

**T**HREE is no country in the world and no period in history when the conflict between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, the oppressor and the oppressed, justice and cruelty has not taken place. This spectacle has always been witnessed in this infinite kingdom of God. The stories of the rise and fall of the nations and their achievements are scattered all over the world. Some of them are preserved in the pages of history; others are buried deep down under the earth inviting research scholars to discover them. No doubt, no nation can move forward trampling its history under foot. But it is a fact that those who are too much engrossed in their past cannot make any headway.

The light of past experiences guides us in the ups and downs of the path ahead and gives us knowledge of the distance to the goal. At every new turn we are bound to recall those who had to give up effort long before reaching the destination. Then we think of the obstacles and impediments that blocked their progress and we have to think out plans so as to save ourselves from those impediments which enfeebled our predecessors.

In my opinion the time has now come when our politicians, intellectuals, and younger generation should make a comprehensive survey of our society and try to find out those seeds of ruination which are bringing unrest and anarchy in our country.

Misdeeds of man in pre-historic period were forgiveable because he had no control over the forces of nature. But today, man has made innumerable scientific discoveries and academic researches. He considers that the laws made by him are superior even to the laws of God or the laws of Nature. To think of reaching the moon is no longer an idle dream.

It is therefore amazing that inspite of all this advancement in the fields of knowledge, whenever man shows his real self he seems to be the same naked, barbarous creature, more cruel than the beast.



We often worry about other countries. We protest against American bombing in Vietnam, against the Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany, against cruel oppression of Palestinian Arabs by the Israel and against the anti-Negro policies of the U.S.A. But we rarely think about our own society and our own people. It is not a fact that we Indians, inspite of our tall claims about our philosophy, ideals, art and religion are still barbarians in actual life. How deep are our sentiments of vengeance, how dark our religious prejudices and how inhuman our narrow-mindedness!

#### SHOCKING STATE OF AFFAIRS

We have had a real taste of all these only after we were in a position to wield power. For the last few years all those people who had spent their whole lives in public work have been experiencing great demoralisation even though they are not pessimist by nature. They really feel shaken and find it difficult to remain steadfast.

Let us think seriously why in this land of peace and non-violence and religious tolerance bloody scenes have been again and again enacted from 1947 to 1968. How is it that the life and honour of fellow-human beings and the signs of progress have become so insignificant in our eyes that young hands rise to destroy them. Obviously it is impossible to think of remedies without a comprehensive survey of the background of the present situation.

Fifty or sixty years ago a new generation had emerged in this country which was fired with the zeal for reconstruction and freedom as well as with an extreme hatred for slavery. These people felt like the Urdu poet who said :—

*In slavery life contracts into a small rivulet, while in freedom it assumes the proportion of a shoreless sea.*

These youngmen included the anarchists of Bengal, prisoners of Kamagatamaro, detenues of Malta, Andaman and Chhindwara, the martyrs of Jalianwala Bagh, the conspirators of Kakori and Meerut as also the accused in the Lahore Bomb case. Some of them were the devotees of satyagraha, others were the soldiers

of I.N.A. Each one of them tried to break the shackles which manacled the nation.

Among them also were the downtrodden masses who had been oppressed for centuries, who had neither social status, nor knowledge nor wealth nor power and who were not treated as human beings even though they were homo-sapiens. They were deprived of equal status in society even by those in whose ears had been ringing the divine call :—

*The whole of mankind is the family of God  
and you are descendants of Adam.*

These were the people who had been kept away from culture and civilization and for whom the laws of God and the laws of Government meant the words of their masters.

They had arisen at the call of Gandhiji. But they were badly in need of education and training. Legal concessions alone could not ensure for them a high status in society. A better syllabus, a more broad-minded society and a more strict administration were needed to remove their obscurantism and to bring about a revolutionary change in their thinking and behaviour. Just benevolence of majority could not inspire them to work for revolutionary social change. The difficulty arose because those who came to power found themselves torn between Gandhian ideology, industrial progress and socialism.

Perhaps 1947 was a very significant and critical turning point on our path. Due to lack of foresight and a rather indiscreet haste we gave up the struggle at this point, taking the mirage for the destination. To take a stop and rest is a sin for those who launch on the path of struggle in life and perhaps we are guilty of that.

*I stopped to take the thorn out of my foot  
In the meantime I lost sight of my goal.  
Only for a moment did I become careless  
And the destination went centuries behind.*

Sometimes I feel that it would have been better if we had fought the battle against foreign domination on purely non-

violent lines and if that were not possible we should have won the battle only by violence. Many of us had adopted non-violence not in principle but only as expediency. We paid lip-service to non-violence because we could not bypass the call of Bapu or ignore the fact of our being weaponless, but we were not able to overcome the sentiment of revenge according to the teachings of Gandhiji. Many of us praised the activities of the terrorists and were proud of their sacrifices.

But strangely enough the entire credit for achieving independence is being given to the votaries of non-violence. We have severely ignored the efforts and sacrifices of the other groups and have forgotten the names and brave deeds of those who were hanged for independence or shot in the battle field for the same cause.

For a long time the people of India have had no chance to show their feats of bravery. That is why perhaps they could not draw a line of demarcation between cowardice and bravery.

#### AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Not only did we break journey prematurely and diverted our aspirations in a wrong direction, we also turned our back on the people and the society and concentrated wholly upon acquiring and retaining political power. We were no more concerned about the five weapons of non-violence—Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, truth and justice. We threw them away the moment we got hold of the magic wand of secularism and democracy. We heaved a deep sigh of relief imputing all our faults and weaknesses to the British imperialism. We did not take any note of even that warning which had shaken the foundations of freedom in 1947. Admittedly the conspiracy was hatched by the foreigners because they wanted to prove us incapable of running the government. It was the British machinations that had resulted in partition and bloodshed. But the para-military organisations of the pre-independence days, the RSS and the Muslim National Guards which had been set up in communal competition with the sole aim of achieving political power by mutual annihilation and bloodshed, had emerged

from our own society and had already shown their mettle in Noakhali, Rawalpindi, Bihar, Punjab and Garh Mukteshwar.

After the partition the Muslim National Guards migrated to Pakistan together with the commander, but the RSS remained in India to carry on its activities. It, however, beats comprehension why those who came to power in this country refused to recognise them in their true colour.

#### NO WARNINGS HEDED

It is a pity that neither the countrywide riots of 1947 nor Gandhiji's martyrdom, nor the thousands of bloody conflicts that followed, nor the destruction of property belonging to minority community could draw the attention of the people, the government or political parties towards the impending danger. The queerest aspect of this situation is the sublime ignorance which makes us look for the meaning of communalism and we are still treating stabbing, arson and murder as mere cultural shows. Even after suffering incalculable damage for 20 years the government and the political parties are afraid of naming the communal and the para-military organisations. They are at full liberty to hold their *Shakhas* in any public park or the compound of any school or college and impart training in wielding murderous weapons. Recently such camps were organised in almost every state of the country.

A disease attacks with ferocity only when there are internal weaknesses. And we are today under attack. All organs of the country and the people have been affected. ; communalism and anarchy have disturbed all aspects of life. At places it has assumed the form of regionalism while elsewhere it has appeared as linguism. In yet other places it has put on the garb of religion and caste. In the beginning as long as its only target were the Muslims, nobody paid much attention to it.

I remember that during my work with Shanti Dal I got certain evidences in Delhi and Punjab which pointed towards schemes for the establishment of Jatistan and Sikhistan. I mentioned these schemes in my report. But my colleagues and the political leaders took no notice of it. They have however

now materialised in the form of Haryana and Punjabi Suba. How I wish that Sardar Patel had, instead of addressing the rally of 10,000 RSS volunteers, put them behind the bars and banned this organisation. Had he done that no one would have dared shoot Bapu. This rally in December 1947 was presided over by the Maharaja of Patiala and addressed by Sardar Patel.

#### BUREAUCRATS ON TOP

Pandit Nehru and his colleagues, inspite of their revolutionary ideals, could not prepar the government and the society to move on the path of socialism and secular democracy because unfortunately the administrative machinery consisted of the same old bureaucrats who had suddenly declared their change of heart in the night of 14-15th August. Even a revolutionary like Nehru could not, inspite of his best efforts, raise them to a level adjustable with secularism and democracy.

The dream of making every village a self supporting unit and making every unit self-governing which appeared in the form of Panchayat Raj was also buried deep under the official files. The moment power came into our hands we started relying on our enmies much more than on our friends because the friends criticised us while the enemies outbid the friends in their protestations of loyalty. Our old comrades of the Satyagraha Movement left in disgust. Sometimes we ourselves broke away from them. Our planning, defence preparations, educational policies and economic system were all quite different from the Gandhian concepts and ideals. Yet we continued using his sacred name in order to decive ourselves and others.

We gave ourselves an ideal and praiseworthy constitution but could not work it in practice. The cause of this unfortunate and shameful weakness was that unreliable bureaucratic machinery which we in our over-confidence, allowed to remain in tact. Despite changes in higher offices the real power remained in the hands of the bureaucracy which had no faith either in secularism or in democracy.

This bloodshed and the chain of riots would have stopped long ago if we had nipped the trouble in the bud and action were taken against all the vicious officers, parties and individuals about whose activities tested public workers had constantly given warning to the government. But the government did no such thing. Even the Congress party remained deaf and dumb regarding these dangerous elements.

Even after the holocausts of Jabalpur, Ranchi and Rourkela a number of occasions came when these public workers put the real picture before the government and pin-pointed the sources of trouble in no uncertain terms but our parties and our government bothered only about saving their own good name and thus supporting the criminals.

I remember that once we wrote to Pandit Nehru that all this trouble was not meant only to terrorise the Muslims. Its real target was Congress and its government; our enemies want not only to terrise the Muslims and force them out of the country. Their real purpose is to subvert democracy and disturb that electoral balance whereby the Congress remains in majority. It was also possible that these elements might launch a direct attack against Congress and that democratic system of government to which Pandit Nehru was dedicated.

Towards the end of his life Panditji himself had realized the danger but then both his health and his hold on the country were giving way and his life was slowly ebbing.

Considerations of caste and religion became so important in the elections that Panchayat elections disturbed even the peace of our villages.

#### WOUNDS OF PARTITION

No doubt partition had inflicted a grievous wound on the people of India. But our leaders ought to have tried to see the wounds inflicted by partition on the hearts of nationalist and Congressite Muslims. They ought to have listened to the heart-rending cries of those poor Muslim labourers who had nothing to do

with politics. They ought to have learned a little more about those unfortunate lives which have been ruined for no fault of theirs under the steam-roller of partition.

I remember when I took to Gandhiji the secretary of Pahar-ganj Congress Committee (a dozen members of whose household had been killed and who was lying in a camp with his surviving relations) even some senior Congress leaders vehemently opposed the gesture. They saw no use in troubling Bapu with his story since what had been done could not be undone. And when inspite of all their opposition I did take this unfortunate man to Gandhiji all the Congress leaders felt greatly offended although this poor man had desired only to shed a few tears at the feet of Bapu before getting into the Pak-bound train.

I am reminded of another incident. One afternoon in 1948 I was coming from Sadar Bazar Area to New Delhi. On the way I saw a number of children with sticks in their hands shouting 'Kill him! Kill him! Don't let him go' and hitting some imaginary victim with their sticks. They were uttering filthy abuses.

This scene shook me to my bones. Even now I can read these words in my diary : 'These innocent children are playing as a game what they had seen their fathers and uncles doing a few days ago. It is indeed a copy of that bloody drama which was staged on the stage of Delhi a few months ago. We had not seen our elders doing such horrible things. If we could behave like beasts inspite of our relatively innocuous background what could not be expected from these children when they grow up with this poison of hatred and brutality fully permeating their hearts and minds? Shall we not have to mourn the misery of a whole generation?"

Those innocent children of 20 years ago have already grown up into the riotous, destructive youngmen fond of gheraos and other such activities. Would that my eyes had not seen the realisation of this horrible idea in actual practice! But I seem to be fated for this.

### SRINAGAR CONFERENCE

The National Integration Conference at Srinagar was perhaps an attempt to create a favourable wind so that the shattered ship of our nation might be steered forward. This conference was attended by the leaders of the government as well as by the representatives of the political parties. Ironically enough the Muslims who were subject of discussion were not represented. After the deliberations it was found that their groans were still unheard.

However, the Muslims could take consolation from the fact that though they were not represented in the conference yet their plight was the main topic of deliberations. The conference atleast forced the Home Ministry to take some concrete steps and the cabinet to decide its methodology. Instructions were issued to the States. The disease was diagnosed to some extent and it was realised that the chronic disease had affected all the organs of our body politic.

One, however, missed that revolutionary ideology which could bring out epoch-making changes in all the echelons of our society from the lowest to the highest and might change our way of thinking and action. If we are earnest about building socialism in our country and about retaining secular democracy the efforts to keep company with those parties and individuals who have no faith in democracy and secularism will not help to end the prevailing chaos.

Let us understand that in this country two or three ideologies are vying with each other. A strong and healthy opposition is of course necessary for a democratic set-up but it is unfortunate that the opposition in India has till now played a lamentably weak role on account of its peculiar ways of action.

### POLITICAL PARTIES

It is alleged that the Congress sacrificed its principles in order to win elections. In that case atleast opposition parties should have proved their sterling character. But they too encouraged casteism in order to reap temporary benefits. They

aggravated the problem of language by introducing emotionalism. They supported and encouraged the narrow loyalties and thus diverted the attention of the people from constructive ideals to destructive action. Each one of these opposition parties took part in buttressing provincialism in order to maintain its popularity. Not only this, they also tried directly or indirectly to stiffen the conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims. None of them except a few communists ever worked in riot-affected areas to help the victims.

I realise that every party will resent these allegations. But you cannot hide facts for ever. Right from the holocausts of 1947 to the riots of Jabalpur and Saugor the role of communist party workers at local levels has been exemplary. They have worked in the fore-front to allay the conflict, to establish peace and to help the victims of riots. But after Jamshedpur, Rourkela and Sitamarhi they too became victims of the same inertia which had already overtaken the PSP, the SSP, and the Congress. Once again they seem to be taking note of this situation. The explanation for the intervening inaction only time will provide.

When the fire which had been kindled to consume only the Muslims reached the corridors of the Government and the Railways and heavy industries of Ranchi, the authorities also awoke from slumber but even then Pakistani saboteurs were used as handy scapegoats.

#### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

How is it that when the government had first taken note of this warning it not see with the help of its C.I.D. the faces of some Indians also shining in the fire of riots.

When weapons were being manufactured in the factories of Jamshedpur and Rourkela to kill Muslims what was the C.I.D. doing? How did the Government ignore the possibility of a similar manufacture of arms for Naxalbari also? Why was no action against those responsible people in whose presence and direction of the factory production changed direction?



Why no explanation was sought from the Principal, the teachers and the authorities of the Ranchi Medical College whose collusion and encouragement had rendered the life of Engineering and Medical students unsafe. Our Government claims to acquire the knowledge regarding the military preparations of Pakistan and China but it remains ignorant of posters and leaflets distributed under its very nose, of the inflammatory speeches in the meetings and the preparations of the rioters to set fire to Parliament House. When each and every Muslim house has been marked even in important cities like Allahabad the government machinery remains totally ignorant of what is happening or can happen in the future.

Weak and disappointed individuals and ideologically heterogeneous parties may ignore this loose administration. But those who have fought shoulder to shoulder in the war of Independence and have contributed their utmost to the progress and reconstruction of the country and who opposed Muslim communalism and resisted the partition of the country till the end have a right to ask the government why Muslim blood was being shed like water. Why those who had effaced the signs of progress and re-construction were not meted out adequate punishment and why the custodians of law and order in a riot-affected city were not held responsible for the occurrences and put on trial?

The nationalist Muslims had made sacrifices for the sake of their country. They have vowed to preserve the solidarity of their country and their constitution but they are not bound by allegiance to any individuals. I cannot understand by what right those who have not shed a single drop of their blood can demand proof of loyalty from the Muslims.

We are within our rights to ask our old colleagues and comrades as well as our present leaders if they sincerely want to implement the decisions of the National Integration Conference, act according to the instructions of Gandhiji and work for the weak and the poor.

If they are serious let them start their work immediately in the States under President's Rule. It will be much easier for the

Central Government to enforce its circulars, Cabinet decisions and the bills passed by the Parliament through its Governors.

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

The other day I heard two young boy stalking to each other in a language which was hardly civilised and they were friends. I was amazed at the deterioration the standards of behaviour and conduct had suffered. Can we keep the teachers and parents free of blame for this?

Only last year some ridiculous and venomous extracts from text-books were read out in the Parliament. It is these which have ruined a whole generation and poisoned its mind.

It is not at all necessary to teach anything about any religion in a Secular State. But it is certainly permissible to improve the moral of children with the help of the exemplary characters of the great men of old. It is, therefore, necessary to stop the prescription of text-books written by the friends and relatives of the educational officers. The task should be entrusted by the government to educational experts so that extracts from sacred moral and historical books as well as original writings of a high order which conform to the ideals of the modern age may be included in them. But there can be no place for pictures of prophet Mohammad and stories of Hindu mythology in these textbooks.

Cheap detective and sex novels should be proscribed in the interest of the morals of the rising generation. These books generate criminal, sex and sadist tendencies in young minds.

Many people are still ruining their lives under the intoxicating effect of liquor. The ideals of Congress demand that prohibition must be immediately enforced all over the country.

In order to reduce provincialism it should be made compulsory for every govt. servant to know at least two Indian languages. The doors of the army, the police and C.I.D. should be opened once again for all the communities. As long as this is not done

the communal riots will not come to an end. As long as the services are filled with people of one religion only the broad-mindedness necessary to end these tragic happenings will not come. It is a fact that after partition the number of Muslims and Christians in various services has become negligible.

The number of Muslims in private firms and the secretariat of the Centre and the States should be increased. If every Minister looks into the communal composition of his department he will realise the gravity of the situation.

The Govt. should strictly prohibit the mentioning of caste after the names as is prevalent in our country. The name of one's father and native place instead can help in bringing the various castes together and in ameliorating the conditions of the Harijans.

The three language formula should be enforced throughout the country but Urdu should not be thrown overboard in U.P., Behar, Delhi and Rajasthan. Attempts should be made to raise the standard of education as it is constantly going down. The constant neglect of Urdu, a rich heritage of our culture, and of other languages has brought down the standards both in writing and speech.

Even the Congress is to a great extent responsible for the present sad state of affairs. Once I complained to the President of U.P. Congress Committee against all official letters being written in Hindi. He said that I should not feel any difficulty because I know a lot about Gita and Ramayana. I replied that I had read all that only in Urdu. I also pointed out to him that when I was unable to read the instructions of State Congress how would I act upon them. Similar was the case with many other Congressmen.

At this he got angry and declared that whatever the objection of Urdu-knowing Congressmen all the work will be done in Hindi. Consequently thousands of Congressmen left the party. The Muslims got alienated from the Congress. And it must be remembered that Bapu always replied to our letters in Urdu. So did Panditji.

Many people due to their lack of knowledge of Hindi fail to get any idea about the work done by the Panchayats, Block Samitis, Zila Parishads and Mandal and State Congress Committees. Serious harm has been done to the first three plans by the language policy and narrow-mindedness of the officials who have been covering their inefficiency with difficult and obscure terminology.

Can we hope that the government would realise the harm done so far and try to remove the numerous difficulties faced by a major section of the population. The language problem can be solved if each state is recognised as multi-lingual. Different languages should be recognised as medium of work in schools, colleges, courts and business so that those who are conversant with only local language and who give primacy to their mother tongue do not face any handicap. Such a policy will create a climate of confidence among the students and the common masses. I do recognise the need for a link language but it can be only that Hindi whose vocabulary includes words not only from Sanskrit but from all other regional languages. Legally we have accepted that Hindi and Devanagri script as official language. Its teaching is compulsory and it should be so. So far as English is concerned we shall have to use it in order to keep contact with the rest of the world.

The ignorance, narrow-mindedness and the lust for power prevailing in political parties have been responsible for an awful mess which could have been prevented only if the mind and character of the Government were clear on these issues.

It is learnt that the Home Ministry, with the approval of the Cabinet, has sent a circular to the State Governments about action in riot affected areas. The responsible officials are to be answerable for incidents and they might be subjected to transfer etc. Collective fines also may be imposed. Necessary legislation is likely to be brought before the Parliament. Strong action is to be taken against newspapers and propagandists spreading communal hatred.

May the Home Ministry succeed in implementing the recommendations of the National Integration Council. I have some

fears only about one recommendation which may lead to police interference in religious places. The fear is that the only targets may not be the Muslims places of worship like Urs. Every Friday there is a religious discourse in the mosque and that gathering may become a target of mischief mongers and subjected to police excesses. Utmost care is needed in implementation of this idea. The difficulty arises because the impartiality of the present administrative machinery is not beyond question.

Similarly political parties and other groups should not be allowed to organise separate relief operations. There should be only one Relief Committee and local officials responsible for the work should act upon the recommendations of that committee. Of course, the committee should include people belonging to various schools of thought but not those who want to make political capital out of it.

I really do not know who I am addressing. Only future will tell how sincere are the government and the political parties in finding a solution to these problems.

When sands of time and age are fast running out it is quite meet that I talk frankly to my countrymen, no matter how many pay heed. If there is some bitterness somewhere I would beg to be excused for, I believe, sometimes poison also kills poison.

