his language and provide leadership to the country. By 1939, with Gandhiji's wholehearted support and blessings, Jawaharlal had already emerged as the undisputed leader of the Congress. The resignation of Subhas Chandra Bose from Congress Presidentship, after his historic victory at Tripuri in 1939, had proved the supremacy of Gandhiji in the Congress and the influence of Rightists in managing its affairs. On this occasion also the Gandhian influence weighed heavily on Jawaharlal and he sacrificed his commitments to socialism and radicalism. By 1939, the Congress Socialist Party had become highly critical of Gandhiji's leadership and the way the Congress movement was organised. By this time Jawaharlal was already identified with Gandhiji and the organizational wing of the Congress and since the Congress Socialist Party had projected its own leaders, there was no scope for him to retrace his steps on the grounds of socialistic ideology at the cost of losing the prospects of the unquestioned national leadership.

Nehru's Socialism :

Jawaharlal was a radical idealist and he found in socialism the answer to the problems of poverty and exploitation, confronted by India in the pre-independence period.²² He believed that the national movement in India was part of a wider struggle of the oppressed people in Asia and Africa. He was convinced that British imperialism thrived in India due to the collaboration of powerful classes like the industrialists and the zamindars, who extended the imperial power their loyal support in return for protection in the game of exploitation of the poor peasants and workers. Thus in order to galvanise the national movement and to transform it into a true revolution, he wanted to mobilize millions of the poor and exploited Indians with a view to destroying both the economic power of the exploiting classes and British rule over India. There was a seminal transformation in the ideological orientation of the national movement due to the socialist vision of Jawaharlal Nehru.²³ His analysis of the struggle between imperialism and nationalism and that between the exploiters and the exploited within the Indian society created great interest and enthusiasm as it was based on real life experience and pragmatism. The socialist vision of

Jawaharlal inspired millions of the neglected, poor and down-trodden people of India to aspire for a life of material dignity and it imposed upon the Congress, the responsibility of bringing about a social transformation at the same time as it struggled against British imperialism.

There was a discernible impact of socialism on Congress politics since 1927 and it increasingly provided the basic pattern for the fabric into which the older thread of nationalism was woven. Nehru emphatically declared in the year 1929 about his socialistic and republican preferences: "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican and I am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even kings of old and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy."²⁴ He further said, "We must realise that the philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over and almost the only points in dispute are the pace and methods of advance to its full realisation. India will have to go that way too if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality, though she may evolve her own methods and may adopt the ideal to the ingenuity of her race".

Jawaharlal gave great importance to India's nationalism and its political freedom, but he was convinced that without social transformation and economic freedom, mere political freedom was meaningless.²⁵ He emphasised this view in his writings: "My outlook was wider, and nationalism by itself seemed to me definitely a narrow and insufficient creed. Political freedom, independence, were no doubt essential, but they were steps only in the right direction, without social freedom and a socialistic structure of society and the state, neither the country nor the individual could develop much".²⁶ He differentiated Indian nationalism from the Fascist concept of nationalism and along with his advocacy of socialism, he made a frontal attack upon Fascism and all kinds of imperialism. He was of the opinion that capitalism, in its difficulties, look to Fascism and thus imperialism and Fascism, represented the two faces of the new decaying capitalism. They only varied in different countries according to national characteristics and economic and political conditions, but represented the same forces of reaction. These imperialist and Fascist forces were opposed by socialism and rising nationalism of the eastern and other dependent

countries. Thus two rival economic and political systems, faced each other in the world and the world in the period of 1930's was divided into two vast groups—the imperialist and fascist on one side, the socialist and nationalist on the other. Nehru had no doubts in his mind that in this confrontation between the two groups, India was bound to take its stand with the progressive forces of the world which were pitted against fascism and imperialism. Jawaharlal's socialistic preferences were clear and emphatic, : "I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense. Socialism, however, is something even more than an economic doctrine, it is a philosophy of life and as such also it appeals to me. I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and subjection of the Indian people, except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure, the ending of vested interest in land and industry, as well as the feudal and autocratic Indian States system. That means ultimately the ending of private property. It means ultimately a change in our instincts, habits and desires. In short, it means a new civilization, radically different from the present capitalist order. Socialism is thus, for me not merely an economic doctrine which I favour, it is a vital creed which I hold with all my head and heart. I work for Indian independence because the nationalist in me cannot tolerate alien domination; I work for it even more because for me it is the inevitable step to social and economic change."²⁷

Jawaharlal was a humanist and humanism was central to his life and thought. He was an agnostic to whom "any idea of a personal God seems very odd", but his God was man, and specially the poor and the down-trodden man. He combined "many assorted virtues with the quality of deep humanism". He aimed at the liberation of mankind from all forms of oppression and exploitation and fought all his life against slavery and degradation. This intense humanism and commitment to the cause of the oppressed and exploited people, greatly influenced his socialistic ideas and philosophy. He was deeply moved by the poverty and suffering of the peasants in rural India and this awareness became an inalienable part of Nehru's personality.

Nehru's rational and scientific temperament and his keenness to make a scientific interpretation of history and human relations considerably influenced his socialistic orientation. Referring to Marxism, he said, "It is a way of interpreting history and politics and economics and human life and human desires. It is a theory as well as a call to action. It is a philosophy which has something to say about most of the activities of man's life". Marxian concept of socialism, Marxist analysis and the example of the Soviet model, provided Jawaharlal with the necessary inspiration to prepare his own programme of action at a later stage when he played a decisive role in shaping the future of India. To Nehru, "Marx's theory of history was... of an ever changing and advancing society. There is no fixity in it. It was a dynamic conception". Nehru's liking for Marxism was due to the fact that it was free from dogmatism. "It was essentially the freedom from dogma and the scientific outlook of Marxism that appealed to me". Lenin and Stalin also recognised that Marxism was "not a dogma but a guide to action". They regarded that Marxist theory was neither complete nor unassailable. Marxism was accepted by Nehru as a guide to the understanding of history and social phenomenon and in this context he followed the foot steps of Lenin and Stalin. But there was a fundamental difference between the approach of Lenin and Stalin who were the leaders of the revolutionary working class and who had to proclaim the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and Jawaharlal Nehru who was a liberal democrat with all his commitments for human freedom and liberty.

Nehru's Concept of Democratic Socialism :

Although Nehru was a socialist, he did not subscribe to the theory, that for the establishment of socialism there was the inevitable necessity of force and violence. He discarded the concept that violence, force and revolution were the means for the attainment of socialistic transformation of the society.²⁸ He discounted the theory that violent mentality increased the militancy of the masses and therefore, in order to achieve the socialistic goal this was to be encouraged among the peasants and the workers. He believed that true strength came not from occasional group violence but from mass organization and the capacity for mass action, which should be peaceful action. In February 1939, he declared :

"I have been and am a convinced socialist and a believer in democracy and have at the same time accepted whole-heartedly the peaceful technique of non-violent action which Gandhi has practised so successfully during the past twenty years. I am convinced that strength can only come to us from the masses, but that strength either for struggle or for the great work of building a new world must be a disciplined and orderly strength. It is not out of chaos or the encouragement of the chaotic forces that we can fashion the India of our dreams."²⁹ Nehru wanted to bring socialistic transformation in India through public opinion and democratic legislation. He wanted to exercise the power of the state against class interest through the democratic and constitutional methods.

Nehru was convinced that if socialism was to be built up in India 'it will have to grow out of Indian conditions'. He wanted that his socialism should be practical as well as indigenous. After independence, when Nehru wielded power as Prime Minister of India, he tried to give a practical shape to his socialism through peaceful methods. For him the revolutions in other countries did not have much significance as conditions in India were different. He rejected the idea of class war and advocated that a more human outlook should be adopted for the adjustment of social relations. He however did not discard the factor of democratic coercion for bringing social transformation. Nehru aimed at solving the problems of class conflict both by legislation and a normal change in the outlook of the opposing classes, the right way of liquidating that conflict is to put an end to it by peaceful methods".³⁰

It was a commonly accepted notion that "any kind of socialism necessarily meant authoritarianism". In 1956, Nehru discarded this theory by saying, "It does not at least in theory; in practice, I think it depends on how a country will develop". In the political philosophy of Nehru, socialistic ideas are closely connected with political democracy. He knew that liberty and democracy had no meaning without equality and equality was not possible so long as social control was not established over the means of production and distribution and means of production were privately owned.

Thus the democratic socialism of Jawaharlal was opposed to communism which was essentially totalitarian, authoritarian and managerial in character. It aimed at working for social revolution

through democratic means. To Jawaharlal, socialism and individualism did not seem essentially contradictory. But Nehru did not accept the theory of absolutely self-sufficient and egoistic individuals, who interpreted the society in terms of their selfish interests. He considered society as a basic element of life. 'Although it does not exist apart from individuals who constitute it, it cannot be completely reduced to them. It is an order out of which individuals arise and acquire their very individuality'. Explaining his theory of reconciliation Nehru said, "Personally I am perfectly prepared to accept political democracy only in the hope that this will lead to social democracy". Nehru tried to achieve the goals of political democracy through a progressive constitution and liberal laws and he wanted to implement socialism through the various socialistic programmes of the government.

Regarding the so-called anti-thesis between socialism and democracy what Nehru had said in March, 1939 had remained as a basic part of his political philosophy throughout his life.

"I do not see why under socialism there should not be a great deal of freedom for the individual; indeed, far greater freedom than the present system gives. He can have freedom of conscience and mind, freedom of enterprise, and even the possession of private property on a restricted scale. Above all, he will have the freedom which comes from economic security, which only a small number possess to-day".³¹

Nehru's concept of social democracy is not opposed to the personal liberty of the individual. Nehru himself had great love for personal freedom and was opposed to any kind of regimentation. However, he justified state intervention in the larger interest of the society and in the individual's own interest. Nehru advocates socialism as the only guarantee for the individuality of the human beings. Once Subhas Chandra Bose, questioned this anti-thesis between Nehru's individualism and socialism. "How a Socialist can be an individualist as you regard yourself, beats me. The one is the anti-thesis of the other. How socialism can ever come into existence through individualism of your type is also an enigma to me".³² Nehru's answer to this question, explains his philosophy of democratic socialism.

"Am I a socialist or an individualist ? Is there a necessary contradiction between the two terms ? Are we all such integrated

human beings that we can define ourselves precisely in a word or a phrase ? I suppose I am temperamentally and by training an individualist, and intellectually a socialist, what ever all this might mean, I hope socialism does not kill or suppress individuality; indeed I am attracted to it because it will release innumerable individuals from economic and cultural bondage".³³

Thus, Nehru could not accept Marxism, pure and simple as he thought that it was unsuitable to Indian conditions. He changed it suitably and called it democratic socialism, which did not aim at the total abolition of private property, but aimed at the public ownership of the basic and major industries. He, therefore, pursued the policy of mixed economy. He faced the problems of combining democracy with socialism, maintenance of individual freedom and initiative and yet to have centralized social control and planning of the economy life of the people. His preference for democratic socialism was manifest and he knew that it was a time-taking process. The change in the economic structure was to be accompanied by the change in the minds and hearts of men. In January 1957, he said. "We must realize that the process of bringing socialism to India, especially in the way we are doing it, that is, the democratic way, will inevitably take time". Nehru was not interested in socialism at the cost of human values and was sure that democracy would promote the growth of both the human beings and the society. He was anxious for the achievement of socialistic goals, but "not at the cost of man's creative spirit, his creative energy, his spirit of adventure; not at the cost of all those fine things of life which have ennobled man throughout the ages."

The Socialistic Pattern of Society :

Although Nehru was in favour of the mixed economy, yet he attached great importance to the public sector as against the private sector. He wanted that the individual's right to private property should be controlled by the authority of the sovereign legislature alone and no judiciary can stand in judgement over the sovereign will of the Parliament. He said : "No individual can override ultimately the rights of the community at large. No community should injure and invade the rights of the individuals unless it be for the most urgent and important reasons".

In December 1954, Nehru announced in the Lok Sabha, "The pattern of society that we look forward to is a socialist pattern of society which is classless, casteless."³⁴ At the Avadi Session of the Indian National Congress in January 1955, the resolution, aiming at a socialistic pattern of society was adopted. Some time later, this was analysed by Nehru in the following words :

"We mean a society in which there is equality of opportunity and the possibility for every one to lead good life. Obviously, this cannot be attained unless we produce the wherewithal to have the standards that a good life implies. We have, therefore, to lay great stress on equality, on the removal of disparities, and it has to be remembered always that socialism is not the spreading out of poverty. The essential thing is that there must be wealth and production".³⁵

Nehru's love for individual liberty worked out in his mind to discard the principles of orthodox socialism. He said : Life under socialism would be a joyless and soulless thing, regulated to the minutest detail by rules and orders framed by all powerful officials". Yet his individualism was not of the absolute and selfish kind of individualism, which acted against the interest of the society. Frank Moraes had styled Nehru as a "Marxist theorist wedded to democratic practices". This observation is justified by Nehru's own statement on socialism : "I look upon it as a growing, dynamic conception, as something which must fit in with the changing conditions of human life and activity in every country".³⁶

Nehru's Socialism : An Evaluation :

Nehru's socialism was not Marxian socialism and it basically negated most of the fundamental principles of Marxian socialism. On many occasions Nehru said that Karl Marx was outdated, although his social and economic thinking were greatly influenced by the writing of Marx. The genuineness of his socialist preferences were doubted by many as his attitude towards the Congress Socialist Party "had never been friendly". S. A. Dange spoke of Nehru's socialism as "a plunge in the dark" as there was hardly any time factor in his socialism. In the opinion of V.K.R.V. Rao, in Nehru's socialism, there was a contradiction between theory and implementation. M. N. Roy called Nehru's socialism as the "purely emotional longing for a vaguely conceived new world, in the

context of the disintegrating bourgeois culture". Others have pointed to the many contradictions in the socialist theory of Jawaharlal, which were typical of the evolutions of Nehru's political views. We can conclude with a statement of Krishna Nehru Huthesis, saying that, "Nehru would have been a terribly bad communist, for he could never have accepted a party discipline that made him act or speak contrary to his conscience, or even keep his mouth shut, if he felt truth needed saying".³⁷

Notes and References :

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3. Ibid, pp. 29-33.
4. Jawaharlal had unqualified faith in man and the greater part of his philosophy centres round human nature, human affairs and human interests. He said : "God we may deny, but what hope is there for us if we deny man and thus reduce everything to futility?" - The Discovery of India, Meridian Books, London, 1951, p. 445.
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31. Jawaharlal Nehru, The Unity of India, op. cit., pp. 117-18, Speech, March 1939.
32. Jawaharlal Nehru, A Bunch of Old Letters, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958, p. 328, Bose to Nehru, March 28, 1939.
33. Ibid, p. 353, Nehru to Subhas Chandra Bose, April 3, 1939.
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35. Ibid, p. 96, Speech, May 23, 1956.
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NATIONS, NATION STATE, NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION : A STUDY OF SRI AUROBINDO'S CONCEPTS

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India including the great majority of the countries of Asia and Africa which, before 1945, were under some form of European colonial rule and have recently acquired independent political control over their own affairs, face the problem of national unification, reconciliation and integration to a great extent.¹

Before we attempt to analyse the topic of this paper it is necessary to broadly define nation, nationalism and national integration. It must be remembered that these terms are generic to an extent and thus it would be more appropriate to identify a group of ideas indicating the meaning of the terms, rather than adopt an exact and rigid definition. Rustow, has offered a conveniently comprehensive definition of a number of related ideas, 'A nation is a self contained group of human beings who place the loyalty to the group as a whole above competing loyalties. A nation-state is an independent state whose membership coincides with that of a nation. And nationalism is the desire to create, strengthen and maintain such a nation state.'² The states of Africa and Asia (including India) which have emerged as nation states after the second world war have broadly witnessed two distinct phases, the first anti colonial phase being concerned with the creation of an independent state and second, constructive phase concerned with more testing problems of transforming a state into a nation state. The second is not necessarily a post-first phase even though the second phase becomes more distinct and more pronounced after the primary condition of freedom from colonial rule is obtained. Further it must be noted that the problems of integration is not limited to new emerging states of Africa and Asia. European nations also face such problems to an extent. The problems of the second phase (including the problem of integration) are intensely linked up with the attitudes the leaders and people develop during the first phase. It is for this reason one must analyse how the question of integration was viewed during the freedom struggle to understand the current near crisis situation of national integration that India faces.

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With the above premises the present paper intends to deal with the concepts of Sri Aurobindo concerning Nation, Nation State, Nationalism and National Integration. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950) one of the prime thinker politicians of India's Freedom Struggle, has greatly articulated the thinking, approaches and attitudes of the first phase of that great struggle. Though his ideas are not the whole of the thinking of the years of freedom struggle, it certainly represents one school of thought. A study of Sri Aurobindo's thought would provide us a definite lead for understanding the issues concerning national integration.

Sri Aurobindo is generally identified with the extremist/nationalist school of thought of the first decade of this century. Though it is not possible to treat the extremist and moderate schools of thought as water tight compartments, they were distinctly two drifts of a single stream. They recognised that India is a distinct nation to the exclusion of others, both emphasised in various degrees the need for promoting national integration. The difference between the two schools of thought and among their leaders were differences of emphasis and of explanation. Keeping this in mind let us proceed to deal with the concepts of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo classified political formations in a three tier form – the individual, the community in various forms like clan, city, province, state, nation state, empire etc., and humanity at large. Basically he identified two forms alone, individual and collective. The various political formations are part of the evolutionary process. The most important problem they face is the problem of reconciliation and integration. The seed of the problem lay in the fact that the family is not destroyed in a clan, a city in the state and the individual in any of them. "If the smaller aggregates were destroyed as soon as the larger are successfully formed, this graduation would result in no complexity; but Nature does not follow this course". Nature retains the earlier forms "in order to serve her need or her passion for variety, richness, multiformity". Thus this retainment creates the problem of integration, unification, reconciliation of conflicting needs, aspiration and interests. Sri Aurobindo being an idealist and a teleologist was sure that future evolution would result in perfection and an absolute reconciliation of the conflicts.

The present discussion excludes treatment of earlier political formation. The discussion is limited to state and nation state.

Sri Aurobindo deals in great length how the states of his own time faced the problem of unification, integration and reconciliation. He was critical of existing forms of government, totalitarian, socialist, communist and even democratic. "What after all, is this State idea, this idea of the organised community to which the individual has to be immolated? Theoretically, it is the subordination of the individual to the good of all that is demanded, practically, it is his subordination to a collective egoism, political, military, economic, which seeks to satisfy certain collective aims and ambitions shaped and imposed on the great mass of individuals by a smaller or larger number of ruling persons who are supposed in some way to represent the community".⁵ Further he adds, "Theoretically, it is the collective wisdom and force of the community made available and organised general good. Practically, what controls the engine, drives the train in so much of the intellect and power available in the community as the particular machinery of state organisation will allow to come to the surface".⁶ In other words the state has failed to establish unity between the individual and the collective formations and between intermediary political formations and state because the states are dictated by collective egoism and are not behaving morally and are mechanical in their dealings. Sri Aurobindo wrote "State is not an organism; it is a machinery, and it works like a machine, without tact, taste, delicacy or intuition".⁷ To an extent Sri Aurobindo could reconcile with a national religion, culture, education etc., these being psychological products of a people, but a state religion, a state culture was for him a violence, a mechanical imposition, a product of communal egoism thriving under a cover of collective co-operation.

The Nation-State is the next political formation in the process of evolution after state, through which Nature attempts to reach perfection. He said that the state had taken various forms like a city state, a small kingdom, a national kingdom in past and in his own times the most living form of state was a nation state. A nation for him is a distinctive collective formation marked by inner oneness. It is not a unity forged politically, the inner oneness sustains itself under political disunity and recovers and reasserts its oneness. A nation is never lost. Sri Aurobindo pointed out the case of India and Israel who have reasserted their oneness in spite of being lost in empires, under foreign rule and physical division and distribution of population over wide areas. The nation becomes a national state when driven by inward necessity, using outward

circumstances it constitutes itself into an organised body. In other words what is Aurobindo suggests is that a nation must organise a government of its own to be a nation state. Once a nation exists, its own vitality finally emerges as an organised nation. All this is possible, for Sri Aurobindo was sure that a nation has soul. "A soul is at once an individualised and united entity. The soul demands a life of its own. Thus once the essentiality of a nation, i.e., a soul is there, the most formidable difficulties like foreign rule and not even a persistent incapacity of the people for unity or disintegrating shocks can prevent the formation of a nation state, Sri Aurobindo observes, "The nation in modern times is practically indestructible, unless it dies from within."⁸ Sri Aurobindo considered the emotional and intellectual aspects of a nation to be more important than its economic and political unity, uniformity or organisation: He considered the former aspects to be primary.

As to why the formation of nation-state took so long a time even after formation of state in pre-Christian era. Sri Aurobindo pointed out that the attempts for formation of a nation state whether in India, Iran, China, Greece or Rome did not flower, for before the psychological roots, the most vital one, could be driven deep, experiments in empire building destroyed the rudimentary gains.

Sri Aurobindo considered the nation to be a creation of the Sachidananda, the Absolute, and as such has all the features of any existant a body or a physical manifestation, a life, a mind and a soul. All these were right there from the very incaption of political collectivity and are emerging one after another in the process of evolution. He writes, "In building up her human aggregates, Nature has followed in general principle, the same law that she observes in her physical aggregates. She has provided first a natural body, next a common life and vital interest for the constituents of the body, last a conscious mind or sense of unity and a centre or governing organ through which that common ego-sense can realise itself and act."⁹

Just as we have excluded political formations prior or lower to state and nation state so also we would exclude higher formation beyond the nation state. However one thing must be pointed out, Sri Aurobindo ruled out the abolition of the nation state, just as earlier formations like family have persisted in state, so also nation states would persist even after formation of a higher and more

perfect political unit of the whole humanity. Unity in diversity would be the guiding principle for future evolution.

Having spelt-out Sri Aurobindo's concept of state and nation-state now, let us turn to his treatment of nationalism and Indian nationalism.

"Nationalism is, after all, primarily an emotion of the heart and a spiritual attitude and only secondarily an intellectual conviction. Its very foundation is the worship of national liberty as the one political deity and the readiness to consider all things well lost if only freedom is won, 'Let my name, be blasted, cried Danton, 'but let France be saved.' 'Let by name, life, possessions all go', cries the true Nationalist, 'let all that is dear to me parish, but let my country be free.'¹⁰ This was probably the most comprehensive definition that Sri Aurobindo attempted on Nationalism. His definition is marked by a spiritual and religious fervour, spirit of sacrifice, suffering, love for liberty and nations of self-realisation.

Like the Western thinkers, Sri Aurobindo based his concept of Nationalism on Liberty. He accepted that foreign rule might even serve the cause of arousing nationalism but can not be the source of it. The only condition was to become conscious of one national identity. Once this identity is aroused, liberty is bound to follow. Speaking of liberty's relation with Nationalism he writes, "it is necessary to distinguish between three kinds of Liberty which are generally confused together. There is a national liberty of freedom from foreign control. There is an internal liberty on that freedom from the despotism of individual, a class or a combination of classes to which the name of self-government is properly given; and there is individual liberty or the freedom of the individual from unnecessary and arbitrary restrictions imposed on him either by the society of which he is a part or by the Government"¹¹ Foreign rule was unnatural for Sri Aurobindo and it was also the greatest hindrance for liberty. He writes "There can be no national development without national liberty"¹² Further he added, "Just as individual liberty is necessary for the richness and variety of national development, so self-government is necessary for its completeness and full deployment of national strength".¹³

Growth of nationalism demands a self-consciousness. And this consciousness must come from within, "to think that a foreign rule would deliberately train us for independence or allow us to train

ourselves is to suppose a miracle in nature".¹⁴ For Sri Aurobindo India, as a nation, was ever there, what was needed was the self-consciousness. Nation is an organism which grows under the stress of a principle of life within. Emphasising the role of feeling and emotional bond he writes, "A feeling or a thought, Nationalism, Democracy, the aspiration towards liberty, cannot be estimated in terms of concrete power" "But such feelings and thoughts are more powerful than fighting men and guns and prisons and laws". "Their beginnings are feeble, their end is mighty".¹⁵

Not only Sri Aurobindo considered Nationalism to be organic but gave it a philosophical bias. The bliss of variety is the fundamental principle of Nature for him and thus the need for different nations is also a natural need. This need for more than one nation is not at conflict with the unity of humanity. "It is for ananda that the world; exists for joy that the self puts Himself into the great and serious game of life, and the joy which he sees in the joy of various self-expression. For this reason it is that no two men are alike, no two nations are alike. Each has its separate nature over and above the common nature of humanity and it is not only the common human impulses and activities but the satisfaction and development of its own separate character and capacities that a nation demands."¹⁶

Sri Aurobindo's plea for Indian Nationalism was not based on the fact that the English government was bad. It was unnatural for him. He wrote, "Mr. Gokhale cannot be ignorant that our ideal of independence has nothing to do with the badness or goodness of the present government in its own kind. We object to the present system because it is a bureaucracy, always the most narrow and unprogressive kind of Government, because it is composed of aliens, not Indian, and subject to alien control and most essentially because it is based on a foreign will imposed from outside and not on the free choice and organic development of the nation."¹⁷ Nationalism demanded liberty and even the freedom to commit mistake. For Sri Aurobindo the need for freedom had no precondition of making one fit for freedom.

Growth of nationalism was a part of larger dynamics of evolution, just as classes, communities, kingdoms etc., were gradual enlargement from individual, so also nation and national state is yet another logical step. And this national feeling is also a step

towards a feeling for the whole humanity. He wrote, "With us to-day Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realising others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity."¹⁸

In the working of the forces of nationalism, in the fight for freedom Sri Aurobindo found the working of the Divine and the Time Spirit. Individuals did not matter for the success or failure of the movement. He wrote, "The fight in which we are engaged is not like the wars of old in which when the king or leader fell, the army fled. The King whom we follow to wars today, is our own Motherland, the sacred and imperishable, the leader of our onward march is the Almighty Himself, that element within and without us whom sword cannot slay, nor water drown, nor fire burn, nor exile divide us nor a prison confine. Lajpat Rai is nothing, Tilak is nothing, Bepin Pal is nothing, these are but instruments in the mighty Hand that is shaping our destinies and if these go, do you think God can not find others to do his Will?"¹⁹ Further, "There is only one force, and for that force, I am not necessary, you are not necessary. God is doing every thing. We are not doing anything or again, "God is behind this movement and He does not need anyone to tell Him how to bring it to success"²⁰

Nationalism in India was also a part of the Time-Spirit's larger design of resurgence of Asia; the Time-Spirit, is at work to bring about a mighty movement of which the world at present juncture has need, that movement is the resurgence of Asia and that the resurgence of India is not only a necessary part of larger movement but its central need, that India is the keystone of the arch, the chief inheritor of the common Asiatic destiny".²¹

Speaking of God and the Nationalist Movement in India, Sri Aurobindo observed, "All great movements wait for their God-sent leader, the willing channel of His force, and only when he comes forward triumphantly to their fulfilment."²² Further, "Nationalism is an Avatar and cannot be slain. Nationalism is a divinely appointed sakti of the Eternal and must do its God-given work before it returns to the bosom of the Universal Energy from which it comes."²³ "Nationalism is immortal, Nationalism cannot die; because it is no human thing, it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to jail".²⁴ He not only considered the Nationalism to be God, but called upon

his co-patriots to work without any illusion or attachment with the ups and downs of the movement. He wanted them to leave everything to God. "The perfect sense of self-abandonment which Ghaitanya felt for Hari, must be felt by Bengal for the Mother".²⁵

All these make it amply clear that Aurobindo had a religious overtone and Hinduism was his basic source of inspiration. However he was alive to the Muslim question. The three important problems for the Congress for him were the Pax Britanica illusion, the organisational weakness and the Muslim question. The last he considered to be the most important which he found politicians trying to ignore and belittle. He was not only alive to the problem but viewed it with a catholicity of a Hindu, if not with the statesmanship of a politician. He wrote, "Of one thing we may be certain, that Hindu-Mahomedan unity cannot be effected by political adjustments or Congress flatteries. It must be sought deeper down, in the heart and in the mind, for where the causes of disunion are there the remedies must be sought." "We must strive to remove the causes of misunderstanding by a better mutual knowledge and sympathy, we must extend the unfaltering love of the patriot to our Musalman brother, remembering always that in him too Narayan dwells and to him too our mother has given a permanent place in her bosom; but we must cease to approach him falsely or flatter out of a selfish weakness and cowardice".²⁶ This Aurobindo wrote in the first issue of the Karmayogin in June 1909. In the same article he promised to bring out in future the contribution of Muslims to the cultural heritage of India, which gave them a permanent place in this country. Yet this was hardly carried out, partly due to lack of time (he retired within a year) and partly due to his inadequate study of Islam and Muslim impact on India.

Sri Aurobindo even welcomed the rise of Muslim consciousness as a first step towards their self awareness which would lead them to join hands with the nationalist in future. He wrote, "We do not shun, we desire the awakening of Islam in India even if its first crude efforts are misdirected against ourselves; for all strength, all energy, all action is grist to the mill of the nation builders. In that faith we are ready when time comes for us to meet in the political field, to exchange with Musalman, just as he chooses, the firm clasp of the brother or the resolute grip of the wrestler".²⁷

Sri Aurobindo was totally opposed to the separate electorate granted by the Morley Minto reforms. He wrote, "It will cast all India into the melting pot and complete the work of partition." "We will not for a moment accept separate electorates or separate representation, not because we are opposed to a large Mahomedan influence in popular assemblies when they come, but because we will be no party to a distinction which recognises Hindu and Mahomedan as permanently separate political units and thus precludes the growth of a single and indivisible Indian nation."²⁸ This fear of Aurobindo has of course materialised with the partition of 1947.

And when the Hindu Sabha was formed he was skeptical of its motives. He was even critical of Lala Lajpat Rai. He dismissed the idea of Hindu nationalism unrealistic and wanted India's nationalism to be based on the geographical compactness as any modern nation state should be. He wrote, "But we fear that in its immediate inception and work it leans for its hope of success on a lower and less powerful motive - rivalry with Mahomedan pretensions and desire to put the mass and forces of an united Hinduism against the intensity of Mahomedan self-assertion supported by official patronage and Anglo-Indian favour."²⁹

"These are not good omens. It is not by rivalry for Anglo-Indian favour, it is not by quarrelling for the loaves and fishes of British administration that Hinduisim can rise into an united and effective force. If the Hindu Sabha takes its anchor on these petty aspirations or if it founds any part of its strength on political emulation with Mahomedans, it will be impossible for the Nationalist party to join in a movement which would otherwise have their full sympathy and eager support."³⁰ Further, "Lala Lajpat Rai struck a higher note, that of Hindu nationalism as a necessary preliminary to a greater Indian Nationality. We distrust this ideal."³¹ Continuing with the criticism he wrote, "But we do not understand Hindu nationalism as a possibility under modern condition. Hindu nationalism had a meaning in the times of Shivaji and Ramdas, when the object of national revival was to overthrow a Mahomedan domination which, once tending to Indian unity and toleration, had become oppressive and disruptive."³² And again, "But under modern conditions India can only exist as a whole. A nation depends for its existence on geographical separateness and geographical compactness, on having a distinct and separate country. The existence of

this geographical separateness is sure in the end to bear down all differences of race, language, religion, history."³³

Though Sri Aurobindo was alive to the realities of communal question, his inspiration being Hindu philosophical and religious tradition, his utterings confused the communal question even probably without his being conscious of the reaction. However there can be no misgiving on Sri Aurobindo's perception. In his famous Uttarpara speech he said, "I spoke once before with this force in me and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and nationalism is not politics but a religion, a faith, I say it again to-day, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith, I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism."³⁴ And finally without any misgiving and in the most clear-cut terms he declared, "Our idea therefore is an Indian Nationalism, largely Hindu in its spirit and tradition because the Hindu made the land and the people and persists by the greatness of his past, his civilization and his culture and his invincible virility, in holding it, but wide enough also to include the Moslem and his culture and traditions and absorb them into itself. It is possible that the Mahomedan may not recognise the inevitable future and may prefer to throw himself into the opposite scale. If so, the Hindu, with what little Mahomedan help he may get, must win Swaraj both for himself and Mahomedan in spite of that resistance."³⁵

Sri Aurobindo was also alive to the two tendencies, one of revivalism and the other of blind copying of the West. Striking a balance he wrote, "Nationalism has been hitherto largely a revolt against the tendency to shape ourselves into the mould of Europe, but it must also be on its guard against any tendency to cling to every detail that has been Indian. That has not been the spirit of Hindutva in the past, there is no reason why it should be so in the future. In all life there are three elements, the fixed and permanent spirit, the developing and yet constant soul and the brittle changeable body. The spirit cannot change We will sacrifice no ancient form to an unreasoning love for change, we will keep none which the national spirit desires to replace by one that is a still better and truer expression of the undying soul of the nation."³⁶

To summarise the Aurobindonian concept of Nationalism and Indian Nationalism as a whole the following points may be stated.

- a) Nationalism is a feeling or an idea or a thought of distinctiveness and belongingness of a community.
- b) Nationalism is based on the pillars of liberty, freedom and geographical compactness.
- c) The creation of nation state is a logical step in the evolution of human development like other institutions as class, community etc.
- d) The variations of nations are based on varied national characters which are the expression of the variety of the universal spirit for the sake of its own bliss.
- e) The plea for Indian Nationalism is not based on oppression or bad government but on the right of every people to self government.
- f) Nationalism in India is God himself, the time spirit, a manifestation of God.
- g) The forces of Nationalism are thus impersonal and the leaders of the movement are instruments of the impersonal forces.
- h) The Indian Nationalism is a shakti, it is the Divine mother herself as the Nation is the motherland.
- i) As India is predominantly a nation of the Hindus, it is natural that the source of inspirations is Hindu religion and philosophy.
- j) He welcomed the rise of Islam and hoped that they would join hands in driving out the English from India and build a united India. However Indian Nationalism was predominantly Hindu and Muslims should accept this.
- k) It is only a God sent leader who would land the nation to freedom.
- l) India's freedom is part of wider resurgence of Asia and future of the world and a necessity in the way for fulfilment of her spiritual mission in a United World.

Having surveyed Sri Aurobindo's concept of state, Nation-state and Nationalism, let us turn to the question of national integration. Sri Aurobindo confirms the basic premises of this paper, Nationalism either Afro-Asian or European, is a world phenomenon emerging in a particular phase of evolution of political units. Freedom and formation of a self governing mechanism is the most primary features of a nation state. The idea, the feeling, the thought of a distinctiveness and a sense of belongingness to a community and a pre-

paredness to subordinate all other loyalty to this community is the precondition of nationalism. Sri Aurobindo also confirms that national integration and problems of unification and reconciliation is a fundamental feature of all nationalities, transcending the time scale and geographical location. The problem cannot be sorted out by blotting out intermediary formations like the family, clan, city, religious, racial and linguistic groups. This would be against the principle of the Nature. Nature nurtures variety and thus nation states must transcend the diversity to arrive at a unity, it must not and cannot destroy variety, nor can it plead that there is no difference in various formations. It must convince its population that variety is the principle of nature, that variety is the healthy sign of the creativity of a community and needs to be tolerated and sustained. The idea of a united nation state can take deeper roots if this principle of variety and unity in diversity of nature is more widely understood and accepted.

The problem of unification, reconciliation and integration becomes more complicated for Sri Aurobindo when the state behaves mechanically without morality, tact, taste, delicacy and intuition and when collective egoism thrives under a cover of collective co-operation. Sri Aurobindo was very critical of politicians, who he held represent average pettiness, selfishness, egoism and self deception. Such politicians cannot be torch bearers of nationalism, they can only complicate the issues of integration.

Having identified the root of the problem of integration, now let us turn to the solutions that Sri Aurobindo's concept offers. Sri Aurobindo speaks of the inner oneness that turns state into a nation state. A state becomes a nation state when its people are conscious of that inner oneness. A state to become a nation state must behave like an organism and not like a machine, it must behave as if it has a mind, a soul of its own. The state must not be a mere political organisation, it is to be a being. That alone can sustain nationalism. Emotional and intellectual unity are the precondition for political, social, economic unity. It is not by appealing to collective egoism or collective self interest but by reaffirming the emotional bond, the psychological unity that a nation state sustains itself.

Sri Aurobindo does not envisage the Nation state to be the highest or the last political formation in the process of evolution.

And as such he does not envisage that a nation state can provide perfection in maintaining unity in diversity. It is the advent of ideal human unity under life divine in a confederative world organisation that can provide the perfect perfection. The nation state would continue to thrive under life divine in a perfect form. Even though Sri Aurobindo was sure of the bright future of the nation states and India, he also warned that a nation may die from within. The warning must not be lost and we must guard against such an eventuality, otherwise all that we have gained as a nation state may be lost.

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NATIONALISM AND PLURALISM IN A DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE. THE PROBLEMS OF IMMIGRANT POPULATION FROM BANGLADESH INTO ASSAM

Asha Hans*

Different stages in international political history throw up different phrases demonstrating the manifestations of change. As unprecedented social, political scientific and technological changes have occurred since this half century, the 'History of Ideas' (George Boas) has never failed to come up with the right semantics¹. Among the most popular of these with government has been nationalism and with peoples pluralism. The chasm created by the dichotomy in thinking among groups and the state on this terminology is growing wider.

Nationalism a product of Western needs and thinking has been adopted by all states old and new. But in the newer states of the third world there is a move to cut the terminology down to size, to reinterpret it or to do away with it. The decision is not new and will continue to exercise the minds of men till it finds its proper place in the new world.

Nationalism as a term came to identify itself with self-determination as early as the 1830's to 1880's in Europe.² Usually the tendency is to equate the term to Wilsonian self-determination in the post 1915 period with the main geographic location being Eastern Europe. But this is not so, and the reason is the fast changing technicalities of the term to suit the rapidly changing international system. By the mid 1960's writers were talking of ethno-nationalism and sub-nationalism.³ Now nationalism was not being confined to Europe but spread its wings over Africa, Asia and the Americas. This is where the semantics of the issue became too small to suit not only the changing age but varied societies.

The modern nation states with rigid boundaries, assimilating different groups throwing up new social norms has come under stress. The aim of nationalism had been unity. A unification based on the symbols of flag, national anthems and a single language. But, the third world countries trying to provide security, to a region

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whose boundaries were usually drawn to protect the imperialist structure turned out to be outmoded remnants of an old age not competent to change with the demands of their nationalistic and internationalistic structures. Finally the stress on the state and the concept of nationalism began to emerge and the snowballing effect has brought nations to a non-plus point where they have to change the concept of the term itself.

Related to the above and as a corollary to nationalism came the concept of pluralism.⁴ Imported from the West was also the term democracy and imposed on newly built political structures to attempt to deal with pluralism. In a state composed of different groups assimilation could be achieved through nationalism and democracy. Democracy would provide to these newly emerging population the chimera of power in their own hands. With time this turned into a reality. Groups in the pluralist structures with different social and cultural norms dissatisfied with what nationalism and democracy had to offer emerged with new demands. In the initial stages the quest did not mean balkanisation. But today it is the order of the day. States are faced with increasing violence threatening to erase the century old phenomenon of nationalism.⁵ The state then has no option but to promote new ways and methods to promote national integration.

India

The "National Problem" has been one of the main issues in India and even after forty years of constitutional democracy, the problem has not been resolved and conflicts about national identities and symbols arise periodically, not only as outbursts of peripheral nationalism but also as political movements linked to terrorism, such as Khalistan, Bodo and Jharkand. Before 1947 India was under a colonial yoke far from democracy and the national feeling was linked to a desire for freedom. Today when democracy has been adopted, the national feeling is being linked to democracy, decentralisation and pluralism.

In this complex scenario created in India, emerges a new factor to be dealt with. This is increasing waves of population pouring into India from neighbouring countries. Indian independence movement started with mass exodus, between India and the newly formed state of Pakistan, the largest ever the world had seen. There

has been no stopping population transfers since then. Since 1945 thousands of people have come in from the neighbouring states of Tibet; Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and even Afghanistan and Iran. Some have come as exiles, others as refugees and some more as immigrants.⁶ They have been movements. The state has not been able to stop them.

The problem they have brought in are not only economic but also political and social. A burden on the Indian economy, they have created also ethnic imbalance and disturbed the political process and stability of the country. They thus emerge as an important phenomena for study in the problems facing the national integrity of the country.

Population Transfers from Bangladesh and the Erstwhile State of East Pakistan into Assam.

Population transfers from neighbouring Bangladesh into Assam, first had disastrous consequences on its economy, politic and society, but these transfers are not new. Attention is being paid to the region because of upheavals in the last one decade⁷. Population movement into the underpopulated undeveloped states started early in history while the Ahoms, ruled the land. Since then 'foreigners' from a neighbouring Indian and non Indian states have continued to assault their polity. The reason is not far to seek. Assam borders Burma, Tibet, Bhutan and Bangladesh, But the largest demographic challenge has come from the South Western territory of Bangladesh.

From neighbouring Bangladesh (then East Bengal) cultivated land and cultivable waste land attracted the poor Muslims. About 1.2 million migrants mostly Bengali Muslims were settled⁸. They moved in and created a smiling Assam, But today, the Assamese are afraid of these Muslim settlers whom they see as being 'Land Hungry'. These settlers if not welcomed atleast did not create concern in the minds of Assamese. It is when they moved from the Wastelands to dispossessing the 'Assamese from cultivable Land' that the ethnocentrism of the Assamese was awakened.

Change in Population upto 1945⁹

	1916	1921	1931	1941
Total Population of Assam	38,48,617	46,36,980	55,60,371	66,94,790
Indigenous	28,43,000	30,70,400	34,08,100	38,92,000

Till 1941 and the next general elections the change in population was not unnatural. Sylhet a majority Muslim area went to East Pakistan. But, the important factor is that even in the 1920's and 1930's the migrant population exceeded 20 percent¹⁰. Most of these were Bengali Muslims who came from Mymensingh and were mostly cultivators. After 1941 there was a steep rise in the population of the state¹¹

	1951	1961	1971	1981
Total Population	80,28,856	1,03,37,392	1,56,25,152	1,98,96,843
Indigenous	44,09,600	52,47,400	62,44,400	74,30,800
Foreigners		8,83,154	23,81,534	48,30,354

The population movements into the state included Nepalese, Muslims and Bengalese. In 1951 the census reports that out of the 13,44,003 persons shown as immigrants in Assam 3,88,288 came from East Pakistan.

In 1961 the Pakistan census showed a discrepancy of at least 3% in East Pakistan. There was obviously a flow into Assam. The Indian census commissioner that year remarked that in the last decade about 221,000 Bengali Muslims had come into Assam from East Pakistan, most of them illegal and that this number had increased to 766,000 in 1971. The next census year was 1971 a catastrophic year for Assam. The refugees due to the Bangladesh crisis came at the rate of 1,19,556 in April 1971 and 34,35,243 in May 1971¹². By November 1971, 97,41,943 (about 10 million) refugees had come in India.¹³ It is obvious that all did not go back. This created issues confronting not only Assam but the nation state and disrupted the process of national integration.

Response

The responses were multifarious. But initially it created a process of ethnocentrism around which the challenge to the immigration problem came. Ethnocentrism gave them the foothold on which they stood to attack the forces of intrusion. This response was easy as immigration had created alienation among the Assamese.

Today we talk about ethnopolitics and the rising political ethnicity in India. In post Independent India this was the first time

that a mass movement based on political ethnicity was found. It is much later that the Sikh issue placed the nation on the verge of disintegration due to excessive violence.

In Assam it was a steady move towards the use of political ethnicity. The reason was not only economic as pointed out earlier but the demographic changes upset the political balance of the state.¹⁴

	No. of voters	Increase in voters	Percentage
1971	5296198	594393	10.4 in 1 Year
1977	7229543	933345	14.8 in 6 Year
1952-1972			110.0

The first shot at ethnicity came before the 1971 crisis, when the Assam Refinery Sangram Parishad in 1969 launched an agitation. Indira Gandhi has already appointed a committee of Experts to investigate and to assess the oil resources of Assam and recommend how they could be used to promote the interests of the people of Assam. She was thus prone to point out that these "agitations put a great stress on the administration."¹⁵ But it was to be agitations all the way—linguistic, economic, political and the use of terrorism to achieve ends. The governments indifference to these issues precipitated the crisis threatening to destroy the very fabric of the nation state. Nationalism was threatened with the most potent modern day threat—ethnicity. The alienation of a group from the democratic structure was the result not only of internal stresses but also external.

For the first time the integrity of the nation was being threatened by a non-recognised factor in Indian foreign policy. Earlier Indian decision makers established the policy making machinery to counter threat from the cold war environment and its two intransigent neighbours China and Pakistan. Now came the beginning of a factor that they would come up against time and again. From Assam the political ethnic constituent would spread and create the issue of Khalistan, Gorkhaland and Tamil militancy. A blow to nationalism and the democratic structure. Pluralism in its extreme form would challenge both the age old norms of the polity.

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ROLE OF STUDENTS IN HOME RULE MOVEMENT IN TAMIL NADU, 1916-18 AN ANALYSIS

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An adequate understanding of the history of Indian freedom movement requires an analysis of the role of distinct social groups and classes and the regional and local variations. The students who are one among the important social groups contributed a lot to the cause of Indian freedom movement. Unmindful of their future thousands of students left their schools and colleges and joined the liberation struggle. In their teens they remained in the vanguard of India's struggle for independence. To illumine the nature and extent of student's participation in national movement, one has to study the role played by the students in the various movements which sprang up during pre-Gandhian era. In this paper an attempt is made to analyse the role played by the students of Tamil Nadu in the Home Rule Movement. In studying this the following issues are taken for discussion: (1) Genesis of the Home Rule Movement (2) how the students were brought into the fold of the movement and (3) the nature of students participation.

Genesis of the Home Rule Movement :

Mrs. Annie Besant, an Irish woman and fundamentally a Theosophist took keen interest in socio-education reforms in India. Her task of rejuvenating India seemed apolitical and she was left free by the British to work for her Theosophical Society. She believed that the future of India and the happiness of her people can never be secured by political methods, but only by the revival of her philosophy and religion.¹ In the meanwhile Mrs. Besant who had devoted herself to the cause of social and educational uplift of India, gradually came to realise that the political advancement was quite necessary for the development of India. Since 1914 she began to divert her tireless energies to politics. To put it in her own words "increasing repression, narrowing of liberty, the ill-treatment of students and the danger of revolution forced her into the field"². There were different opinions about the motive behind her entry into the politics. Since the present paper is concerned with students role in the Home Rule Movement it becomes hardly necessary to discuss the motive behind her entry into the politics.

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However, Mrs. Besant's main objectives in entering Indian politics, observes S. R. Mehrotra, were to stir the Congress into activity, particularly by bringing about a union between moderates and extremists; to popularise the doctrine of self-government; and to promote friendship between Britain and India.³ To achieve her object Mrs. Besant decided to start the Home Rule League.

In 1914, she started the daily "*New India*" and the weekly "*Commonweal*" to press the the preparation for the coming changes in India, and to claim steadily India's place in the Empire.⁴ She submitted her plan to start the Home Rule League in Bombay Congress Session in 1915. But the moderate dominated Congress was reluctant to allow her resolution for discussion.⁵ As a result both Mrs. Besant and Tilak decided to go on their own. On 3rd September 1916, Mrs. Besant formally inaugurated the Home Rule League at a meeting held at Gokhale Hall, Madras.⁶ In the meeting about five hundred persons enrolled themselves as members of the League. Mrs. Besant was elected as its president, Arundale the Organising Secretary, B. P. Wadia the Treasurer and C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar as one of the General Secretary.⁷ The Home Rule League was to consist of two divisions, one in India and the other in England. The function of League in England was to educate the English about the conditions in India. Mrs. Besant said that the object of the League was to begin at once a "strong, steady and sustained agitation" in the press and on the platform.⁸ Being the President of Theosophical Society which had a number of branches all over India with several thousands of members Mrs. Besant utilised it for political purposes.⁹

Students in Home Rule Movement :

In order to make the movement more popular the Home Rulers sought to extend their base to different groups. While peasants were mobilised in the north, they sought to organise labour and students in the south. Mrs. Besant started many student oriented programmes such as the Boy Scouts, Volunteer Corps and National education to attract the students and through them to amplify the agitation she had begun. The Home Rulers also instituted Home Rule classes for students where political education was taught. This moulded the students to show interest in politics. Thus the students were brought in to the movement.

Boy Scout Movement :

Mrs. Besant was first keen to develop patriotism among the students. In Western countries patriotism and nationalism were taught to students through Boy Scout and other such agencies.¹⁰ So Mrs. Besant and her League urged the Government to extend the benefits of the Boy Scout Movement to the Indian Students. *New India* in one of its issue pointed out that 'the only way of meeting high spirit of the present generation of Indian youth is to treat boys and youngmen as they are treated in England'.¹¹ But the the Government rejected the plea. It pointed out that the conditions were so different in India and explained the difficulties in introducing the Boy Scout on account of climate, habits, caste system etc.¹² In reality the Government did not want to create material spirit among the students. But the Home Rulers continued to press the Government to start Boy Scouts. When the demand for Boy Scout became more vocal the Government relented and decided to start Boy Scout movement in Madras. Arundale who expressed his reservation over the nature of the Boy Scouts proposed by the Government said that the movement should be made thoroughly Indian in tone and in aspiration.¹³

The Home Rulers who expressed their reservation over the nature of the Boy Scouts proposed by the Government decided to start their own Boy Scout Movement. In January 1916, an Indian Boy Scout Movement was inaugurated in Madras under the auspices of the Home Rule League. During Christmas holiday Scouts were trained by Pearce, the vice-principal of Mahindra College, Galle. The Scout Commissioner for Ceylon was invited specially for this purpose. The Scout Master T. P. Sinha gave training in drill. The headquarters of Boy Scout Movement was established in a building adjacent to the office of the Madras branch of the Home Rule League.¹⁴ Arundale instructed the boys in flag signalling and Kamath another instructor, taught them dumb-bell exercises. Mrs. Besant advised the scouts to paint a large map of India on one of the walls of the Home Rule Office, with the word, "Vande Mataram" and "Be prepared" written in Sanskrit in the centre.¹⁵ The Boy Scout Movement attracted the attention of the student population and created patriotic feeling among them. It was evident from the fact that after the formation of the Boy Scout the students' participation in Home Rule Movement increased considerably.

Home Rule Volunteers Corps :

For any movement a volunteer corps is a must to organise meeting and spread the ideas and principles of the movement. The leaders of Home Rule Movement who felt the urgent need for creating a volunteer corps formed the Home Rule Volunteer Corps on 14th November 1916 in Madras. To start with it had seventy five members of whom many were students. The main purpose of the corps was to keep order in league meetings. The volunteers who wore crimson turbans were also required to do social and public service and assist such of those local bodies which were not hostile to the cause of Home Rule.¹⁶ For the volunteers physical training was imparted by Arundale. Seperate uniform was also provided to them.¹⁷ Thus the students were given training to keep order in league meetings which helped them to develop some expertise in the sphere of organizations. The students who were required to do social and public service had established links with various segments of the society. They worked closely with adult leaders to the cause of Home Rule Movement.

National Education :

Education which is intimately linked with nationalism attracted the Home Rulers. Mrs. Besant said that education should inculcate the spirit of patriotism among the students. She condemned the existing educational system as backward, reactionary and unpatriotic. As the students were the future hope of India she decided to replace the existing educational system by introducing national education. She said that love for motherland, patriotism and devotion to the country should be taught in the National school and Colleges.¹⁸ She charged that the English teachers who worked in the Indian schools were mainly responsible for creating a sense of inferiority complex among the Indian students.¹⁹

The Home Rulers formed a separate National Board of Education to spread the ideals of the National education. The main aim of the board was to give religious instruction to the students, make them to respect the mother tongue and enable them to have greater knowledge about their motherland and train the students as patriotic citizens.²⁰ Several National schools and colleges were started not only in Tamil Nadu but also in many parts of the country to save the "unfortunate youths" of Government schools and colleges "from becoming either slaves or rebels".²¹ In Tamil Nadu National

schools were started at Madras, Rajapalayam and other places. Vernacular was the medium of instruction in all the National schools and English was taught only as the second language.²²

A summer school for National school teachers was organised at Adayar in May 1918. In March 1918, "National Education Week" was celebrated to popularise the concept of national education among the students and parents.²³ The concept of National Education deepened the youth's imagination and increased their ardour to serve the country.

Student Agitation :

From the foregoing account, it can be claimed that students were brought into the movement by the Home Rulers through Boy Scouts, volunteer Corps, Home Rule classes and National education. The students of Tamil Nadu who became staunch supporters of Mrs. Besant organised strikes and held demonstrations which greatly disconcerted the government. College students and school boys read *New India* the mouthpiece of Home Rule Movement regularly. They also made it a point to read the pamphlets issued by Mrs. Besant and attended Home Rule classes and lectures. The impact of Mrs. Besant's preaching was very much evident out side Madras city. The students of the districts of Tamil Nadu came under her spell. The school boys were in fact reciting the last sentence in her article on the Tilak's security case : "The agony of the cross proceeds the resurrection of India a nation".²⁴ The students of St. Joseph's college, Trichinopoly and the Government college, Coimbatore pasted posters on the compound walls of the college which read, "kill the English" and "worship Mrs. Annie Besant."²⁵

There are very many examples to show the influence Mrs. Besant had on the students. She needed to give only a hint and the students completed the task with perfection. The following examples bear a clear testimony of this point. In Indian Railway separate railway compartments were allotted for Europeans and Eurasians. When a correspondent of *New India* entered into one such reserved compartment he was forced by the station master to alight from it. This incident sparked off a big controversy. Mrs. Besant condemned this system of separate reservations for Europeans and Eurasians which resulted in frequent confrontation between Eurasians and students at the railway stations in Madras.²⁶

The students of Pachaiyappa's College, Madras organised a procession on 27th July 1916, entered the railway station and damaged the railway property.²⁷

Mrs. Besant criticised the activities of the Criminal Investigation Department and termed it as "Crush India Department". In consequence of this observation, the police reporters at Public meetings were roughly handled by students. On 1st December 1916 the police reporters were abused and hustled by the students at a student meeting in Trichinopoly.²⁸

The Government which viewed these developments with concern decided to take steps to keep the students away from the politics. With this intention, the Government passed an order which prevented the students from taking part in political movements. The order stated in categorical terms that "no under-graduate student in any college and no pupil in any school shall be permitted to take part in public, political discussion, to attend political meetings, to join any political association or to take part in any movement". The Government sent the order to all the educational institutions in the Madras Presidency and the heads of colleges and schools were instructed to enforce the directions strictly.²⁹

Mrs. Besant was highly critical of the Government policy which banned the students from attending political meetings. She pointed out that one of the baneful effects of the order would be the emergence of student revolutionary organisations similar to those which existed in Bengal.³⁰ She further wrote that "no Government can prevent students from being moved by the wave of political life which is now passing over India. They (students) are Indians living in Indian Homes, and the Government cannot isolate them."³¹ *New India* which criticised the Government order pointed out that in England students were encouraged to discuss and study political problems. The paper cited an example from the history of England to substantiate this point. During the suffragette agitation in Great Britain and Ireland girl students along with their teachers took an active part in it. It further said that the Indian students were treated worse than the British girls. The Government order did not alter the situation. The students continued to show keen interest in the movement.

Finding the Home Rule Movement gaining momentum, the Government passed an internment order on 7th June 1917 which

prohibited Mrs. Besant, Arundale and B. P. Wadia from taking part directly or indirectly with any organisation which mobilized the support of the students for the movement.³² The order prohibited Mrs. Besant from addressing any meeting and expressing her ideas through articles.

This move of the Government created strong resentment among the supporters of Mrs. Besant. In fact it made the movement more popular. Prominent members of Theosophical societies approached the Secretary of State for India with a request to cancel the restrictions placed on Mrs. Besant.³⁴ The Government of Madras removed the restrictions imposed on Mrs. Besant, Arundale and B. P. Wadia³⁵ which emboldened the students and they began to openly disobey the authorities. Finding the pressure escalating, the Government lifted all the restrictions on the students.³⁶ This was a great success to the students and proved to be a turning point in the movement. To identify the movement, the students of Trichinopoly organised a students' convention on 4th and 5th January 1918. Arundale who presided over the convention praised the students for their active participation in the movement.³⁷

The students who subscribed to the ideals of the Home Rule Movement demanded the right to wear native dress when they attend schools and colleges. They organised demonstrations to press home their point. Rollo, the then Principal of Pachaiyappa's college permitted the students of the college and High School to attend the classes dressed in Dhoti, shirt and upper cloth without coat and cap. Already the students of the Kumbakonam Government College were accorded this privilege by their principal, Satham.³⁸

Decline of the Movement :

Though Mrs. Besant staged the Home Rule Movement so cleverly, she suffered very much due to lack of support from local leaders. When the Congress rejected the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms she welcomed it and said that there was a change of heart on the part of the British. It earned her the enmity of Congress committee leaders.³⁹ The leaders like Kasturiranga Iyengar, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and Subramania Siva tried level best to defame Mrs. Besant and eject her out of Indian politics. Several of her associates began to dissociate from her. Mrs. Besant was deeply hurt by these and wrote, "My Tamil Brethren, what have I done to you that you hate me so bitterly?"⁴⁰

She faced the opposition from the non-Brahmins also. Since the prominent leaders and active members of the Madras branches of the Home Rule League were Brahmins it created a discontentment among the section of non-Brahmin community. The non-Brahmins formed Non-Brahmin South Indian Liberal Federation in 1916 which later grew into the Justice party.¹⁴ The Justice party and its leaders opposed the Home Rule Movement and called it as a 'Brahmin Rule'. As a result of these factors the Home Rule Movement lost its appeal in 1918.

Conclusion :

From the foregoing account, it can be claimed that the students of Tamil Nadu played a significant role in the Home Rule Movement. Instead of remaining as mere silent spectators of events happening around them, students stood in the forefront of the movement. It is mainly because of the fact that Mrs. Besant started student oriented organisations such as Boy Scouts and Volunteer Corps which provided a base on which the mighty big edifice of students resistance was built. These organisations not only provided an organisational structure but also inculcated a sense of oneness and unity. The colonial Government who watched with wary eye on the students tried its level best to insulate the students from the contagious influence of Home Rule Movement. But in fact the Government's measures increased the students participation in the movement. Thus the Home Rule Movement imparted political training to the students who fought with determination to liberate the country from the manacles of servitude.

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THE POLITICS OF JHARKHAND MOVEMENT

Jitendra Narayan Dash*

The Jharkhand Movement, in the region of the central belt of India is presently engaging the attention of not only the central government but also several other State Government that are affected by this development. A tribal Movement in its basic nomenclature, the Jharkhand Movement is a Proto-national Movement¹, aimed at the expansion of their tribal identity, striving to retain their traditional resource base demanding a share of the state power.

The factors which generated this movement and kept up it alive may be summed up as the growing discontent among the tribal people of Chhotanagpur on account of alienation of land and exploitation by moneylenders etc, a strong antipathy to-wards *Dikus* or non-tribals, and political developments in the wider setting of the country.²

Tribes in India represent a distinct cultural stratum and definite demographic position in India's national life. Despite their Comparative isolation, they have maintained a unique place in the history and civilization of India. Though their historical self-awareness may be of limited range and depth, there are several instances of their participation in the socio-political life of the region and the country. Yet the social history of Indian tribes has remained largely undiscovered. The myth of 'isolated cultural wholes', as developed in African and Oceanian tribal studies and unquestioningly applied to the Indian tribal scene, may be proved a gross distortion and misrepresentation of historical and empirical reality.³

To-day the Indian tribes have been undergoing a variety of socio-political changes, particularly for the last hundred years. Unprecedented economic, administrative, legal, religious, and political forces have successively infiltrated into the tribal areas, with a diversity of purposes and motives, and started influencing tribal life directly or indirectly. In the face of it, therefore to-day the modern *Adivasi* is losing his identity everywhere in India.

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In order to reinstate himself on the modern scale of progression he has been made to change his customs, his rituals, his beliefs, his clothes and even his philosophy.⁴ And the argument that under this process, the various tribal peoples are slowly getting assimilated and absorbed in the non-tribal nationalities is a gross misconception in the teeth of various upsurges like a "Bodo-Land" in Assam, "Adivasisthan" in Gujarat and a "Jharkhand State" in central India involving twenty-one districts from four states like Orissa, Bihar, West-Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Therefore, the claim by the spokesman of Government of India before the U. N. working Group that India is like a melting pot in which the tribals have fused with the non-tribal peoples in recent times and that in India the tribal problem virtually vanished, is a statement against the situation⁵. And the claim by some Social scientists that with the growth of capitalism the tribal peoples are getting detribalised and this process will solve the problem of the tribals is entirely based upon erroneous conceptions.

The long protracted Jharkhand Movement is exactly a negation of all the above complacent statements. To-day this movement has become so very dominating that to ignore it is like ignoring an inevitable reality. Like the other Socio-political Movements among the tribes of India, this movement is no doubt a war cry against the establishment, but at the same time it also converges various tribal segments into one mainstream and thereby tries to identify the blanket identity for the otherwise exploited tribal as a whole. The Jharkhand Movement is mainly a reaction against tribal exploitation aimed at establishing a permanent and political identity for themselves, through the establishment of a separate state called "Jharkhand State". Sometime back in December 1987, pinpointing their reaction, Mr. Manoranjan Mahato, leader of the Jharkhand Party told the press at Jhargram: "Like any other Indian citizen we want to live with our heads high. The light of education has not reached the tribal. There have been no attempts to rehabilitate those who lived on forest. We are being exploited. In short, we have no other alternative but to have our own State".⁶

Speaking about the Jharkhand Movement, Mr. Ram Dayal Munda, the American-trained academic and ex-Vicechancellor of Ranchi University advocates that "The Jharkhand Spirit is almost 200 years old. It has been yearning to protect its threatened identity. Our people have been fighting for their rights since 1759.

Some of its manifestations have been the Sidhu Kanu and Birsa Movements in 1855 and 1895".⁷

Going back into the history of it, it is found that, the Chhotnagpur Improvement Society organised in 1928, by a few educated tribal Christians for the upliftment of the tribals was latter renamed as the Adibasi Mahasabha. It was further decided at the Annual conference of May 1938, that the Adibasi Mahasabha would serve as the only political party to represent tribal interests. It was then stated that the physical type, mental makeup, culture, language and the values of the tribals were distinct from the non-tribals. The former was the majority Community in Chhotnagpur and Santhal Pragnas. The proportion of welfare work for the tribals was negligible when compared to the income from mineral wealth and forest produce of the area. The tribals were losing their identity as primary education was being imparted through the medium of Hindi which was for them, only a bazar language."

In 1949, the Adibasi Mahasabha was merged with a regional party, the Jharkhand party. It was believed that political action would be an alternative to social reforms. It is a clear case, where it was believed that Sanskritisation or evangelisation would not succeed in raising the status of the tribals". The consolidation of the Jharkhand party began under the leadership of Jaipal Singh, a Munda, who had graduated from Oxford, and the party demanded a tribal state called "Jharkhand". It was stated in their manifesto that tribal problems would be solved when the tribal state was formed. In the period from 1952 to 1957 the Jharkhand party did very well in the general elections and emerged as a major party in the Chhotnagpur - Santhal Pragnas regions. In the second general elections, its influence⁸ was noticed in Orissa also. But by 1960s, the decline of Jharkhand party, began mainly because of three reasons;

1. the enthusiasts lost interest in the party because the demand of a separate state was not realised,
2. the growing impact of development programmes was felt in Chhotnagpur and some other areas, and there was an improvement in the conditions of the tribals, and
3. a split took place in the party because of several cultural and religious differences, especially between the Christians and the non-Christians. The Christians were more advanced compared to the non-Christians, and the latter sought the support of the Jan Sangh and the Congress for their problems.

By the year 1267, the Jharkhand Movement, because of the above reasons had lost its bite and much of its popularity. Its ranks were absorbed by the Congress, while the militant sections joined the Naxalbari movement where they got an opportunity to adopt a radical path for the realisation of their demands.

In 1973, with a new thrust to the Movement problems, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha was formed and it demanded a Jharkhand-state again and among other things asked for a change in agrarian relations, recovery of land from the land lords, and revivalism of their tribal culture in all its dimensions. The militant phase of the J. M. M. began in right earnest from October, 1977, especially after Jaya Prakash Naraya's advice for the formation of Small states and the statement of the then Home Minister, Charan Singh, about reorganisation of the states. In 1980, the Morcha entered the state politics with a renewal of their demands.

From another angle, some people, almost negating the current trend of events, try to justify that, the slogan of the Jharkhand State was a ploy of British imperialism to keep the tribals of the plateau region away from the main stream of the national movement. Still others, point to the intriguing fact that during the Second World War the Tatas were toying with the idea of carving out an industrial province comprised of the plateau region of Bihar and Orissa together with the Asansol sub-division of Bengal. The idea was to have a state based on this politically backward region with huge mineral resources under the direct control of the monopolists.¹¹

However it can not be denied that the Jharkhand Movement had a tempestuous impact under the leadership of Jaipal Singh on the eve of our national independence. It had almost rallied all the tribal peoples of the entire plateau region, and had evoked sympathetic response among the tribal peoples even beyond borders of the Bihar plateau. Later, the Jharkhand party revising its claim on the geography of their proposed state in the memorandum of March 12, 1977 to the Government of India therefore demanded not only the Chhotanagpur division and the Santhal praganas from Bihar but also four districts from Orissa (Sundergarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur) three districts from West Bengal (Purulia, Midnapur and Bankura) and two districts from Madhya Pradesh (Raigarh and Surguja).¹²

To-day apart from its political overtones the Jharkhand Movement is emerging as a strong force in the industrial and mining belt of Chhotanagpur. Now it conceptualises as a Jharkhandi not only as a producer but also as a member of the working class. The feeling of ethnicity has been further reinforced because of urbanisation and the spread of modernity.¹³

In the past, the Jharkhand party failing in its effort for a separate state, even through the States Reorganisation Commission in 1956, had out of frustration decided to merge into the fold of Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Jaipal Singh in the early sixties. This however instead of resulting in the process of assimilation of the tribal peoples in the non-tribal communities, catapulted the situation and therefore as a sequel to it a strong undercurrent in the region gripped the people and several new parties like the Hul Jharkhand Party, the Birsa Seva Dal, the All India Jharkhand Party, the Bihar Prant Jharkhand Party the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, etc, came to the boiling surface.¹⁴

Now at present, the Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee (JCC) a conglomeration of 53 groups, has been clamouring for a separate state. Since its Birsa Munda rally on November 13, 1988. At that time the J.C.C. had given the government a deadline (Dec. 31) to make up its mind on the issue. The situation then got further complicated because of the alliance of the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) with the Assam-based All Bodo Students Union, which is militantly involved in asserting the rights of the tribals in that state. But, nothing so far has been crystallised as regards any concession from the government. The Jharkhand Party, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the Jharkhand Kranti Dal, the Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee and the AJSU, at the moment have been lost in a direction-less upsurge.

Therefore the prospect of a unified Jharkhand Movement, raised by the formation of the Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee (JCC) in 1988, has dwindled because of the differences crept into it. The trouble revolves round the AJSU, ever since its inception in 1988, becoming more vocal and aggressive. The flat denial of the Union Government to talk to the AJSU leaders before the set deadline of Dec. 31, 1988 and the failure of the support of most of the JCC constituents to its Bandh call on the New Year day of 1989 not only exposed the differences in the JCC but also ripped open the

inadequacies of the AJSU. While some of the Jharkhand Organisations like the JMM and the Jharkhand Party had decided to take to the parliamentary politics as usual, the AJSU, because of its tough militant posture has been advocating boycott of elections right from its inception. Another issue over which differences have been building up in the Jharkhand Movement is the reported decision of AJSU to have 1935 as the base year of "Jharkhand nationalism."¹⁵

With their differences, becoming more and more detrimental to their effort for a separate state, the various agitating groups of Jharkhand Movement have been well on their toes to fight for self government. It is their intense desire to assert their identity and the right to develop as a specific ethnic community or nationality that has sustained them despite their intermittent failure and differences.

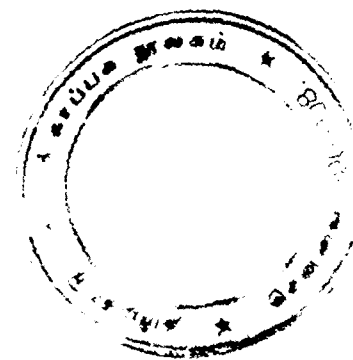
As is officially reported, the centre is now studying a report on greater autonomy to the 'Jharkhand' region.¹⁶ This report has been prepared by Dr. Ram Dayal Munda of the Jharkhand Movement. Dr. Munda, though neither a member of the Jharkhand party nor any of its splinter groups, is quite clearly the movements' theoretician. Meanwhile, the Sadan Vikas Parishad (SVP), and the Jharkhand Co-ordination Committee (JCC), feel that the Centre's proposed move to impose the Sixth Schedule of the constitution regarding administration of tribal areas would create distrust and friction between tribals and non-tribals (Sadans) in the region. So the problem is virtually without a solution as yet.

The Jharkhand Movement starting as a virulent spark in 1938-39 has already completed 50 years in its toil and stride. But the politics of the movement has been squarely unsuccessful till date, because of its prevailing innate differences on the one side and the lack of a sustained programme on the other.

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