

## Problems of National Integration \*

E.M.S. Namboodiripad

### Foreword

Collected in this booklet are some articles and documents on National Integration written by me on various occasions. These are brought together with the hope that the booklet will stimulate discussion on the problems dealt with here.

The first is the article entitled "Problems of National Integration", published in the Sunday Standard in 1963. It deals with the problem as a whole in a popular way.

More or less the same ground is covered in the second, "National Integration in the Communist Party", a note submitted in 1962 to the National Council of the Communist Party. It however deals with the problem by relating it to the Marxist-Leninist theory of nationality.

The third are a few notes which were submitted by me as a member of the National Integration Committee to its Sub-Committee on communalism and National Integration.

The fourth and the fifth are my criticism of Sri Kumaramangalam's book on "Language Crisis" and my rejoinder to Sri Kumaramangalam's reply to my criticism.

It is to be hoped that these will enable the reader to understand how the party to which I belong understands and tries to solve one of the most vital political problems which the country is facing today.

I am not presumptuous enough to think that the view-point

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presented here will be universally accepted. It is bound to be opposed from various angles. I for my part would welcome such opposition. For only through exchanges among people who hold different points of view can a correct understanding be reached.

A reference may, in this connection, be made to the last 2 articles contained in this book. They are, it can be seen, part of the ideological struggle which is today being waged between that are popularly known as the “right” and “left” wings of India’s Communist movement. I am only sorry that Sri Kumaramangalam has not made any contribution to the discussion of the problem of National Integration. May I take this opportunity to appeal to him, and those of his way of thinking to concretely point out where precisely I have taken a “dogmatist” view of any aspect of the problem of National Integration.

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E. M. S. Namboodiripad

## **Problems Of National Integration**

The language disturbances which broke out in Assam in the middle of 1960 were a grim warning : the unity built up in the course of freedom struggle, and sought to be carried forward in the period of national reconstruction, was facing a serious threat.

Then followed serious communal disturbances in early 1961 in Jabalpur and certain other cities of Madhya Pradesh. Outbreaks of communalism repeated themselves in certain other States and localities too.

These alarming developments made our leaders take serious note of the fissiparous trends that threaten national unity - casteism, communalism, linguism, provincialism and regionalism. The question arose : can these forces be overcome and the nation unified ? And if so, how ?

A series of Committees were set up and Seminars organised both at the official and non-official levels to discuss this question. The discussions culminated in the National Integration Conference, held at New Delhi in September-October, 1961. Out of this conference emerged the National Integration Council. The latter, in its turn, resolved to set up two Sub-Committees, each with its own specific problem to deal with – the Ashok Mehta Committee on National Integration and Communalism, and the Ramaswamy Iyer Committee on National Integration and Separatism.

While the two Committees were doing their work, the political situation in the country underwent a basic transformation : the Chinese launched their massive attack all along the border. Their troops began to march into our territory. Some of the vital posts of national defence had to be abandoned ; the army formations guarding them retreated.

The President, the Prime Minister and other leaders of the Government called on the people to unite as one man to defend the honour, integrity and the borders of the nation. Every section

of the people, every political party, every social organisation, responded to this call and rallied behind the Government. Differences and disputes existing among them were buried.

This new development made the Committees on Communalism and Separatism have second thoughts on the work they had undertaken. They came to the conclusion that the problems under study at their hands receded to the background. The spontaneous response which all sections of the people, all political parties and mass organisations, had given to the leaders' call for unity to face the common danger did, in their opinion, show that the purpose for which they had started their work had by and large, been achieved. Their work was, therefore, suspended for the duration of the emergency.

The forces of disruption, however, continued to exist; they had not been eliminated. The Government for its part did not take at its face value the declaration made by the DMK that it would not raise the issue of regional separatism for the duration of the National Emergency. The work of drafting the Bill declaring separatism an offence continued.

The position became still worse after the Chinese announced their unilateral cease-fire and withdrawal beyond their own line. Although these steps were looked on with a certain amount of reserve, the passage of time made more and more sections of the people convinced that the emergency was passing. Demand for its formal lifting began to be voiced and became the official policy of several of the opposition parties and groups.

Official policy too began to relent on particular aspects of the way in which the emergency situation is to be dealt with. The decision to hold bye-elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures (originally held over for the duration of the Emergency) was clear proof of the new thinking on the Government's part.

It is, therefore, not surprising that some of the issues which had receded into the background in the days when the Chinese

armies were advancing into our territory should once again come to the forefront. The recent controversy on the division of river waters as among the Andhra, Mysore and Maharashtra Governments and the bellicose speeches delivered in the three Legislatures on the issue showed that the question of regionalism is as serious today as during the days when the Ramaswamy Iyer Committee on National Integration and Regionalism was doing its work.

Passions were roused also on the issue of official language. The introduction of, and debate on, the Official Language Bill in Parliament excited passions both in the Hindi-speaking regions as well as in the rest of the country. The understanding on the basis of which the two Committees of the national Integration council had suspended their work was thus proved to be too facile. The questions referred to them for consideration and recommendation are as serious now as ever. It will be a serious mistake to underestimate the dangerous potentialities arising out of them.

The questions naturally arise : why should these threats to national unity assume such serious proportions now ? Why should even the threat from outside be ineffective in stemming the tide of all these fissiparous tendencies ? What are the socio-economic factors which led to the accentuation of these tensions and conflicts in the post-independence years ?

These questions are answered by different sections of the people in different ways.

The most common among them are those given by the ruling party and opposition parties. They are naturally incomplete, since the political prejudices and self-interest of the respective parties cloud their vision.

Take, for example, the answer given by the ruling party. Its essence is that the ruling party and the Government are sincere and earnest about integrating the nation and rooting out all the disruptive forces, It is the opposition parties which are thwarting

their efforts to unify and integrate the nation ; it is, therefore, the duty of all those who are interested in national integration to rally behind the ruling party and the Government.

On the other hand, such opposition parties as are above casteism, communalism and other disruptive forces—the Communist Party, the PSP, the Socialist party of India, etc.—take the stand that the ruling party and the Government should take a major part of the responsibility for creating a situation in which national unity is threatened. It is, therefore, necessary according to them for the ruling party and the Government to change their policies and practices. They, therefore, demand that these policies and practices should be changed and that a really national policy be adopted—the policy of consistent struggle against all disruptive forces.

Both the ruling party and these opposition parties accuse the others of compromising with disruptive elements with a view to gaining temporary and local advantages for themselves. Furthermore, the ruling party accuses these opposition parties of actively participating in and even instigating movements which tend to divide the nation, such as the movement for the formation of linguistic states. The ruling party, in its turn, is accused of using all the parochial sentiments which are the main weapons used by their provincial and regional leaders in their struggle against the opposition parties as well as against rival groups in their own party.

The result is that the discussion on national integration itself becomes a matter of partisan struggle between the ruling and the opposition parties on the one hand and among the various opposition parties on the other. This partisan character of debate makes it impossible for any of them to make a sufficiently objective and deep study of the issues involved—study which leads to meaningful conclusions and enables to find effective solution for these problems.

It is proposed in the following pages to make such an objective study of issues involved in what is called the problem

of national integration. It is necessary at the outset to state that the conclusions arrived at by the writer are tentative. They are offered with a view to provoking discussion, rather than by way of giving final conclusions. It is hoped that the points made here will be subjected to serious criticism by those who hold different views and that the writer will be able to profit by such serious criticism.

## II

The crucial issue involved in national integration is how to make various sections of the people and organised groups subordinate their narrower loyalties to the larger loyalty ; how to make them see that their primary and most important loyalty is to India as a whole, rather than to the caste or tribe into which they are born, the religious community through which their spiritual needs are satisfied, the language they speak, etc.

This is an issue which has had to be faced by every country in the world at some phase in its history or other.

The countries of Western Europe faced and solved it in the 19th century. The solution which they ultimately arrived at is called by the theoreticians of Political Science as the 'formation of nation states'.

The process was delayed in Central and Eastern Europe, and even in certain parts of Western Europe, because of the existence in the pre-First World War period of three big empires—Russia, Austria and Prussia. It was only at the end of the First World War when these three empires were broken up, that nation-states were formed in Central and Eastern Europe.

This process has not yet been completed either in Asia or Africa. The countries in these two continents have, however, started the process. They are today proceeding along the same path as was traversed by Europe in the 19th century and in the early years of the present century.

One of the reasons why there was so much delay in the

completion of this process in Asia and Africa is that, down to the end of the Second World War, they were all—or almost all—under the thralldom of the colonial empires formed by the Western powers. Just as several European nationalities were held down by the military might of the Russian, Austrian and Prussian empires in the pre-First World War period, so have almost all the Asian and African countries been prevented from giving expression to their natural urge for the formation of nation-states. Even after the end of the Second World War, it took more than a decade for the majority of these countries to emancipate themselves completely from the colonial domination imposed by the Western powers.

These colonial powers have, however, recently been compelled by the growth of militant anti-imperialist movement throughout the world to retreat from their dominating position and transfer power to national Government. But, when they did so, they did their utmost to incite passions among the various nationalities, and, within the same nationality, among various tribes, communities and other groups.

We know to our cost how in the years preceding the formation of an independent Indian state, they encouraged all manner of fissiparous forces in our country and how they succeeded in forming two rival states, rather than one state, on the Indian sub-continent.

The same game was played and is being played by the colonial powers, for instance, in the Arab world, where they are trying to set one Arab country against another and thus preventing the emergence of a united Arab nation. In South-East Asia, they have succeeded in forming the new Malaysian state which ostensibly unites the Malay people, inhabiting the contiguous territories of Singapore, Malaya, Borneo and Brunei. In the process, however, they set this new Federation of Malay people against their brethren in the Philippines and Indonesia.

More blatant than all these are the intrigues that they are carrying on in the African continent, where the formation of

nation-states is sought to be prevented by the encouragement of all sorts of tribal and other fissiparous forces in every single African country.

It would, however, be wrong to think that what prevents the formation of nation-states in Asia and Africa is only the existence of colonial domination before the Second World War, followed by the dirty intrigues resorted to by the former colonial powers when they had to retreat. The socio-economic and cultural conditions in the various countries of these two continents are also such that the formation of nation-states is not easy. Narrower loyalties having their origin in mediaeval forms of social and cultural life are deep-rooted and have their influence on the thinking and activity of millions of people in these countries. Had it not been for the existence of these loyalties which have become part of the consciousness of the people, the colonialists would not have been able to take advantage of them and to divide and disrupt national unity in these countries.

Take, for instance, our own country. It is true that the British rulers played a dirty role in inciting communal passions in the years immediately preceding our attainment of independence. Had it not been for their presence here and the intrigues resorted to by them, the communal problem would not have reached such proportions or taken such tragic forms. It is, however, equally true that they could resort to such intrigues precisely because the socio-economic conditions in the country were such that these passions could easily be roused.

That is why, even after the attainment of independence when the British rulers were out of the scene in our political life and were not in a position to intrigue, communalism did not recede into the background but only took other forms. The emergence of such organisations as the Jan Sangh, for example, cannot be explained except by recognising the fact that Hindu communalism is a force to reckon with even when the foreign intriguer is away and is not in a position to mould the course of political developments in the country.

Let us recall, in this connection, that the process of the formation of nation-states even in Western Europe was attended by serious clashes and conflicts between outmoded ideas and concepts having their origin in mediaeval society and the ideas and concepts of modern democracy, nationalism and secularism. Loyalty to one's own region or principality, to one's guild, to one's religious group—all these contended even in Western Europe against the new forces of modern nationalism. These new forces had to wage revolutionary battles against the old forces and defeat them. It was in the course of these battles that they unfurled the banner of 'liberty, equality and fraternity'. But, before coming out victorious and establishing themselves as superior to the old outworn forces, they had to go through years of persecution and suffering.

Our freedom movement for its part drew inspiration from these national, democratic and progressive movements of Western Europe when it unfurled its own banner of revolt against British imperialism. As our national leaders had made it clear during the freedom movement, our struggle was directed not only against the foreign exploiter, but also against the backward, oppressive and undemocratic organisations and institutions in the country.

The struggles against untouchability, for the elevation of the depressed classes, for the promotion of Hindu-Muslim and other forms of communal unity, for the substitution of English by the mother tongue as the language of administration and education, for the formation of linguistic states, for equality between men and women, etc. were part of this urge for creating a modern democratic and progressive nation out of the various caste, communal, tribal, linguistic or regional groups in the country. It was because they were able to inscribe the banner of the struggle against mediaeval and backward institutions, and ideas arising out of them, that our national leaders were then able to unify and integrate the nation.

At that time, however, they were directing the main fire against the biggest obstacle standing in the way of creating a united nation—against British imperialism. They knew, and the people knew, that there was no question of any successful struggle against these mediaeval and backward ideas and institutions so long as the external oppressor continued to dominate over the nation. They, however, made it clear that, as soon as the foreign oppressor is gone, the nation will work earnestly in order to overcome all the internal obstacles to the unification and integration of the nation.

After the attainment of independence, however, it is no more a question of just laying down the policy and programme of unifying and integrating the nation. The question of implementing those policies and programmes came on the agenda.

This requires not only an awareness of the evils generated by the mediaeval and backward institutions and ideas which have their hold on the people. It requires a thorough and deep understanding of the objective factors and forces which lead to the emergence of these mediaeval and backward institutions and ideas.

Failure in this respect is bound to make the struggle against fissiparous forces ineffective. It is therefore necessary for us to go a little into the sociological roots of the fissiparous trends that are admittedly endangering the unity of the nation.

### III

The historical process of the formation of nation-states in India has certain features which are peculiar. These were completely absent in European countries, both Western and Eastern.

Social development in Europe took the three well-known stages of primitive Communism, Slavery and Feudalism. It was when the feudal society was being broken up under the hammer-

blows of growing capitalist society that the petty barriers which existed for centuries got destroyed and the slogan of 'one nation, one state' was raised as a matter of practical politics.

In India, however, historical development took place in a slightly different way. The breakup of the ancient Primitive Communist Society to form the Slave Society and the substitution of the latter by the Feudal Society took place in India in such a way that a social institution peculiar to India came into existence—the caste.

How the Indian social set-up arose and developed from stage is an absorbing topic for those engaged in research into the development of Indian society. It is, however, clear that it became such an organic part of the Indian people's life that its impact is strongly felt even in this epoch of capitalism and transition to socialism.

The foundation of the Indian village community is the same natural economy as was characteristic of the countryside in all parts of the world in the pre-capitalist epoch. Production for consumption, rather than for sale in the market, exchange of products within the village and that too on a barter basis—such was the pattern of economic relationships in those days.

While this was true of all parts of the world till the rise of modern capitalism, India is different from the rest in that her self-contained economy takes the social form of the Village Community divided into castes. Division of labour, exchange of products, marriage and family relations—all were organised along caste lines. This caste hierarchy with its relations of superiority and inferiority of various castes gave the Indian village certain specific features absent in the rest of the world.

This does not mean that the particular pattern of caste organisation and the village community known to us in modern times was worked out in its fullness at some particular point of history. On the other hand, the division of society into castes and the organised village community have undergone various

transformations both in their outward form as well as in their inner content.

It was a far cry from the original division of society into four *varnas* (which is supposed to have been the beginning of the caste system) into the modern system of caste society with its scores of castes and hundreds of sub-castes. The Village Community too is not the same in all parts of the country nor in all stages of its history.

It would therefore be reasonable to conclude that the socio-economic transformations which took place in other countries through the formation and breakup of the slave and feudal societies took place in India by way of transformation in the caste system and Village Community.

Let us, however, not distract ourselves into the historical origin and development of the two social institutions which are peculiar to India—the Caste and the Village Community. The main point to be stressed is that these two institutions have gone very much into the consciousness and activity of the Indian people. People belonging to various castes have a feeling of being one with their own caste people and separate from the rest of society ; and this feeling is a living force, having its impact on the entire social life of the Indian people. This is the main point which is relevant for the discussion here.

There are, however, certain sections of the people who are outside the institution of caste. They are : Firstly, the various tribal peoples who live their separate lives and have not yet been fully integrated into the caste-ridden Hindu society. Each tribe has its customs and manners, its own tribal bonds and sometimes speak its own tribal language or dialect.

Secondly, there are the non-Hindu religious communities, particularly the Muslims, the Christian and the Sikhs. Although they too, in some respects, have been affected by caste distinctions (there being low caste Muslims and christian, etc.) they have by and large kept away from the customs and manners

of caste-ridden Hindu society. At the same time, they have their own social and cultural lives based on doctrines and rituals ordained by their own religious faith. They too, therefore, have their feeling of separateness from Hindu society and oneness among themselves.

The inevitable consequence of these peculiar features of the social set-up in India is that there is no feeling of unity and solidarity between the various caste in Hindu society, between the people belonging to the caste-ridden Hindu society on the one hand and non-Hindu religious communities on the other, and between the tribal people and the plains people. This is the soil on which have arisen what are called Casteism, Communalism and Tribal Separatism.

The common soil on which these forms of separatism have grown in India is, as we stated above, the reality that the economic relationship in ancient and mediaeval society was based on production for one's own consumption and exchange of products within the village. This, however, has now disappeared. No more is Indian society—even tribal society in the most inaccessible jungles of the most distant parts of the country—free from the influences of market economy. People in every part of the country are steadily being drawn into the vortex of market economy.

There is, therefore, no objective economic basis for the feeling of separateness as between the various castes in Hindu society, or the various religious communities, or the various tribal peoples. They all function within the same system of economic relationships under which any individual belonging to any caste or religious community or tribe can, and actually does, go to any part of the country, take up any occupation and live any type of life which he or she likes. This is something which was unthinkable either in ancient or mediaeval days when the caste, the tribal and the religious organisation had allotted to every individual his or her allotted place of work and occupation.

This fundamental transformation in the economic base, on which the social institutions of the caste, the tribe and the religious community were built, began with the advent of the British regime. The biggest and most effective blow directed by the British rulers fell on the old self-sufficient economy which was the "unchanging" Village Community. The lakhs of Indian villages, each of which lived its own life since times immemorial, began to feel the effect of the slightest tremor in the world set-up. Wars or revolutions, economic crises or political upheavals in the capitalist world, threw dozens of young men out of their village, pauperised hundreds of families and unsettled the family budgets of almost every section of rural society. Continuous and evergrowing pauperisation of the Indian people belonging to every caste, tribe and religious community was the natural result of these upheavals.

Even though the objective basis of the institution of the caste, the tribe and the religious community was thus knocked out, the consciousness in the minds of the people, to which the existence of these institutions had given rise, was not by any means eliminated. Firstly because, being institutions which have had their existence dating back to several centuries, the consciousness of caste, tribe, etc. persisted in the minds of the people even after the objective factor which gave rise to that consciousness was eliminated.

Secondly, even though the British rulers destroyed the basis of the old social system, they did not help the formation of a new system in its place. The role played by them in the history of social transformation in India is, as has been pointed out by all historians and social scientists, destructive, rather than constructive. While they destroyed the old self-sufficient village system, they did not build the modern industrial society. They, therefore, failed to bring about such a technological and cultural revolution as was brought about by the bourgeoisie in the countries of Western Europe. Such a technological and cultural revolution alone would have broken the parochial, cliquish and

other narrower feelings and considerations which have to be broken up if the nation-state is to be formed. Furthermore, having no social base in the country on which they could rely for support in maintaining their alien rule, the British propped up all the backward and reactionary social forces in the country. The leaders of the caste, tribal and religious organisations were the natural allies of the British who did their best to promote them and set them against the growing forces of nationalism.

The same development is unfortunately taking place in the post-independence years too. The process of breaking up the objective economic basis of the caste, the tribal and the religious groups and organisations is continuing. What is left of the caste, tribal and communal societies is being steadily destroyed. But the new rulers of the country have been as yet unable to build a fully industrialised society. They have been unable to bring about that technological and cultural revolution which will sweep away the cobwebs of backwardness inherent in the caste, tribal and communal separatist sentiments.

On the other hand, the new ruling classes, for their own reasons, are, in actual practice, allying themselves, at one stage or in one part of the country, with one, and at another stage and in any another part of the country with another, force of separatism. They are obliged to do this because, in the present set-up of parliamentary democracy, they have to rely on the support of all these backward social forces in order to win victory in the elections.

Neither the ruling nor the opposition parties can escape their respective share of the responsibility from this. For, both are pandering to the prejudices and passions which can secure them votes in elections. Separatism of all sorts—caste, communal, tribal and other—naturally come handy and are used without scruples.

Thus is created the political background in which these forces of separatism can grow.

## IV

The transformations that are taking place in the socio-economic system are of two kinds : (1) those that affect all the socio-economic institutions in the country in general. (2) Those that affect some of them in a particular way and others in another way.

The pauperisation of the majority of the people ; the growth of well-to-do sections connected with various forms of modern business activities or carrying on modern intellectual professions and occupations ; the break-up of the old family ties—these belong to the first category. They affect people belonging to every caste and tribe, having allegiance to every religious persuasion, speaking every language and inhabiting every state and region.

Nobody is free from these social upheavals. No social group in the country is left unaffected by this process. Within the ranks of every caste, every tribe, every religious community, every linguistic and cultural group and within every state and region, this polarisation is taking place.

Even from the ranks of the most socially-oppressed and lowest caste is a narrow stratum of educated professionals growing—the first nucleus of a stratum which hopes to transform itself, in course of time, at least into the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, even from within the highest castes are large numbers of people being pauperised and thrown into the ranks of semi-proletarians, if not full proletarians.

The tribal people too are undergoing the same process of transformation—a narrow stratum of at least professionals is emerging and hopping to get further up the ladder of the modern class society; while their masses are forcibly separated from their land and the tribal social environment to be thrown into the ranks of proletarians.

The well-knit organisation built on the basis of the religious

bond is also breaking. Each religious group is being divided into a minority of the rich and the well-to-do and the majority of either the already poor or those who are being rapidly impoverished.

Linguistic groups and people inhabiting each State and region in the country are also subjected to this process. From the ranks of each of them are arising two classes or strata of society—the majority who are impoverished and have little or no property of their own, and a minority who are taking the utmost advantage of opportunities for developing themselves into property-owners.

The polarisation of society into such a majority (propertyless) and a minority (the property-owners) is thus a phenomenon to which no social group is an exception.

Such a polarisation of society has been going on in our country ever since the British rulers came and destroyed the basis of the old self-sufficient village economy with the caste system as its backbone. The economic basis of all these socio-economic institutions—the division of labour along the lines of caste, all the castes and religious communities together forming the village community—was undermined by them when they brought the market economy.

This, however, is not only being further carried forward but developed into its most perfect form, the form of monopoly capital in these years of planned economy. The renowned economist, D. R. Gadgil, has pointed out that the existence and development of monopoly in business fields goes hand in hand with concentration of power in terms of regional, communal or social groups.

“This”, he goes on, “is an extremely important sociological phenomenon which cannot be ignored in Indian conditions. It cannot be ignored because the total picture that emerges is that of concentration and control over and patronage resulting from all modern finance, trade and industry in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons concentrated in

particular social groups. The diffusion of the benefits of the rise of modern industries and commerce is thus severely restricted within the community and the joint operation of socio-economic and political power makes certain groups so entrenched that social justice is denied and social peace cannot be guaranteed with the continuance of this state of affairs.”

This has its impact on the relations between castes, tribes, religious groups, linguistic and cultural groups, States and regions. For, while on the one hand every such social group is getting polarised into a majority of the propertyless and a minority of property-owners, relations of property as between one social group and another also undergo changes.

The essence of monopoly being that those who are already privileged get increasingly greater opportunities to improve their position in relation to the rest of the society. Relatively larger proportions of those who belong to particular social groups are able to enrich themselves more than other groups.

Thus, for instance, certain special castes in every part of the country are able to secure a much larger proportion of jobs under the Government and professional occupations than the rest. So are certain other communities able to bag a much larger proportion of trade, industry and other forms of modern business activity. While a few individuals from other social groups are also able to ascend the ladder of governmental jobs, professional occupation, trade or other forms of business activity, they are yet proportionately lesser in number.

On the other hand, while several of the old privileged social groups are also getting impoverished, their proportion is much lesser than those of the less privileged groups.

Such developments give an entirely new complexion to the conflicts based on casteism, communalism, tribalism, linguistic and regional rivalries, etc. They are no more confined to a struggle for a proper share in the political and administrative set-up under the foreign rulers, as they were in the pre-

independence years. They have now become the expression of the keen competition and rivalry between the newly-emerging professional and business elements who happen to belong to various social groups. Their competition and rivalry is related to what each considers its own legitimate share in the development of the nation.

Thus is laid the basis for tensions and conflicts between the various castes, tribes, religious communities, linguistic groups and the people inhabiting different states and regions. Conflicts between the propertyless and property-owners as classes bound by economic ties sometimes appear as, and are sometimes overshadowed by, conflicts between such social groups as caste, community, etc. An extremely complex situation is the natural result of these developments.

Thus far about the general socio-economic transformations which affect everyone of these social groups and which, therefore, have become the problems of national integration. Over and above these, however, are the transformations which are peculiar to every socio-economic and cultural factor in Indian society. They, therefore, give some special characteristic feature for each of the problems connected with national integration.

Before examining them one by one we may, however, note that neither the economic transformations that are being made under the Five-Year Plans, industrialisation, development of agriculture, etc.—nor the technological and cultural changes brought about through education and the adoption of new methods of production are adequate to undermine the objective and subjective bases of the existence of the backward sentiments of casteism, communalism and tribalism.

Industrialisation is yet confined to a few selected cities and industrial areas ; the bulk of the rural areas (which happen to be the citadels of these backward sentiments) remain unaffected by the economic and technological changes brought about by industrialisation. In agricultural and other sectors of rural

activity too, modern technology and the consequent changes in the people's outlook to life are mostly confined to a narrow stratum of well-to-do elements in the rural areas.

The mass of the rural people, therefore, are perforce left with all their outmoded ideas and stick to superstitious beliefs and practices. Modern concepts like secularism, casteless and classless democracy, etc., become just fashionable jargons bandied about by a narrow stratum of urban and much less of the rural intellectual elite.

The general solution for these problems, therefore, obviously consists in a more thorough and consistent process of industrialisation, leading to a transformation of the entire life and culture of the rural areas. Modern practices and techniques of production, accompanied by the dissemination of the most up-to-date ideas of science and technology, will alone knock the bottom out of the centuries-old ideas of caste hierarchy, tribal separatism and religious fanaticism, thus undermining the very basis of the political factors of casteism, tribalism and communalism.

## V

Caste as a system of social organisation has two essential features demarcating it from other social systems.

Firstly, one's occupation is determined by the caste into which one is born ; in other words, division of labour is so rigid that people cannot take up occupations other than those followed by their forefathers.

Secondly, this rigid division of labour based on heredity places some in the category of 'superior' castes while others are 'inferior' castes. Furthermore, every caste is 'superior' to some and 'inferior' to other castes (except, of course, the highest which has only 'inferior' castes below and none above, and, the lowest to whom every other is a 'superior' caste).

This whole arrangement received a shattering blow when the British rulers brought with them the economic relations, laws and moral standards of modern capitalist society. The process which they started about two centuries ago is now being continued and further accelerated by the new rulers of free India.

The decisive change in the social set-up made in the course of nearly two centuries of capitalist development is the substitution of the old natural economy by the market economy. This in its turn put an end to the division of labour based on heredity. No more does the accident of birth in a particular family and caste decide one's occupation. On the other hand, one chooses one's occupation to the extent to which one is able to do so by educational and other attainments.

This change affects every caste, 'high' and 'low'. Members of 'high' castes, including Brahmins, are increasingly forced, by the circumstances of their economic life, to leave their traditional occupations and to take up jobs which are customarily associated with 'lower' and even 'scheduled' castes. At the other end of the pole, considerable numbers of the harijan and other 'low' caste people are enabled, by increasing opportunities afforded to them, to leave their traditional occupations and to take up jobs customarily fixed for Brahmins or other 'high' castes.

While the traditional division of labour and the consequent 'superior'- 'inferior' relations between the 'high' and the 'low' castes are thus being broken the various castes have not been integrated into a united single community. On the other hand, new tensions are being generated between the various castes, particularly between the major caste groups, such as high-caste Hindus, low-caste Hindus, backward classes, scheduled castes, etc .

There are several reasons for this, some of them economic, others political, still others socio-cultural.

To take the economic reasons first, it should be noted that the process of capitalist development pauperises the majority of

people belonging to every caste, not excluding the Brahmins. Those who occupied a high place in the old caste organisation of society and who, therefore, were the object of hatred nursed by the 'lower' castes have now been thrown into the ranks of the toiling poor. Some of them are of course fortunate enough to get general or higher education. But even they are forced to take up clerical or other similar jobs of low income category. Others who are less fortunate are forced to take up less skilled or unskilled occupations. In either case, they are forced to work for a wage (or salary) in order to keep themselves alive.

While this is the fact of the majority of even the 'highest' castes, a small minority of all castes, including the 'lowest', are enabled to ascend the ladder of economic power. Those who could never have dreamed of getting better-paid and socially-respected jobs in the old set-up are now able to get good jobs and rapid promotions. Some of them are also able to acquire land, or go into other economic activities like trade, industry, etc.

The reality of this differentiation taking place in all castes is, however, given a distorted picture.

It appears to the pauperised majority of the 'high' castes that the fortunate few belonging to the 'low' castes and even 'scheduled' castes are growing and prospering at their (the 'high' castes) expense. They contrast the rise of a handful of people belonging to the 'lower' and 'scheduled' castes to the impoverishment of the majority belonging to the 'high' castes. They, therefore, see in the 'low' and 'scheduled' castes the cause of their ('high' castes') own doom.

On the other hand, the majority belonging to the 'low' and 'scheduled' castes see that it is a difficult job even for a handful of them to move up the social ladder. The lot of the overwhelming majority is virtually no better than in the days when the rigid rules of the caste system were fully operative. They, therefore, come to believe that the elimination of caste

inequalities is nothing but window-dressing ; in spite of all the well-advertised campaigns in favour of a casteless society, low castes still continue to groan under indescribably miserable living and working conditions ; the change, if at all, is from the social oppression of a rigidly-organised caste system to the economic exploitation of capitalist society superimposed on the caste system.

The result is that, in the consciousness of both the 'high' as well as the 'low' castes, their births in particular castes appear to be the source of all their miseries and hardships. Both of them therefore, begin to hate the other castes to whom they trace all the evils of the age.

Against this background, new forms of political life and activity emerge. Newspapers and other media of publicity and propaganda, periodical elections, forms of agitation and organisation like mass meetings and rallies, organisation of social and political associations, etc. give relatively modern form to the old caste consciousness. Associations and organisations of castes, if not of sub-castes, are formed to agitate for 'their' (caste) grievances and demands. The fact that a leader or candidate belongs to a particular caste comes into play as an important factor in political life and influences votes. Politicians and parties use this factor for their own individual and partisan ends. They thus give political respectability to what are universally acknowledged as anti-national and disruptive trends.

To these realities of economic and political life should be added the socio-cultural background of the phenomena of caste-based tensions. The essence of this background is that the social and family life of present-day Hindu society is still dominated by caste distinctions.

The central issue of social and family relations—marriage—is even now arranged within the caste. A few intercaste marriages may have taken place. They may be increasing in number. But, taking Hindu society as a whole, intercaste and (even intersub-caste) marriages are exceptions.

Caste distinctions make themselves felt in other aspects of social life as well. Take, for instance, the behaviour of an average high caste Hindu family, particularly of its women members, to members of 'low' and 'scheduled' castes who visit their homes. The treatment meted out to them now may be liberal in comparison to a generation ago. But only in exceptional cases do they treat 'low' caste visitors on a footing of perfect equality with the members of the 'higher' castes.

Members of the 'low' castes therefore resent the lecturing done by the leaders of the 'high' castes on the necessity for ending all caste distinctions. The few privileges that the Constitution and the practice obtaining in certain States give the 'low' or 'backward' castes—such as reservation in Government services, special provision for admission in educational institutions, special fee concessions, etc.—have come under attack. The pauperised majority of the 'high' castes are equated with the mass of 'low' and 'scheduled' caste people. It is then demanded that nothing should be done to the 'low' or 'scheduled' castes which is not done to the poor sections of the 'high' castes. All this in the name of putting an end to caste distinctions and discriminations! No wonder the 'low' and 'scheduled' caste people look upon such lectures on caste equality with suspicion.

No effective struggle against casteism can therefore be waged unless a concerted drive is launched against the practice of caste inequality and discrimination in everyday social life. It is not enough to put a legal ban of the practice of untouchability, as has been rightly done in the Constitution. The spirit behind this ban should be applied in every aspect of daily social life. All Customs and conventions which treat some castes as inferior to others should be eliminated. The utmost possible encouragement should be given to intercaste dining and intercaste marriage. Casteism in political life cannot be eliminated so long as it is allowed to dominate social life.

Such an attack on caste inequality and discrimination in social life should be combined with the creation of political

guarantees that the hitherto socially-oppressed castes—what are now known as ‘backward’ and ‘scheduled’ castes—would be enabled to overcome the legacy of their centuries-old social oppression. This would obviously necessitate the continuance, for some time more, of those safeguards and special provisions through which the Constitution helps them to rise up the social ladder—reservation, special scholarships, other educational concessions, etc. These special provisions and safeguards are, of course, temporary, being calculated to meet a transitory situation. They, therefore, cannot continue indefinitely. The communities concerned should, however, be assured that they will be continued till such time as they as a Community rise up to the average level in point of education and place in Government services.

While doing this, however, the poor majority belonging to the ‘high’ castes should also be assured that every effort will be made to raise their living standards, along with the living standards of the entire people. They should, at the same time, be persuaded to join their brethren belonging to the ‘low’ and ‘scheduled’ castes in their struggle to overcome the legacies of the centuries-old social oppression arising out of caste inequality.

Elimination of caste psychology and of all the practices arising therefrom is thus the essential pre-requisite for a successful struggle against casteism.

## VI

The tribe and the non-Hindu religious community do not fit into the system of caste organisation. They do not show the two essential features which, as we saw earlier, demarcate the caste from other social systems.

Neither the tribe nor the non-Hindu religious community pursues a particular occupation. Every tribe and every religious

community has, within its ranks, those who pursue several occupations which, according to the caste system, are reserved to different castes, from the highest down to the lowest.

There is, therefore, no superior-inferior relationship within the tribal organisation nor among the non-Hindu religious communities.

The tribe and the non-Hindu religious community, however, cannot be said to be completely free from the influences exercised by the caste system. The dominant social group in ancient and mediaeval India being Hindus belonging to the highest castes, the collective mind of the majority of the Indian people reflected caste consciousness.

Even the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc. were, to some extent influenced by caste exclusiveness ; there are cases of sections within these religious communities being considered 'inferior' by their co-religionists.

Again, the Hindus considered all those who did not fit into the Hindu system of caste division as alien to the Indian social system and 'outside the pale of Indian culture'. Christians, Muslims and other non-Hindu religious communities were *Mlechhas*, while the tribes which were not fully absorbed into the Hindu caste system were barbarians. The various tribes living their own lives in the distant parts of the country as well as the non-Hindu religious communities were thus considered by the Hindus as 'inferior' to them.

Such an attitude on the part of the dominant group in the Hindu society naturally reacted on the non-Hindu religious communities and the tribes. Far from conceding the claim of Hindu superiority, the tribal people, living their own independent lives, were satisfied with themselves; they had no use for the way of life which Hindus in the plains used to live.

As for the non-Hindu religious communities, they looked upon Hindus as people who followed false gods, believed in false doctrines and observed false norms and standards of social behaviour.

Furthermore, the champions of some of these non-Hindu religious faiths came to India as conquerors ; wars were fought between them and the Hindu rulers of India. This led to acute social-political tensions. On the one hand was the fanatical faith of Muslims that they were taking the message of true God to unbelievers. On the other side was the equally fanatical determination of the Hindus to defend the Dharma from attack by foreigners. A psychology of conflict was thus generated between Hindus and non-Hindus, particularly the Muslims who happened to be numerically the largest and the most mili. group to come to India.

No such open conflicts have taken place in history between the tribes and the plainspeople. But, a development takes place in the socio-economic life of the plainspeople, they show a tendency to make greater and greater encroachments into the areas occupied by the tribal people. The self-contained independent tribal life receives shock after shock as more and more plainspeople enter the tribal areas, take possession of tribal lands and subject the tribal people to wage and price exploitation.

Furthermore, group after group of Christian missionaries have of late begun to settle themselves in such areas, converting the tribals to Christianity and thus rallying them into the ranks of the non-Hindu religious communities. The tension and conflicts developing between the Hindu and the non-Hindu religious communities thus enter the relations between the tribal a. d plainspeople also.

These conflicts between the Hindu and non-Hindu religious communities and between the tribals and the plainspeople develop side by side with similar conflicts between the high and low caste Hindus. The low caste Hindus, non-Hindu religious communities and the tribal people sometimes happen to join together in a struggle against the dominant sections of the Hindu religious community, the caste-Hindus. Agitations like those

launched by the non-Brahmin and Justice Movements, conversions of low and depressed caste Hindus to other religious groups, etc. create tensions and conflicts. They tend to obliterate the essential difference between caste on the one hand and the tribe and the religious community on the other. Casteism, communalism and tribal separatism begin to develop certain common features—hatred against the prevailing social system based on caste which, in its turn, develops into hatred for the dominant Hindu castes.

This was naturally made clever use of by the British rulers, since it gave them an effective weapon of struggle against the growing freedom movement. The caste and communal composition of the sponsors and leaders of the freedom movement—the fact that, at least in its initial stages, the movement had at its head intellectuals and professionals drawn from the caste-Hindus—came as a handy weapon in their hands. The minds of the low-caste Hindus, the non-Hindu religious communities and the tribal people could therefore be easily poisoned against the freedom movement. The non-Brahmin and Justice Movements, protest movements among the tribal people and, above all, the movement for the formation of the State of Pakistan on the basis of the two-nation theory received the blessing and support of the British rulers.

While recognising this disruptive role played by the foreign ruler in giving all sorts of encouragement to the development of caste, communal and tribal conflicts, it would however be wrong to miss the equally disruptive role played by Hindu chauvinism. For, the basic attitude of Hindu superiority over other faiths and religious communities inevitably created bitterness and hostility among the non-Hindu social groups as well as low-caste Hindus towards high-caste Hindus. This became the fertile soil on which the seeds of the caste, communal and tribal disruption was thrown by the British rulers. That is why radical and progressive elements in our social life have always held the view that Hindu communalism is as dangerous as, if not more than, other brands of communalism and that Muslim, the Sikh, the Christian and

other forms of communalism cannot be combated if Hindu communalism is not eradicated.

Unfortunately, however, Hindu communalism has grown stronger, rather than weaker, after independence. All sorts of revivalist and obscurantist ideas are being spread and movements developed on the theory that Hindu Dharma is superior to all other religious faiths. Prominent individuals associated with the administration join this chorus and appear before the people as fanatical believers in the superiority of the Hindu faith. There are also parties and organisations which do not hide their hatred for other religious groups. Some of them even demand that non-Hindus, particularly Muslims and Christians, should be considered alien and denied rights of citizenship.

These are not the crankish but innocent ideas advanced by stray individuals here and there, but deeply-held and deliberately-propagated views of well-organised groups and parties. Furthermore, parties and groups who hold and propagate such views are strong enough to secure millions of votes at the time of successive elections and are, therefore, well represented in the Central parliament and in several State Legislatures.

It would be miraculous if, under these circumstances, non-Hindu communalism does not thrive and gather strength. Add to this the fact that the basic approach of the leaders of these non-Hindu religious groups is the same as that of the leaders of the revivalist Hindu movement. The difference is only that, while the Hindus consider theirs to be the true faith and every other a false faith, the others take the completely opposite view.

Both of them, therefore, in a way support and encourage the development of each other's communalism. While the revivalist Hindu leaders appeal to the narrow fanaticism of the Hindu masses and, to this end, recall the great and glorious past of ancient Hindu society, the religious leaders of Islam, Christianity, Sikh Panth, etc. appeal to the fanaticism of their followers and rouse them for action in defence of their faith.

Leaders of the tribal people too appeal to their followers to stand united and save their independent tribal way of life.

The unity and integration of the nation, therefore, cannot be secured by mere pious appeals and exhortations. Abstract denunciation of fissiparous and disruptive forces will not help. What are required are concrete campaigns against the various form of narrow sectional approach to national problems.

One of these campaigns is the concerted attack on the system of caste as a social organisation, referred to earlier. That, however, would leave communalism and tribal separatism untouched. The fissiparous trends originating from social tensions as between the Hindu and non-Hindu religious communities, and between the plainspeople and the tribals, do not come within the purview of the struggle against the caste system.

The mass movement for the elimination of caste inequalities should therefore be combined with two other broad movements.

(a) For the strict observance of the correct principle of secularism, the principle that, 'religion should not interfere in politics, nor should the state and political parties interfere in religious matters'.

(b) Against the attack launched by the plainspeople (who are drawn from all castes and religious communities inhabiting the plains) against the economic and other interests of the tribal people. The exploitation of the tribals by the plainspeople is the fundamental background against which tribal separatism is rising.

Unfortunately, however, these principles are not adhered to by the ruling party or most of the opposition parties. The leaders of almost all political parties (including even those who pay verbal tribute to the principle of secularism) invoke the aid of religious leaders to mobilise the votes of masses belonging to all religious communities. It is not unusual for the same political party to canvas the votes of people who follow a particular faith

on the basis of appeals made by the leaders of the respective religious communities. Nor is it rare for the State itself to arrange religious ceremonies and rituals as part of public functions, such as opening of a school or hospital, laying the foundation-stone, etc.

Such acts of defiance of the principle of secularism by the ruling party and by the administration strengthen the tendency of religious institutions and their leaders to interfere in politics. On the other hand, the operation of some legislations such as the Hindu Religious Endowment Acts bring the executive and legislative wings of the state into the day-to-day functioning of religious institutions. Such a mixing up of religion and politics gives all sorts of encouragement to casteism and communalism.

Similarly, the tribal problem is not dealt with by the administration and the ruling party in the spirit of safeguarding the interests of the tribal people against exploitation of the landlord, money-lender and other vested interests from the plains. The talk of "unity and integration of the nation" is often used to deny the tribals their inherent right of freedom from exploitation by vested interests from the plains. National unity is in other words equated with the complete absorption of the tribals into the plainspeople.

The mass of the tribal people naturally do not like this kind of national unity and integration for, this means the continuation of the process through which they are being uprooted from their natural surroundings and forced to migrate to other areas in search of jobs, precisely because the "civilising mission" of the plainspeople has led to the total loss of land and other properties by the tribal people and the disruption of their centuries-old tribal life.

This is not to say that the 'splendid isolation' in which the tribal people have been living for generations can continue. On the other hand it is certain to break up. The tribal people are bound to get integrated into the common life of the Indian people. The differences between them and the plainspeople are,

therefore, bound to get further and further narrowed down. While this is not only inevitable but even desirable, the leaders of the nation are in duty bound to prevent this process from leading to the total impoverishment of the tribal people.

Strict observance of the principle of secularism in politics and effective safeguards for the tribal people against exploitation by the vested interests in the plains areas are thus the essential pre-requisites for the integration of all religious communities and tribes into one nation.

## VII

The leaders of the ruling party and several publicists include, along with casteism and communalism, what they call 'linguism' in the category of fissiparous trends. As a matter of fact, it is not unusual for some of them to call the demand for the strict application of the linguistic principle to the formation of states and for the fixation of their boundaries as one variant of communalism.

This, however, is opposed to the best democratic traditions of our freedom movement. The necessity to use the mother-tongue for all political, administrative and cultural activities has always been recognised by the leaders of the freedom movement since the days of Tilak and other leaders of the radical national movement. This was further carried forward in the Gandhian phase of the freedom movement. It was in this new phase that the Congress organisation began to transact its business at the State level through the mother-tongue ; to this end it accepted the principle of linguistic homogeneity in fixing the boundaries of provinces for the organisational work of the Congress. At the all-India level too, Hindi was recognised as one of the two languages in which work was to be done, the other being English.

Our freedom movement respected all Indian languages, not as 'vernaculars' with inferior status, as they used to be under the

British rule, but as people's languages none of which is superior or inferior to any other language. Such an approach to Indian language has thus become part of the democratic consciousness generated by the freedom movement. It is not disruptive of national unity if those who speak any Indian language desire that their own language should have a status not inferior to either English or Hindi. It is, on the other hand, disruptive of national unity for the enthusiasts and advocates of either English or Hindi to demand that either of these or both should become the national language(s), all the other languages being relegated to the position of 'regional languages'.

Recognition of our country as multi-lingual with equality of status given to all the Indian languages as national languages does not, of course, mean denial of the necessity for a common language or languages to be used for inter-provincial communication and all-India contacts. Such a language or languages are obviously essential if different linguistic groups are not to remain isolated from one another, if the Indian people are to have a common economic, political and cultural life.

Such a common language or two common languages, however, cannot take the position which English used to occupy under the British regime. It [they] cannot become the language[s] of administration, at any level other than the central ; even at the central level, those who do not know enough of the common language[s] to speak and write in it should be permitted to use their mother-tongue. Business of the administrative and political organs at the state and lower levels should necessarily be transacted in the language of the State. Education too cannot be imparted in the common all-India language[s] but in the mother-tongue. In neither of these respects should the common language[s] have the status which English had under the British Rulers.

The recognition of the multi-lingual character of India and of the need for a common all-India language, or two All-India languages does certainly raise several practical problems.

Linguistic minorities are bound to exist in every State. They cannot be expected to get their children educated in the mother-tongue of the State in which they happen to live for business or for employment. Nor can they be fluent enough in the language of the State to use it in all their business with the Government. Some arrangements for the use of minority languages or the all-India language will, therefore, have to be made to meet the requirements of these linguistic minorities.

Again, in relation to the work of the Centre, while working towards the progressive introduction of the all-India language as the vehicle of consultation and administration, the use of other Indian languages will also have to be permitted. Deliberations of Parliament and other all-India bodies for consultation will have to be arranged in the way in which it is done in several multilingual countries : simultaneous translation of every speech into languages other than the one in which it is delivered. This will enable every member who cannot follow the common all-India language[s] to follow the proceedings and participate in them. (Contrast this with the present position when no less than 20% of Members of Parliament are unable to follow proceedings because they have no knowledge of either English or Hindi).

The secretarial and other work of the Centre too will have to be so arranged that, while keeping broadly to the use of the common language[s], the use of other languages are also permitted ; this would require the setting up of adequate machinery for the translation of notes, memoranda, etc. from one language to another.

In the field of education too, practical problems of a rather difficult nature would arise. For, while it is necessary that the mother-tongue should be used as the medium of instruction even for higher education, every student will have to acquire a high standard of knowledge in the all-India language and at least in one foreign language. Every linguistic area will also have to cater to the needs of linguistic minorities in that area, as well as of those students from the linguistic majority itself who want to

take the all-India language as their medium, since they would like to go in for all-India work.

Providing for all these requirements would naturally raise difficult problems. The question, however, is : are these difficulties to be stated in order to resolve them, or as arguments with which to prevent the recognition of India as a multi-lingual country ? If the difficulties are recognised with a determination to overcome them, everyone of these problems can be resolved.

Use of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction even at the University level ; provision of facilities for linguistic minorities to get their children educated through their own mother-tongue at lower levels and through the all-India language at higher levels : use of The Common all-India language as medium of instruction even for students belonging to the linguistic majority of a state if they so desire ; progressively greater but voluntary use of the common language by the administrative organs of the Centre even while use of all other languages is permitted and arranged for ; setting up the machinery for the simultaneous translation of all speeches delivered in Parliament—all these can be arranged if only the political leaders of the country recognise the multi-lingual character of the country with equality of status for all-Indian languages, even while using one of them as the all-India language. The real question is : do they recognise India to be a multi-lingual country and the need to assure to every linguistic group that theirs is not an 'inferior' language but has equality of status with other languages ?

In answering this question, however, the protagonists of Hindi agree with the protagonists of English. Neither of them would give the other Indian languages that equality of status which the freedom movement has always recognised. Both of them would consider these languages as 'regional languages' in more or less the same way as the British rulers used to speak of 'vernaculars'; while they can be used for 'local purposes', the 'business of the nation' should be transacted in one single

‘national’ language. The difference between them is : which—English or Hindi—should be this ‘national’ language ‘superior’ to ‘regional languages’?

This controversy would lose all meaning once the equality of status between all the Indian languages is recognised. For, opposition to the use of English or Hindi both for purposes of all-India communication will then cease to have the implications of deep national passions which it now has ; it will become purely a matter of greater convenience to larger sections of the people.

Looked at from this point of view, the non-Hindi people will voluntarily come to agree that, Hindi being the language spoken by the largest section of the population in the country, it has to be accepted as the common language for all-India communication and contact. People of the Hindi-speaking areas, on the other hand, would recognise the use of continuing English also as an additional language for all-India purposes ; not only is it one of the commonly-used international languages which therefore will be useful for the study of scientific and technological subjects ; it is also the language in which the present generation of the intelligentsia all over the country is equally proficient. They would, therefore, waive their objection to allowing English to be used as an additional all-India language till the present national passions on the question of language die down. Both the Hindi and English enthusiasts will therefore come to agree that the natural evolution of the country’s cultural-political life is towards Hindi being the common all-India language while English also will be allowed to continue for several years.

Such a common-sense solution of the language problem is what is demanded by the reality of the national situation. This, however, is denounced by the so-called champions of national integration as ‘linguism’ which is equated with communalism. The justifiable aspirations of all linguistic groups for development of their respective languages and for equality of status for them are condemned.

It is on the basis of such an open denial of the right of various linguistic groups in the country to be equal to the rest, on the theory that there is one 'national' language with several 'regional' languages, that they consider the formation of linguistic states to have been 'a mistake'. It is on this basis again that they oppose the rational solution of the problem of inter-state boundaries on the twin principles of homogeneity and village as the unit.

Such an attitude of opposing the application of democratic principles to the problem of language will hinder, rather than help, national integration.

## VIII

The last of the fissiparous trends which deserve consideration is 'regionalism' with its variant, 'provincialism'. It makes people of a particular region of the country, or a province, look upon the particular local interests of the country as a whole.

'Regionalism' as a tendency is quite natural under the social set-up of ancient and mediaeval times. For, human society was then not organised in larger nation-states but in village communities or at best petty principalities. It is only in modern times, when a common market is created that the various principalities and village communities are brought together and modern states of larger size formed.

The establishment of British rule created in India the basic pre-requisite for the formation of such a larger state—the establishment of relations of the common market. Thus was formed the united Indian state with centralised economic institutions and Central administration. But the development—economic, educational, administrative, etc.—which took place under the British regime was uneven.

Certain provinces and regions threw up considerable numbers of educated middle classes and professionals, while others supplied the major part of the manpower for the British army.

Some of the major cities became the centres of whatever trading and industrial activities were carried on by the British capitalists. They, therefore, gave rise to a class of Indian traders and small industrialists. The rest of the country remained virtually unaffected by such economic developments.

The major part of the country was under direct British rule (the so-called 'British provinces'), while the rest was under the Indian princes (the so-called 'Indian States') who ruled over their states under the British 'paramount power'.

These differences in the economic and political set-up of the various parts of the country gave a particular political complexion to every particular province and state. It, therefore, developed what may be called the provincial, State or regional outlook to the people of the respective regions.

The basis for putting an end to these diversities and thus unifying the nation was laid in the post-independence years. What remained of pre-independence India after the formation of Pakistan was constituted into a centralised state with a single Republican Constitution. All the former British provinces and Indian States were integrated and merged into it. This process was completed with the States Reorganisation Act of 1956 when all the Part B and C States (formed out of the former princely states) were abolished and homogeneous states were formed more or less on the linguistic principle.

An economic basis was laid for this political unification when a common plan of economic development was formulated. A series of Five-Year Plans and a Perspective Plan for long-term development came to be evolved and executed. Industrialisation, modernisation of agriculture, technological and scientific development—all these were to be carried out in the entire country.

In the actual execution of these development plans, however, provincial, regional and other discrepancies began to creep in.

Take, for instance, the progress of industrialisation, the key element in economic development. This is virtually concentrated in a few States and regions, rather than evenly dispersed throughout the country. Figures relating to issue of new capital show that companies which account for 70 to 80% of new investments are registered in four major centres—Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Facts relating to the physical location of the most important projects of industry, transport and hydro-electric development also show that development in every one of these respects is virtually concentrated in a few States ; within these very states, they are concentrated in a few regions or districts.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the people belonging to those states and which do not get an adequate share in the fruit of development get dissatisfied. Conflicts develop between peoples and even Governments of the various States, and within States between the various districts or larger regions, on questions of location of projects, distribution of waters, etc. The formulation of every Five-Year Plan becomes the occasion when the people of each State, and different districts or regions in the States themselves, fight for what they consider their legitimate share of development.

No useful purpose will be served by denying these realities of the situation. for, it is these disparities in development that give rise to passions leading to provincial and regional disputes. On the other hand, only by taking note of them and taking necessary steps to remove the disparities can provincialism and regionalism be made to disappear from the public life of the nation.

This is, of course, accepted in principle by the planning authorities who include the 'removal of regional disparities' among the objectives of planned development. The fact, however, remains that it is not applied in practice. The majority

of undeveloped States and regions continue to remain relatively undeveloped. The universal complaint voiced against the working of Five-year Plans that the rich are becoming richer applies as much to the States and regions as to individuals, economic strata and classes. The bulk of development still goes to those States and regions which were fortunate enough to be in the forefront even in pre-independence years.

While this is the material background against which it has developed and is developing, rarely does regionalism express itself as a single factor. It operates most often along with certain other forces.

Regionalism joined hands with the linguistic factor and gave rise to the movement for linguistic State. Out of this movement arose regional-linguistic passions. Questions of inter-state boundaries, allocation of river waters and location of projects roused the passion of regional-linguistic groups and developed into militant demands leading to bitterness and conflict.

The anti-Hindi movement and the demand for Dravidanad also arose out of this combination of regional and linguistic factors. It should however be stated that the idea of a separate Southern State composed of regions inhabited by four linguistic groups is a negation of the linguistic principle. In the matter of regional development too, the state of Madras is one of the developed states. Dravidanad is thus a slogan which distorts, rather than gives expression to, the regional and linguistic discontent.

In another part of the country, in the North-East, regionalism allied itself with the tribal factor and gave rise to the movement for the independent Nagaland. It has been partially conceded by the Central Government through the formation of such a state within the Indian Republic.

Again, regionalism allied itself with the religious community and gave birth to the movement for the separation of pre-independence India into two (Hindu and Muslim majority)

states. In the post-independence years, it led to the slogan of the Sikh homeland.

It should also be noted that regionalism does on occasions express itself not in combination with other factors but all by itself. For instance, regional rivalries between the Circar and Rayalaseema districts of Andhra Pradesh, the Travancore-Cochin and Malabar areas in Kerala, Vidarbha-Marathwada and the rest of Maharashtra, etc. have no connection of any kind with the tribal, communal or linguistic factors. Regional rivalries in such cases should indisputably be traced to the uneven development of the respective regions.

Even such purely regional rivalries rouse passions and lead to outbursts which have disastrous consequences. All the more serious therefore is regionalism when it is allied to some other factor, such as the linguistic group, the tribe and the religious community.

## IX

The foregoing discussion of the various socio-economic and cultural factors which lead to the emergence of fissiparous trends makes it clear that the unity and integration of the nation cannot be brought about by just denouncing certain political parties or organisations, or by making pious declarations regarding the need for integration.

The fact has, on the other hand, to be recognised that, India being in the process of transition from mediaeval to modern society, her social set-up, economy, cultural background and politics are undergoing unprecedentedly profound changes. This process of thorough change gives rise to innumerable problems, creates acute social tensions and leads to political disturbances and clashes. The forces working behind these disturbances, conflicts and tensions have to be understood in order that they may be brought under control.

We may, in this context, quote the leading sociologist of India, Prof. M. N. Srinivas of the Delhi School of Economics who makes the following assessment of what he himself calls "the Nature of the Problem of Indian Unity" :

"National self-consciousness does not come in a vacuum. It comes all along the structural points. Religion, sect, caste, language, region, town and village, all develop self-consciousness. Many, if not most, of these loyalties are more immediate than loyalty to a vast and heterogeneous entity like India. It will take some years before a proper hierarchy of loyalties is established and immediate loyalties not given priority over loyalty to India."

He makes particular mention of 'regionalism' which he points out, "can provide a powerful impetus to regional development...It means that they (the people of a region) no longer consider their collective poverty to be inevitable but as something which can be put an end to by their own effort and governmental aid. As far as the bulk of the people in our rural areas are concerned, this signifies a revolution in outlook. It also means that they identify themselves with a geographical area which is bigger than a village or *tehsil* and that they recognise a different type of allegiance from caste, or religion,...Once it is realised that 'regionalism' can become an important ally of development there will not be any hesitation to take account of regional considerations in planning. A real danger in this approach, however, is that the benefits tend to be spread so thinly that it will make extremely difficult a leap forward in the economy. But then democratic planning is beset with difficulties." (Introduction to "Caste in Modern India" pp. 13-14)

Agreeing with the above broad approach, we may now sum up our own discussion of the problem by repeating that the different forces which are said to be thwarting the process of national integration should be tackled in different ways.

Casteism should be so dealt with that, while for the period of

transition the former oppressed castes get sufficient opportunities for development, the main aim should be to destroy caste as an institution and its various manifestations.

The religious community, on the other hand, is a force which will continue to act on the minds of men at least for the foreseeable future. Nobody can, therefore, set before himself or herself the objective of destroying the religious community as an institution. In this sense, the solution for the problem of communalism is different from that of casteism. At the same time, the religious community cannot be permitted to step beyond its own field of activity (ministering to the spiritual requirements of man) and enter the field of operation of the state, political parties and other secular institutions.

As for the tribal factor, the major task of national integration consists in resistance to encroachments into tribal life by the forces of exploitation from the plains ; to this should, of course, be added the task of helping the tribal people to bring about a transition from mediaeval to modern conditions of life.

Coming to the linguistic factor, the solution lies in (a) the simultaneous fostering of all the Indian languages, (b) voluntary acceptance by all linguistic groups of Hindi as the ultimate common language for all-India communication and contact and (c) common agreement that, for such period of transition as can be commonly agreed to by all the linguistic groups, English will also continue to be used along with Hindi.

Finally, provincialism and regionalism cannot be tackled through any other means than of conscious removal of the provincial and regional disparities.

What is common to all these solutions is the recognition of the good old principle of 'unity in diversity'. Failure to recognise this is the source of all troubles connected with the process of national integration.

# **National Integration And The Communist Party**

## **I. Historical Presentation of The Problem**

1. The emergence of communal and regional separatism as a political force is not new. It is as old as 1952 when the first general election took place. Innumerable political parties based either on communalism or regionalism participated in the election. Some of them did get fairly good representation in the legislatures. But the majority which the Congress secured in the Central Parliament and in most of the State legislatures gave its leaders confidence that they could successfully meet the challenge posed by these parties. Subsequent to the election, the Congress leaders thought that the new orientation that they were giving to their policies—friendship and co-operation with the Socialist powers on a world-scale ; adoption of the Socialist pattern, and subsequently Socialism, as the goal of the nation ; the new perspective regarding planned economy, agrarian reform, etc.—would secure them such solid support from the people that a crushing blow could be dealt to communalism and regionalism.

2. Subsequent developments showed how misplaced was their optimism in this regard. Parties based on communal and regional separatism grew stronger, rather than weaker. They were able to cash in on the growing discontent of the people against Congress policies to a far greater extent than the Parties of Left Democratic Opposition. And by 1959, they had grown so serious that the then President of the AICC, Smt. Indira Gandhi, called a representative meeting of Congress workers to discuss the problem. That Conference decided to appoint a Committee to consider the whole question of what has since come to be known as National Integration. This decision, however, was not implemented. In the meanwhile, the language disturbances in Assam took place and showed the explosive character of the situation.

3. It was against this background that the Bhavanagar session of the Congress, held in January 1961, adopted a resolution on National Integration. That resolution stated : “democracy, with its wide-spread system of elections, which is vitally important and which is the very basis of our Constitution, has also resulted in some ways in encouraging certain disintegrating forces. Under cover of political and social activities, the old evils of communalism, casteism, provincialism and linguism have appeared again in some measure. Communalism which has in the past done so much injury to the nation is again coming into evidence and taking advantage of the democratic apparatus to undermine this unity to encourage reactionary tendencies. Provincialism and linguism have also injured the cause for which the Congress stands. Caste, although losing its basic force, is beginning to function in a new political garb. If these tendencies are allowed to flourish, then India’s progress will be gravely retarded and even freedom will be imperilled. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that every effort should be made to remove these evils and always to keep in view the unity and integrity of the nations. Adequate progress can only be based on a national scale, embracing all communities and states.”

4. The adoption of the above resolution was followed by the appointment of the Committee envisaged earlier. Headed by Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Committee held two sittings at the end of which it submitted a report to the AICC. The report is divided into four parts. The first part deals with “National Outlook in the Fields of Education and other Spheres” and makes 10 recommendations. The second is in relation to “Promotion of opportunities for Minorities in the Economic Field” and makes 8 recommendations. The third part is on “Maintenance of Security of personnel and property” with 9 recommendations. The last part explains “Role of the Congress Organisation” and has 9 recommendations.

5. In the meanwhile, the seriousness of the threat which communalism constitutes to national life was further underlined

by the riots which took place in Jabbalpur, Saugar and other places in Madhya Pradesh. The meetings of the Indira Gandhi Committee were themselves held under the shadow of these riots. This naturally influenced the deliberations of the Committee. It is doubtful if the Committee would have considered the questions dealt with in the second part of its report had it not been for the fact that these communal riots did break out. It may be further noted that, as it is, the report did not deal with what are known as 'Linguism', 'Provincialism' and 'Regionalism'.

6. The communal riots caused concern to progressive elements outside the Congress too. Our Party expressed its concern through the report and resolution adopted at the Vijayawada Congress. The resolution stated : "Fissiparous and separatist tendencies based on caste, community, province and region have grown apace in recent years. They threaten one of the most precious heritages of our freedom movement—the unity of the nation. The patriotic elements belonging to all parties are deeply depressed by these phenomena."

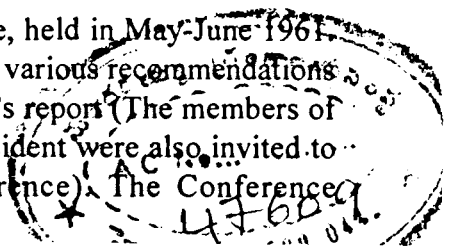
This was further expressed in the letter which Comrade Ajoy Ghosh wrote to Pandit Nehru on May 18, 1961, in which he said : "In the light of what happened in Jabbalpur and other places, it is evident that the Congress, by relying on its own influence alone, cannot wage an effective battle against communalism. Not merely is the influence of the Congress today considerably less than it was in the days of struggle for national freedom but also it is a well-known fact that many Congressmen themselves have come to imbibe communal ideas. At the same time, large numbers of Congressmen are definitely non-communal. There are non-communal and secular-minded men and women in other parties also and many of those who belong to no party. In this situation and taking into account the seriousness of the menace, we feel that an appeal should be issued by you and by the Congress Working Committee to ask Congressmen in all parts of the country to join hands with other

non-communal forces to wage a concerted struggle against communalism. Also we feel that it is high time that a Conference is convened of all the major secular parties and elements in the country to discuss the communal problem in all its aspects and evolve ways and means to eradicate it.”

7. The National Integration Conference held from 28th September to the 1st of October, 1961 was not of the type suggested by Comrade Ghosh in the above letter. What had been suggested by him was a Conference of secular parties. Actually, however, the conference included the representatives of some communal parties. The National Integration Council formed after the Conference also included the leader of the Jan Sangh. By the time the first meeting of the Council was to be held, another member was added to it—the representative of the Hindu Mahasabha. While thus including representatives of Hindu communalism, the Conference and the Council did not include representatives of the Muslim League, the Akalis, DMK, etc. This naturally led to legitimate criticism of the composition of the Conference, as well of the Council formed after the Conference. Our Party, however, did not consider this to be strong enough ground to refrain from participating in their work. Comrade Ajoy Ghosh and Dr. Ahmed participated in the Conference, while Comrade E. M. S. has been functioning in the National Integration Council and in the Sub-committee appointed by the Council. Comrade Hiren Mukherjee functioned in the Emotional Integration Committee headed by Dr. Sampurnanand.

8. In the meanwhile, the question of national integration has been dealt with by certain other bodies as well. These are :

(a) the Chief Ministers' Conference, held in May-June 1961. The Conference discussed in detail the various recommendations made in the Indira Gandhi Committee's report. (The members of that Committee and the Congress President were also invited to attend the Chief Ministers' Conference). The Conference



considered most of the recommendations made in part I, II and III of the Report (leaving out the last part which is concerned exclusively with the role of the Congress as an organisation). Having come to some conclusions on each of these recommendations, another Conference of the Chief Ministers was held on August 10th, 11th and 12th, 1961. The Conference had as the main subject for its discussion the question of language in its various aspects.

(b) the Emotional Integration Council with Dr. Sampurnanand as its Chairman and Comrade Hiren Mukherjee as one of its members. The Committee submitted a preliminary report on November 17, 1961. The Committee also submitted its final report in September this year. Comrade Hiren Mukherjee, as a member of the Committee, submitted a sort of supplementary note.

(c) the Committee on "Religious and Moral Instruction", appointed by the Ministry of Education with Shri Prakash as its Chairman, which submitted its report on December 21, 1959.

9. the above-mentioned bodies went into the question of national integration whether under direct governmental auspices, or under the auspices of the ruling party. The question has also been discussed by various non-official bodies, through Seminars, Conferences, etc. It is not possible to keep track of them all, or to bring together the various suggestions and recommendations made by them. Nor is it necessary, since a study of the above report will be sufficient to show the way in which official thinking goes on regarding the basic issues involved.

## **II. Fundamental Approach of Marxism to the Question**

10. A study of this voluminous material does not help us to understand the fundamental reason why such a threat to national integration should make its appearance now. The various

specific recommendations made in them, therefore, do not help to solve the most important problems connected with national integration. The fundamental problem was put as follows by Comrade Ajoy Ghosh in the speech he delivered at the National Integration Conference, held in September-October, 1961 :

“At the very outset we feel it necessary to emphasise certain contradictory aspects of the present situation. India is today administratively more united than ever in its history. Economic planning is carried out by a central body. Above all, state power is no longer exercised as was the case in the past by the British who were interested in keeping up and accentuating conflicts inside the country. All these are factors favourable for the consolidation of the unity of the country and of the nation. Yet, as would be denied by none, fissiparous and disruptive tendencies have grown alarmingly in recent years. They threaten one of the most precious heritages of our freedom movement—the unity of the nation. Why has this happened ? How has this happened ?”

Any study of the national integration, which does not try to find a correct answer to these questions will not help us. The analysis made and the series of solutions contained in such studies are bound to be superficial. This happens to be the case which all the recommendations made by the various official or Congress bodies mentioned above.

11. It should be recognised that our own Party is not free from the superficiality of approach mentioned above. While the Vijayawada resolution of the party Congress and the speech delivered by Comrade Ghosh at that Congress explain the political background against which these fissiparous and disruptive tendencies are emerging and growing stronger, our Party is yet to make a proper Marxist analysis of the growth of disintegrating forces in our national-political life. While the above-quoted passage from Comrade Ghosh’s speech at the National Integration Conference indicated an awareness of the

need for a sufficiently deep study of the phenomenon, no such study has actually been made. The result, therefore, is that the party is not able to take a unified stand on the problem of national integration in general, and its various aspects like Communalism, Casteism, Linguism, Regionalism and Separatism in particular. On every one of these questions, conflicting trends in theory and practice—revisionism in theory and right opportunism in practice, as well as dogmatism in theory and sectarianism in practice—have made their appearance and are preventing the Party from coming to correct conclusions. The enemies of the Party are naturally trying to take advantage of this situation in order to accentuate differences and to create a split in the Party.

12. It is, therefore, necessary for the Party to steer clear of these incorrect trends. It should take its firm stand on the solid ground of Marxism-Leninism on the question of national unity. None of these fissiparous and disruptive forces that are making their appearance now in our political life can be understood if we do not understand fundamental proposition of Marxism which Lenin summed up in “on the Right of Nations to Self-Determination”. He said :

“National movements did not first arise in Russia, nor are they peculiar to Russia alone. Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. The economic basis of these movements is that in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically united territories with a population speaking the same language, while all obstacles to the development of this language and to its consolidation in literature are removed. Language is the most important means of human intercourse ; unity of language and unimpeded development are the most important conditions of a genuinely free and extensive commercial turn-over corresponding to modern capitalism, of a free and broad grouping of the population in all their separate classes ; finally, they are a

condition for the close connection between the market and each and every proprietor and petty-proprietor, seller and buyer. The formation of national states, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied, is therefore the tendency of every national movement. The deepest economic factors urge towards this goal, and for the whole of Western Europe, nay for the entire civilized world, the *typical*, normal state for the capitalist period is, therefore, the national state.”

13. This fundamental Marxist-Leninist approach to the phenomenon of development of nations and national movements should never be lost sight of by our Party when it deals with the question of national integration in our own country. Particular mention should be made of this now, when the bourgeoisie in our country is equating ‘linguism’ with casteism and communalism as ‘fissiparous trends’, and on that ground, even suggesting that the formation of linguistic states was a mistake. Any surrender to this bourgeois stand would be a departure from Marxism-Leninism.

14. Equally incorrect would it be to make a mechanical comparison of the conditions in Russia with those in India and to apply to India the principle of self-determination for all nationalities, including the right to separate. Lenin himself had warned against such mechanical application of the principle of self-determination of nationalities to all countries regardless of differences among them.

Polemising against Rosa Luxemburgh who argued that, since this principle is not included in the Programmes of West European Social Democratic Parties, it is wrong to put it in the Russian Party’s Programme, Lenin says : “A comparison of the political and economic development of various countries as well as of the Marxian Programme is of enormous importance from the standpoint of Marxism, for, no doubt exists as to the general nature of modern states and the general law of their development. But such a comparison must be drawn in a sensible way. The elementary condition required for this is the

elucidation of the question whether the historical epochs of the development of the countries contrasted are at all comparable.”

Regarding the national question itself, he says that Rosa Luxemburgh “has lost sight of the most important thing, i.e., the differences between countries where the bourgeois democratic reformation has long been completed and those where it has not yet been completed. This difference is the crux of the matter. The complete disregard of this differences transforms Rosa Luxemburgh’s exceedingly long article into a collection of empty, meaningless generalisations.”

Lenin goes on to refer to the comparison between Austria and Russia made by Rosa Luxemburgh, and says that under the circumstances in which the bourgeois democratic revolution was started and completed in Austria, it was perfectly natural for the Germans, Hungarians and Slavs in that country to gravitate “not towards separation from Austria, but on the contrary, towards the preservation of the integrity of Austria precisely in order to preserve national independence, which could have been completely crushed by more rapacious and powerful neighbours. Owing to this peculiar position, Austria assumed the form of a double centre (dual) state, and is not being transformed into a three centre (triune) state (Germans, Hungarians and Slavs).”

He then adds : “The peculiar conditions of Russia in regard to the national question are just the reverse of those we have in Austria. Russia is a state with a single national centre—the Great Russian. The Great Russians occupy a gigantic uninterrupted stretch of territory and number about 70 million.”

Analysing in detail the stand taken by Marx and Engels on the national question in relation to Poland and Ireland, Lenin says : “The conclusion that follows from all these critical remarks of Marx is clear : the working class should be the last to make a fetish of the national question, since the development of capitalism does not necessarily awaken *all* nations to independent life. But to brush aside mass national movements once they have started and to refuse to support what is

progressive in them means, in effect, pandering to *nationalistic* prejudices, that is recognising 'one's own as the model nation' (or we will add on our part, as the nation possessing the exclusive privilege of forming a state)."

15. Running like a red thread throughout Lenin's writing on the principle of self-determination for non-Russian nationalities, including the right of separation, is recognition of the basic fact that the then Czarist empire was a state of Great Russian domination. "The peculiarity of this national state (Russian)", he says, "is, in the first place, that 'alien races' (which, on the whole, form the majority of the entire population—57 per cent) inhabit precisely the border lands ; secondly, that the oppression of these 'alien races' is much worse than in the neighbouring states (and not in the European States alone) ; thirdly, that in a number of cases the oppressed nationalities inhabiting the border lands have compatriots across the border who enjoy greater national independence (suffice it to recall the Finns, the Swedes, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Rumanians along the Western and Southern frontiers of the State) ; fourthly, the development of capitalism and the general level of culture are not infrequently higher in the border lands inhabited by 'alien races' than in the centre of the state. Finally, it is precisely in the neighbouring Asiatic states that we observe incipient bourgeois revolutions and national movements, which partly affect kindred nationalities within the borders of Russia."

To which he adds : "It is precisely the concrete historical peculiarities of the national question in Russia that caused the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination in the present epoch to become a matter of special urgency in this regard."

16. It will be idle to argue that these specific features which existed in Russia then exist in India today. The very manner in which capitalism developed in our country and generated the national movement is basically different from that of Russia. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse the specific features of the

development of capitalism and of the national movement in our country in order that we may be able to apply the general principles of Marxism-Leninism to our own conditions. But, before doing this, it is necessary for us to be clear in our minds that our approach to this question as to all other questions is opposed to the approach of the bourgeoisie.

National integration in general, and its various aspects like casteism, communalism, linguism and regionalism are not abstractions, as the bourgeoisie would have us believe when it speaks of these "fissiparous trends" in contraposition to "nationalism" in general. All these aspects of national integration, as well as the fact that problems of national integration have assumed importance at the present time, are the result of historical development. The working of this social, economic, political and cultural forces that led to the emergence of these separate problems, as well as the fact that the question of integration versus disintegration has come to the forefront now, have to be studied from a historical point of view. Furthermore, the study should be made not academically, but in a concrete way in relation to the class interests of the oppressed masses.

When such an approach is made, it will inevitably come into conflict with the approach of the bourgeoisie. There is, therefore, no question of our Party evolving a common programme of struggle against fissiparous trends and for national integration with the bourgeoisie, although, on several specific issues of struggle against fissiparous trends, we can and should have a common stand with it. In other words, our party should carry on a continuous, systematic struggle against the bourgeois approach to national integration, even while joining hands with it on issues in order to isolate and defeat the more disruptive forces.

### **III. India's Specific Conditions Analysed**

16. The essential difference between Czarist Russia, in relation to which Lenin worked out his principle of self-

determination for nationalities, and India is that capitalism became the dominant social system in our country not under the native bourgeoisie, but under foreign capital. The efforts to break the internal barriers for the exchange of commodities and thus to create a unified home market were successfully made in our country by the British rulers. Hence the domination of the bourgeoisie of the numerically largest nation within the country (which was the specific feature of the Czarist empire, where the Great Russian nationality which was not only numerically the largest but politically dominant in the country) is absent in India.

As a matter of fact, Indian capital developed in such a way that the territories occupied by that linguistic group which is numerically the largest—the Hindi-speaking people is economically less advanced than certain other territories. It is Bombay and Calcutta and not the cities of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan that became the base of such industrialisation as took place in the country during the British rule. In relation to other indices of capitalist development, such as the growth of a professional middle class, the Hindi-speaking region was behind Bengal, South India and Bombay. Finally, the Hindi-speaking region itself was not unified enough to become a dominant national group in the political, not to speak of the economic, life of the country.

Coming to language, literature and culture too, there was no question of the Hindi-speaking region dominating over the rest of the country in the days of the British rule. The question then was one of absolute equality of all Indian languages including Hindi, in that they all were equally suffering because of the domination of English. It was not till the 1920's that it became permissible among the educated middle classes all over the country to use the mother-tongue as the medium of communication.

17. Naturally, under these circumstances, the target of attack from all the democratic forces including the Marxists in India was the domination of the British ruling classes, as opposed to

the Great Russian in Czarist Russia. It was in this struggle against these foreign rulers that our national movement took shape, national unity forged.

It should, however, be noted that, as soon as the anti-imperialist movement penetrated to the mass of our people, there emerged a strong mass movement not only for the development of all Indian languages, but for the formation of linguistic states. The first big mass national movement in which the peasantry was drawn into the movement on a big scale—that of the non-co-operation and Khilafat movement—also had the idea of linguistic states inscribed on its banner.

It should be further noted that, as early as the Lucknow Congress which worked out the well known Congress-League Pact, it came to be accepted in the national movement that the Constitution of independent India should be Federal and not Unitary. At every phase in the history of discussions on the future set-up of the free Indian state, everybody had to agree to its federal basis. This principle has become such an integral part of the political consciousness of the people that, at the time of the framing of the Constitution after the attainment of independence, even those who were in their heart of hearts advocates of the unitary principle had to agree to the federal basis of the Constitution.

18. The acceptance by the entire anti-imperialist movement in the pre-independence period of these two principles, the federal basis of the Constitution and the formation of the linguistic states shows that, despite the above-mentioned differences between Czarist Russia and pre-independence India, the crucial principle laid down by Lenin regarding the formation of national states as an integral part of capitalist development, as well as the connection which he traces between language and national development, are applicable to our country also.

It is, however, these two crucial factors that are sought to be ignored by our bourgeoisie, when, in the name of national integration, they harp upon the theme of a strong centre which,

in practice, renounces the federal basis of our Constitution and carry out a persistent campaign against what they call the 'mistake' of having formed the linguistic states.

In our Party also it is natural that a trend should appear which ignores the historical significance of these two factors. This does in practice lead to trailing behind the bourgeoisie in its way of "fighting separatism".

19. While drawing attention to these specific features of the development of capitalism and national movement in our country, it is at the same time necessary for us to note that, despite their existence, the general tendency of our national movement was against the separation of the various linguistic groups inhabiting the country. The tendency of our national movement was for the utmost possible *unity* of the entire country *consistent with* the need for allowing all the linguistic and cultural groups to develop their languages and cultures as well as making *the states* (formed on the basis of language) *autonomous within the field of activities allotted to them. The unity of the country is not to be counterposed to, but integrated with, the widest possible autonomy for the states formed on linguistic basis.* It is this that is denied by the separatist elements like DMK whose ideology finds reflected in our ranks too.

20. The economic basis for the particular form of political consciousness of the anti-imperialist movement which is opposed to separatism lies in the fact that, created as it was by the British rulers, the home market in the country was one and indivisible. It was in the interests of the bourgeoisie in the entire country to have the unity and integrity of this all-India market preserved. Those bourgeois groups which were already developing under the British were not basing themselves on any particular territory inhabited by a single linguistic group. Everyone of them was interested in extending their activities to territories inhabited by other linguistic groups. As a matter of fact, the most developed among them—the Gujaratis and the marvadis—had connection as traders and industrialists with the

territories inhabited by almost all linguistic groups. A common India citizenship, as different from separate citizenships for each linguistic group, is, therefore, conducive to the development of the bourgeoisie as a whole : the right of every individual citizen of India to hold property, carry on trade, start industry and take up jobs in any part of the country is necessary for that “free and extensive commercial turnover corresponding to modern capitalism” in the interests of which, according to Lenin, development of language and the formation of national states are necessary.

21. At the same time, language being the most important means of human intercourse, its development is an unavoidable necessity if capitalism has to develop all over the country. The development of such democratic institutions as are necessary for genuine capitalist development is impossible if we continue to use a foreign language as the medium for education and for official work. Such a transition from English to the mother-tongue as medium of instruction and official work can be brought about only if the states are formed on linguistic basis.

It should also be noted that, while the bourgeoisie as a whole is interested in keeping the unity and integrity of the Indian market as a whole, there are undoubtedly developing elements in the various territories and regions of the country who are not strong enough to compete with the strongest and most dominant among the Indian bourgeoisie. A fully unitary Indian state, it is feared, would be so much in the hands of the dominant sections that these growing elements would be thwarted by them.

22. It was inevitable, under these circumstances, that the aspiration for a united country should take the form of the well-known principle of unity in diversity—the federal principle of the Constitution and the linguistic basis for the formation of States.

#### **IV. Post-Independence Developments**

23. The position, however, did not remain like this in the

post-independence years. The urge for united India began to get weakened and ideas of separatism grew. This was, of course, most serious in Madras, where the DK and DMK championed the cause of a separate Dravidanad and came on the political scene as serious forces as early as during the first general election. The same trend, however, appeared in different forms in other states as well. Particularly was this true of those areas which were predominantly inhabited by the tribal people, such as Jharkhand, Assam, etc. But, even in areas where it did not take the extreme form of separatism, tendencies towards regionalism made their appearance and grew strong.

24. This new phenomenon should be traced to the manner in which development of capitalism proceeded in the post-independence years and affected the economy and politics of the country. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse the major economic and political developments that took place during the last 15 years.

25. The first important development to be noted in this connection is that, for the first time in the history of the country, India became politically and administratively united. A centralised administration came into existence and all the petty principalities and 'Indian states' were integrated into it. Those economic factors which, even under the British, tended to unite the country were now supplemented by certain factors which made themselves, felt in the political and administrative fields.

26. This, however, was done by the bourgeoisie which was by no means single and indivisible. It was composed of various groups, each of which had its own special interests and had, therefore, mutual conflicts among them. Furthermore, the conflicts inside the bourgeoisie were ever-growing ; new sections were entering its ranks, while those that were already in existence grew in size. All this naturally led to competition between one group and another. Each of them, therefore, naturally tried to use the political and administrative machinery that had come into existence during this period in order to serve

its own specific interests and, therefore, against its rivals. The realities of economic life, therefore, generated the forces of conflict in a situation in which politics and administration were being increasingly integrated.

27. To these conflicts within the capitalist class as a whole should be added the fact that whatever economic development is taking place is extremely uneven. It is true that the formerly backward states and regions have started developing. It is, however, equally indisputable that the lag between some of these formerly backward regions and the more advanced regions is widening, rather than being bridged. There are whole states in the country, and within each state there are particular regions, whose development is below the average for the country as a whole and for the particular state respectively. This naturally leads to discontent in the states and regions which remain relatively backward. It is, therefore, inevitable that the whole people in such states and regions rally behind the bourgeoisie of these states and regions in demanding that the centre takes effective measures to overcome their backwardness.

28. It is inevitable that, led as they are by the bourgeoisie, such people's movements against the policy of the centre take undesirable and unjustified forms; they are bound to make unreasonable demands on the Central Government and to take a generally chauvinistic attitude, so long as the bourgeoisie is at their head. If this is what is meant by the usual denunciation of provincialism and regionalism, then that denunciation is justified. It, however, remains true that in most cases of provincialism and regionalism, the reason for the discontent is strong—the state or region concerned is, undoubtedly, being denied the legitimate share of the nation's overall development.

29. Developments in the political and cultural fields too tended to generate the forces of disunity, rather than of unity. No more is English foisted on the people by alien rulers; our own people are perfectly at liberty to throw it out in favour of their own languages. An end has, therefore, been put to the situation

in which all the languages in the country were equally being suppressed and the foreign language dominated the political, administrative and cultural life of the country. Being the language spoken by the largest number of people and, therefore, known in pre-independence years as national language. Hindi has come to be accepted as the language of Central administration and all-India communication. Hindi is eventually to replace English as the official language of the country and as medium of instruction at least in higher educational institutions.

This has led to two types of conflicts : (i) the conflict between those who are conservative enough to resist the very idea of change-over from English and who therefore demand that English continue to be used for an indefinite time, and those who want a rapid transition from English to Indian languages ; (ii) the conflict among those who are united on the need for replacing English but who differ on which should replace it as the all-India language. Some want Hindi to take its place, while others want to treat all Indian languages alike. The latter, however, is an impossibility since one language has to be used for all-India purposes and this has necessarily to be Hindi. The non-Hindi-speaking linguistic groups therefore contain a much bigger proportion of those who champion the continuance of English indefinitely.

30. This led to acute controversy on the language issue which was reached at the time when the Constitution was being framed and which continues even now. Passions are roused in all parts of the country—that in favour of Hindi in Hindi-speaking regions and ‘against Hindi imperialism’ in the non-Hindi-speaking regions. It is an index of the depth of feeling on this issue that those who are seeking a compromise on this issue have no other alternative than to suggest that English, together with Hindi, should continue to be an associate language and the link between various Universities until such time as the non-Hindi-speaking groups voluntarily agree to accept Hindi as the sole official language of the Centre and the link between various Universities.

31. The conflict, however, is not confined to Hindi *versus* non-Hindi languages. It extends itself to the relations between different non-Hindi languages, as shown in the Assamese-Bengali controversy in Assam in 1960.

32. Together with such a growth of 'linguism' should be noted another phenomenon—emergence of tribal separatism. The inevitable result of capitalist development is that forces of capitalism from the plains enter the hills inhabited by the tribal people. The economic and social life of the tribes, so far free from the penetration of capitalist forces, has now become subject to the working of the laws of capitalism. Land and other forms of property owned by the tribes begin to get alienated; the community life that binds the tribes together gets disrupted; pauperisation, if not proletarianisation, leads members of all tribal groups to leave the area of inhabitation of their tribes, leave their traditional jobs in the tribal community and seek jobs elsewhere. While the economic and social life of the tribal people is thus getting disrupted, exploiting classes and elements from the non-tribal areas are able to lord it over the territories and regions inhabited by the tribals. The conflict which consequently arises between the tribal and plainspeople takes various forms in various parts of the country. It has so far reached the most extreme form in the Assam hills where the violent movement developed between the Naga rebels and the administration on the issue of forming a fully separate independent Nagaland. In other places like Jharkhand, it has not taken this extreme form, but the fact that the demand for the formation of a separate Jharkhand state arose shows that the tribal problem is serious everywhere.

33. It is these economic and political factors that have led to the development of what is known as separatism. It has reached the most extreme form in Madras where the DK-MK slogan of separate Dravidanad has become a serious political force and in Nagaland where the slogan of separate Nagaland has created an explosive situation.

If the economic and political developments that have led to these separatist movements are not reversed, not only will it be impossible to arrest the growth of these separatist movements but it is even likely that other similar movements will arise in other parts of the country. For the disparity in economic development, the question of language or languages that should be used for administrative and educational purposes, and the conflict between tribals and plainspeople are agitating millions of people outside Madras and Assam as well. Even in those places where they have not reached the stage of demanding separation, it should be noted, violent passions are being roused on such issues as allocation of river waters, location of industry and other development projects, etc.

## **V. Bourgeois and Proletarian Approaches to Separatism**

34. The bourgeoisie is blind to these realities of the economic and political developments in the country during the post-independence years. Neither the class as a whole, nor the different sections and groups into which it is divided, are able to see that the problem of national integration is in essence that of forging unity in diversity in a multi-lingual—if we are to use a strictly correct Marxian term, a multi-national—country in which capitalism is developing rapidly, but unevenly. Far from solving the real problems arising out of this situation, its leaders satisfy themselves by just denouncing linguism, provincialism, regionalism and separatism as disruptive of national unity. Having made such a denunciation of these outward symptoms of a deep-seated malady which has its roots in the process of social change, they come to the facile conclusion that the remedy for the evils lies in such administrative measures as putting a ban on the propagation of separatist ideology, if not a ban on the parties and organisations which propagate them.

Such an approach on the part of the dominant section of the bourgeoisie is matched by the approach of those sections of the bourgeoisie which are dominant in the non-Hindi-speaking

states, in those states and regions which are lagging behind others in economic and cultural developments, and among the tribal people. While the dominant bourgeoisie uses the slogan of 'national unity and integration' to justify its domination in the entire country, the other sections plead the cause of 'justice' and stretch it sometimes to the point of political and administrative autonomy, even separation.

35. Failure to see the class nature of fissiparous tendencies like linguism, provincialism, regionalism and separatism takes our party too towards the line of tailing behind either the dominant all-India bourgeoisie, or the bourgeoisie of the states, regions, linguistic groups and tribes.

The former leads a section of the Party to make a dogma of the slogan of 'national unity and integration' and repeat the same arguments as are advanced by the all-India leaders of the Congress. This, in practice, leads them to the position of supporting the Congress as against communal and separatist political parties. Such arguments and practices miss the basic and significant fact that the Congress approach to the question of national unity and integration is such as cannot be acceptable to broad sections of the people.

On the other hand, there is a section of the Party which makes a dogma of the particular point in Lenin's work which is related to the development of nations and right to self-determination and would try to mechanically apply it to our own conditions. This dogmatic approach leads them, in practice, to a policy of tailing behind the DMK and other movements which are based on separatism. Even in those states and regions where the local bourgeoisie does not put forward the demand for separation, this approach rallies the Party behind the local bourgeoisie with regard to location of projects, division of waters, etc.

The essence of both approaches is the same—dogmatism in theory and tailism in practice. The difference is only with respect to the particular principle which is to be made a dogma—'national unity' or 'self-determination of nations' ; also

which section of the bourgeoisie to tail behind—the dominant all-India bourgeoisie, or the bourgeoisie that is dominant in different states, regions, linguistic groups and tribes.

36. The National Council, therefore, calls upon the entire party to launch a determined struggle against every manifestation of these anti-Marxian trends. The unity of the entire Party has to be built through a systematic struggle against bourgeois trends of all varieties—(a) against the tendency of over-centralisation and domination, as well as against provincialism and regionalism; (b) against the efforts to so develop Hindi as to help it to dominate in the administrative and cultural life of the country at the expense of other languages; also against the refusal to recognise the special role of Hindi as the language of all-India communication ; (c) against the landlords and capitalists of the plains who want to dominate the tribal belt, as well as against the growing bourgeois element among the tribal people to set their people against the plainspeople.

Such a struggle against all forms of disruption practised by different sections of the bourgeoisie cannot be conducted if the Party adopts the line of building unity with the Congress against the forces of separatism, as is advocated by some comrades, or the line of fighting the Congress in alliance with the forces of separatism, as some sections within the Party would like to do. It can be done only if the Party independently comes before the people with a programme of building the unity of India on the basis of recognition of the real diversity which exists because of its multi-lingual character, the uneven economic and cultural development of its various states and regions and the existence of the various tribes inhabiting the various parts of India.

## **VI. Casteism and Communalism**

37. The same thing applies to the other two aspects of the problem of national integration, or rather the other two fissiparous trends which are talked of in connection with national integration—casteism and communalism.

Just as linguism, provincialism, regionalism and tribal separatism, so have casteism and communalism their roots in the concrete manner in which capitalist development has been and is still taking place in the country. These two phenomena can, therefore, be understood and their concrete manifestations dealt with only through a scientific analysis of the social institutions of the caste and religious community and how they are being changed in the process of capitalist development.

38. Caste is an ancient social institution. It grew and developed on the basis of relations of production existing under pre-capitalist social formations ; as a matter of fact, it was, by and large, a particular form of division of labour in an economy where commodity production had not yet become the dominant feature of social life. Such a form of division of labour being inconsistent with the requirements of commodity production—which began to become dominant in the economy of the country under the British regime—caste became an anachronism. It, therefore, should have ceased to exist the moment commodity production became the dominant feature of the economic life of the country.

39. This, however, did not happen because :

*Firstly*, the new relations of production being developed by capitalism involve acute competition among the various sections of the nascent bourgeoisie. In this competition between different sections of the bourgeoisie, bourgeois elements developing from particular castes have greater opportunities for advancement. It is true that individuals belonging to all castes are able to develop as capitalist farmers, traders, industrialists, government officials, etc. But the number of such individuals is much less among the 'lower' castes than among the 'higher' castes; in the case of such castes as are in the lowest rung of the caste ladder (scheduled castes and scheduled tribes), they are virtually absent. The result is that, by and large, the particular castes which were dominant in the pre-capitalist social formations are able now to appropriate a bigger share of the fruits of capitalist development; they, therefore, continue to be dominant in the new

set-up also. Furthermore, the development of capitalist relations in agriculture and industry leads to the ruination of the common people of the country belonging to all castes, particularly those in the 'lower' castes. Capitalist development does therefore appear to them as a process of enriching the 'higher' and impoverishing the 'lower' castes.

*Secondly*, even though the particular (caste) form of division of labour has ceased to exist, the social consciousness which is crystallised in the manners and customs of the people continue to be caste-oriented. Even those who have broken, and continue to break, the centuries-old rules of caste in relation to their professions, who do not observe the rules of caste behaviour when outside the home, strictly observe the rules of caste in the home and in respect of all social customs and manners.

40. These two factors are not unrelated to, but act and react on, each other. The first generates acute competitions and rivalries between sections of the bourgeoisie belonging to the 'higher' and 'lower' castes in general, and between the various castes in each category. The bourgeoisie belonging to each caste, therefore, seeks to secure advantages for itself at the expense of the other and, to this end utilises the caste sentiment. In doing this, they see a handy instrument in the second factor—the remnants of caste consciousness among the people. Caste consciousness and caste prejudices which exist among the masses are thus turned by the bourgeoisie into caste passions. On the other hand, it is just because caste consciousness and caste prejudices exist among the masses that the unequal development, which is the inevitable companion of the development of capitalist relations, becomes inequality between various castes in a new way. In other words, caste inequality which was the characteristic feature of pre-capitalist society in India is now further strengthened by inequality of development under capitalist development and gives rise to discontent and agitation on the part of various castes in relation to division of jobs and professions, opportunities for development in the lines of industries and trade, etc.

41. The struggle against casteism, therefore, should be based on a two-pronged attack: (a) against all remnants of the inequality between castes which was the characteristic feature of pre-capitalist society—for full equality of all citizens of the country irrespective of the caste into which they are born; for special measures to raise the level of life of those who belong to the formerly 'lower' castes; (b) against the uneven development which is inevitable if the process of modernisation is to take place under the domination of the bourgeoisie—for a just and fair division of all developmental opportunities among the various states, regions, and groups of people. Only by uniting the masses of people belonging to all castes, high and low, for such a two-pronged attack can the evil of casteism be fought and overcome.

42. Far from doing this, the bourgeoisie acts in such ways as to intensify the conflicts between the 'higher' and 'lower' castes. Here again, two sections of the bourgeoisie take two different stands which are contradictory to each other and, in the process, divides the people along caste lines. Furthermore, in the absence of a correct class approach, our own party is, to a certain extent, influenced by these different approaches.

43. The bourgeoisie belonging to the 'higher' castes uses the struggle against casteism as the means through which a formal, juridical equality between all castes is maintained but behind this is continued the real inequality between 'high' and 'low' castes. Such, for instance, is the struggle waged by the 'nationalist' sections in all parties and organisations who demand that reservations and other concessions to be given to the 'backward communities' should be based not on caste but on the economic condition. This argument misses the fact that there are certain castes which, due to historical reasons, have continued to be and still are backward *as castes* and that their backwardness can, therefore, be overcome only if they are helped *as castes* to become equal to other castes. In several other ways too, the formerly 'lower' and 'backward' castes have to be helped to overcome their low standard and backward conditions if casteism is to be liquidated.

44. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie belonging to the 'lower' castes refuses to recognise the fact that, if the inequality of their castes as castes is to be ended, they have to unite with the masses belonging to the 'higher' castes. For, the interest of the masses belonging to all castes, the interests of the country demand the abolition of the caste itself as an institution. The existence of caste consciousness, caste prejudices, discontent on the basis of caste inequalities—all these are impediments in the way of the development of the country as a whole and, therefore, of the development of the 'lower' and 'backward' castes themselves. Caste separatism, therefore, hinders, rather than helps, the advancement of the 'lower' castes themselves.

45. Our Party, therefore, should be vigilant against the ideological offensive launched by the bourgeoisie—either those sections of it which belong to the 'high' castes, or those who hail from the 'low' castes. Here again, the Party should launch a two-pronged ideological offensive—(a) against all forms and manifestations of 'high caste' domination masquerading in the name of struggle against casteism—for special measures to help the 'low' castes to advance more rapidly than the 'high' castes, so that they can shortly be equal to them; (b) against the petty short-sighted approach of the bourgeoisie belonging to the 'lower' castes who fail to see the immense harm done to the 'low' castes themselves arising out of the division of the masses as between the 'high' and 'low' castes. The Party should carry on systematic ideological and practical work among the masses belonging to all castes for eradication of all remnants of caste as an institution and to generate the unity of the masses of the working people through the process of class struggle.

46. The other fissiparous trend which has to be combated—communalism—is related to the religious community which is an institution not peculiar to India. Different religious communities, and even conflicts between them, exist in several other countries. But the problem of relations between different religious communities in India has its own peculiar feature. The two religious communities which may be said to be dominant in

our country—the Hindus and the Muslims—have behind them a history of continuous political conflicts. It is true that history is not a one-sided story of conflicts alone, as was sedulously propagated by British historians; co-operation and brotherhood had developed at various stages between the two communities. It is, nevertheless, a fact that conflicts have taken place between them at various phases in our history. All the more is this true of the days of the British rule when the rulers deliberately followed the policy of ‘divide and rule’. Political and administrative measures to keep them divided, and to incite quarrels between them, were supplemented by the ideological poisoning of the minds of the people by the one-sided distortion of Indian history. The result of all this was that, at the very time when the Indian people were more and more uniting themselves against the British, the relations between the two major religious communities were getting further and further strained. Every time a mass anti-imperialist movement reached the zenith of militancy, Hindus and Muslims were turned against each other; the unity of the anti-imperialist movement was thus weakened. This naturally led to the inevitable partition of India and all that followed the formation of two states on the religious basis.

47. Such a historical development of the relations between Hindus and Muslims—to a certain extent, those between Hindus and Sikhs and Sikhs and Muslims as well—has led to a mixing up of religion and politics. While everybody pays lip service to the modern concept of a secular state, religion, in practice, interferes in the political life of the nation. Extreme viewpoints among the Hindus lead to the concept of Hindu Rashtra which is openly proclaimed by certain organisations. Other religious groups too have given birth to their own variants of the anti-secular concept—Deen Ilahi; the superiority of the Panth; the Christian way of life and approach to all questions, including politics and education; etc. Organisations and parties which base themselves on these anti-secular concepts spring up all over the country and become a menace to the nation. Particularly is this true of the organisations and parties which speak in the name of Hindu Dharma, since not only is their approach anti-secular,

they chauvinistically demand the suppression of the freedom of conscience of minority religious groups.

48. Far from effectively combating these anti-secular trends, the bourgeoisie gives concessions to them and strengthens them. Its leaders do not take a consistently secular stand, but are themselves victims of religious obscurantism. They try to distort the whole concept of secularism : they would have the people believe that, instead of complete separation of religion and politics from each other, secularism means freedom for all religious faiths to equally interfere in the political life of the people. This approach of the bourgeoisie can be clearly seen in such official documents as the report of the Sri Prakasha and Sampurnand Committees referred to earlier. Furthermore, the concession that they give to the communalism of the majority community can be seen in the fact mentioned earlier that, in constituting the National Integration Council, the Central Government had no hesitation in appointing the representatives of the Jan Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha while scrupulously keeping out the representatives of non-Hindu communal organisations.

49. Our Party, therefore, has the duty to fight an uncompromising struggle for the consistent implementation of the principle of secularism. The slightest departure from that principle should be exposed and fought. While defending the right of every religious community whether it is the majority or minority—as well as of those who have no faith in any religion to believe in and practice whatever religion they like or to remain irreligious, the Party should fight against all forms of intrusion of religion in the social, economic, political and administrative life of the nation. Equally opposing the efforts of the leaders of all religious groups to interfere in the public life of the country, we should, at the same time, concentrate the fire on the chauvinistic leaders of the majority religious community—the Hindus. At the same time, we should continue to point out to the minority religious groups that their legitimate rights can be defended and protected only on the basis of a consistent application of the principle of secularism.

## VII. Tasks of The Party

50. It is clear from the above analysis of the concrete way in which fissiparous trends like casteism, communalism, linguism, regionalism and tribal separatism manifest themselves that our Party has to take independent stands on all of them. It will be suicidal for us to tail behind the bourgeoisie under the mistaken assumption that its leaders are putting up an effective and consistent fight against those forces which are disrupting the unity of the nation and preventing its integration. On the other hand, we have to sharply expose before the people the inherent weaknesses of the policies pursued by the bourgeoisie which accentuate the conflict on questions of language, provincial and regional inequality, caste, communal and tribal discontent. Against these policies pursued by the bourgeoisie, we should advance a programme which will help the nation to find proper solutions for all these questions. The elements of such a programme of building national unity are given below :

(A) *On the question of separatism* : We are opposed to all forms of separatism, such as the DMK slogan of Dravidanad, the slogan of an independent Nagaland, etc. We cannot, however, agree to the manner in which the Congress leadership and the Central Government seek to fight separatism. We have, on the other hand, to firmly oppose the tendency shown by them to consider India a unitary state with a highly centralised administration. The twin principles of linguistic states and maximum possible autonomy for the states should be firmly adhered to. Concrete slogans and demands calculated to bring about a consistent application of these two principles should be worked out.

(B) *On the question of language* : We firmly adhere to the principle of replacing English by the regional languages at the state level and Hindi at the centre as official language. The transition from English to Hindi at the centre should be simultaneous with the same from English to the regional languages in the states; the preparation for this transition which

is being made by the centre with regard to Hindi should also be made with all necessary central assistance in the states. At the same time, for the transition period (the duration of which should be decided with the consent of the non-Hindi-speaking regions), English should be given the status of an associate official language. The above guiding lines should be applied to the question of medium of instruction as well, the aim in this respect being as rapid a transition as possible from English to the regional languages with necessary guarantees for a high standard of knowledge in Hindi and English.

(C) *On the question of provincialism and regionalism* : This should be considered as a question of the most rapid reduction of provincial and regional disparities in development. The allocation of funds for developmental plans, location of projects, division of waters, etc. should be made on certain generally-known principles which would ensure that every state and region will receive approximately the share which is its due on the basis of population. As for the demands relating to recarving of the boundaries of states which have become serious in certain regions, all such questions should be solved on the principle of linguistic states whose borders are to be fixed with village as the unit and putting contiguous areas which have a majority speaking one language in that linguistic state.

(D) *The problem of tribal discontent* can be solved only if the Government bases itself on the need for protecting the tribal people from the exploitation of landlord and capitalist elements from the plains. Tribals should be assisted in modernising themselves, but the process of modernisation should be left to the Tribals themselves. The solution will differ from area to area and tribe to tribe; in some places it may be necessary to form autonomous areas within a particular state or region ; in certain other places, even while having no such local autonomy, special safeguards will have to be given to protect the property and social life of the tribal people.

(E) Our Party is opposed to *Casteism*. It, however, cannot endorse the stand taken by the leaders of the bourgeoisie

according to which any step taken to help the 'lower' castes to overcome their low status amounts to casteism. Not only educational concessions, but even reservation in government jobs will have to be continued for several years; the basis of this should be not economic condition but the degree of the hangover of social oppression which particular castes have been subjected to for centuries. At the same time, certain criteria should be laid down in order to fix the stage at which a particular caste may be considered to have freed itself from these hangovers of past social oppression.

(F) With regard to *communalism*, we have to take a firm stand on the principle of secularism and fight against all forms of intrusion of religion in the political life of the country. We should carry on a consistent campaign among the people against the tendency of religious leaders asking their followers to form themselves into political parties and organisations, to vote in a particular way, etc. as a community.

Various concrete questions arising out of the above have to be considered in detail by the National Council in so far as they relate to all-India questions and by the State Councils in relation to provincial questions.

## **Papers Submitted To The National Integration Committee—1962**

### **(a) Definition of Communalism**

Communalism is the tendency to look at administrative, political and economic problems from the point of view of a particular religious community. This should, however, be subject to the following qualifications :

(1) Communalism very frequently took on the garb of nationalism, which was most often possible in the case of the majority religious group. There was also the danger of Hindu culture being equated with Indian culture. It should always be remembered that the best tradition of Indian culture was the freedom the various religious communities enjoyed to lead their own chosen religious life.

(2) In view of the likely continuance of the religious communities for a long time to come, the sentiments and practices of all religious groups should be guaranteed and safeguarded.

(3) The special protection for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes should continue.

### **(b) Note To The Committee**

It was after I gave my tentative proposal, at the last meeting of our Sub-Committee, that Shri Vajpayee gave his proposal for defining communalism. I did not make any comment on it then. Subsequent to the meeting of the Committee, we have had two notes—one from Shri Sadiq Ali and another from Prof. Mujeeb. The latter too attempts to give a definition of communalism; but instead of defining communalism as such (which according to him is impossible) Prof. Mujeeb gives separate definitions of the communalism of the majority and that of the minority.

Having studied all these notes and definitions, I want to offer the following additional comments for the consideration of the Committee.

Why should we attempt at a definition of communalism? In order that we may get a clear idea of what we are exactly against and then to devise ways and means of effectively fighting it.

The question then arises: With what are we going to fight communalism? What is the ideological basis in which communalism is to be combated? We are interested in doing nothing which will encourage, doing everything which will discourage, the growth of communalism. But then is there anything that we want to encourage, if so, what is it? Or, rather what is that should take the place of the communal outlook which is to be eliminated?

Shri Vajpayee's answer seems to be: "Nationalism". He seeks to contrast communalism to "the common bonds of loyalty to the mother country, its people and their culture and heritage". Any tendency to oppose these "common bonds of loyalty" with "loyalties narrower and/or antagonistic to and subversive of the national entity" is to be deemed communalism.

This, according to me, is incorrect. For, such a definition does not make any distinction between communalism and other fissiparous tendencies. Casteism, provincialism, regionalism, linguism—all these are obviously "loyalties narrower and/or antagonistic to and subversive of the national entity". There would, therefore, have been no sense in the National Integration Council setting up two Committees—one on provincial and regional separatism, another on communalism—and taking the question of medium of instruction out of the purview of both if the approach made by Shri Vajpayee is to guide the Council. As a matter of fact communalism is only one of the "loyalties narrower and/or antagonistic to and subversive of the national entity". Our job is to give a precise definition of what this particular type of "anti-national loyalty" is.

This job can be done only if it is clearly understood that communalism is the negation of one of the essential features of our

political-administrative set-up—*secularism*, which has been clearly laid down in our Constitution. I would like to refer to Articles 15(1) and 15(2) which prohibit “discrimination against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them”; Article 25(1) which guarantees “freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion” ; Article 27 which bars compelling anybody “to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expense for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination” ; Prohibition of religious instruction being provided “in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds”. The Constitution and the People’s Representation Act also prevent “any candidate or his agent or any other person with the consent of a candidate” from “using or appealing to religious symbols for the furtherance of the prospect of election of any candidate”.

I would also like to mention that our Constitution seeks to maintain full equality not only among the various religious communities, but also between the religious and the irreligious. The third Schedule to the Constitution, for instance, gives two alternatives to the form of “oath” or “affirmation” to be taken by Central and State Ministers, Members of Parliament and State Legislatures, Supreme and High Court Judges. One of these alternatives is for the use of those who are religious-minded and who may, therefore, swear “in the name of God” ; the other to be used by those who are not religious-minded and who may, therefore, “solemnly affirm”.

The spirit of our Constitution is thus the absolute separation of religion from political and administrative affairs—non-interference of religion in political affairs and of administration in religious affairs. Religious faith is purely a personal matter for the person concerned. The State is not and should not be concerned with it. Everybody is free to follow, or not to follow, any religious faith; observe or, not observe, the religious practices of any community. But that should not have any influence on the administration in its dealing with the citizens or of the latter in their relations with the administration.

Whether one is a Hindu, or a Muslim, or the follower of any other religious faith, or an atheist, is not the concern of the administrative and other public authorities. The job of the administration is to see that :

(a) the economic, political and administrative matters are kept completely free from the direct or indirect influence of religious organisations;

(b) No one behaves in such a way as to directly or indirectly deny any citizen the right to follow the precepts of that religious community to which he belongs.

Absolute impartiality as between one religion and another : full protection for the followers of all faiths in the observance of their religious practices; firm determination to allow no religious group to interfere in the economic, political and administrative life of the country—such are the responsibilities of the State. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the religious community and its leaders to cater to the spiritual needs of their followers regardless of whether a particular person belongs to this or that economic or political organisation.

It should be the endeavour of the National Integration Council and this Committee to see that this secular spirit of the Constitution is strictly observed in practice. For, though secularism has been accepted in the Constitution as the basis of our political set-up, its spirit is unfortunately denied in the concrete day-to-day activities of administrative organs. I would like to recall that in the speech which the late Ajoy Ghosh delivered at the National Integration Conference, he pointed out how “the principles of secularism are often tampered with and compromised not only by non-official agencies but even by officials, and some Ministers”. He also pointed out how “the religious orders freely interfere in politics and even compel their followers to vote or not to vote in a particular way”. He, therefore, called on “secular parties” to “pledge themselves to do everything in their power not to mix up religion with politics under any circumstances and on any plea.”

The definition of communalism that our Committee suggests, and the concrete proposals that we work out to combat communal influences, should have as their aim the restoration and strengthening of this spirit of secularism. This, however, is not what Shri Vajpayee's definition does. On the other hand, the definition given by him would help to strengthen Hindu communalism. The direction in which that definition will lead us was brought home to us by Shri Bishan Chander Seth's demand that the Muslims and Christians who have clustered together in sizable numbers in certain pockets should be dispersed. This may well be stretched further and the suggestion made that non-Hindus Plot should be driven away from India. Such an approach is, in essence, not at all different from the two-nation theory advanced by Jinnah.

The basic mistake continued in the definition given by Shri Vajpayee is that it does not accept the secular basis of our State. The definition speaks of 'common bonds', 'mother country', 'its people', 'their culture and heritage', etc. But nowhere is it stated that loyalty to the mother country, its people, their culture and heritage, etc. should have nothing to do with religion but be entirely secular. Underlying the whole definition given by Shri Vajpayee is the concept that the 'Indian nation, its history, culture and heritage' are based on Hinduism. Non-Hindus therefore, should either remain loyal to the 'nation, its history, culture and heritage' based on Hindu Dharma or be considered disloyal to the nation. The practical proposal made by Shri Seth is where such a definition will lead us.

As against these implications of the definitions suggested by Shri Vajpayee is my definition which guarantees us against both types of communalism pointed out by Prof. Mujeeb in his note. It combats the idea which would equate nationalism with the domination of the major community. It also negates the communalism of the minority which takes the ostensible form of defending the fundamental principle of freedom of faith. Making no distinction between majority and minority, it gives to religion its appropriate place, its appropriate fields of activity where the State or political parties should not interfere; on the other hand, it clearly defines the field in which religion is not expected, and will

not be allowed, to interfere. My definition is, in fact, based on that very conception of secularism which has remained an inseparable part of our national movement and which has been incorporated in the various provisions of the Constitution.

It is necessary, in this connection, to point out that the three provisos to my definition are essential for a proper understanding of my approach to the definition of communalism, and to the task of eliminating its influence from our public life. The three ideas contained in the three provisos and the main part of the definition make an integrated whole of what I consider to be the correct approach to communalism. I would, therefore, like to restate and slightly modify what I stated at the last meeting and give the correct approach that should be taken by the following modified version :

Communalism is the tendency to import the point of view of a religious community into the administrative, political and economic problems facing the country – problems which can be successfully solved only from a purely secular point of view. This tendency is opposed to the ideal of building our nation on the basis of secularism and negates one or more of the following implications of secularism:

(a) Complete freedom for all religious communities, and for those who do not believe in any religion, to follow the religion which they like, and to follow no religion at all if they so like;

(b) Absolute impartiality of the administrative organs as between various religious communities, and between the religious and the irreligious. Complete non-interference of the administration in religious affairs;

(c) Special responsibility of the administrative organs to see that religious freedom is not tampered with by any group, particularly by the majority religious community in relation to the minorities, where the possibility of tampering is naturally greater;

(d) Responsibility of all political parties to allow

(i) no activity on the part of administration to interfere in religious affairs, or (ii) religious communities to interfere in political affairs,

(e) Responsibility of the administration and of political parties to see that giving expression to (i) the legitimate grievances of religious minorities in relation to protection for their religious rights if they are under attack, and (ii) of backward communities (including Scheduled castes and tribes) in relation to their social and cultural backwardness should not be considered a communal approach. On the other hand, it should be the responsibility of the State and of political parties to go to the aid of the religious communities when their rights are encroached upon and of backward communities in the matter of raising their social and cultural position.

I understand the apprehension given expression to by Prof. Mujeeb that the acceptance of my definition would "make every religious community feel that it cannot express its point of view if it is in disagreement with majority opinion without being accused of communalism." I, however, submit that the most effective way to remove this fear will be to accept the position that religion is supreme in its own (spiritual) field, while the State and other secular organisations are supreme in mundane matters. Genuinely to accept and sincerely to implement the good old principle of 'unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's, is the only way in which full religious freedom can be guaranteed without allowing religion to intrude into the economic, political and administrative affairs.

## LETTERS TO CHAIRMAN

6th August, 1962.

Mr. Ashoka Mehta, Chairman,  
Committee on National Integration and Communalism,  
New Delhi.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

In the course of our discussions in the Committee, you had asked me whether there is any basic difference between my definition and the definition prepared by Mr. Viswanathan. I had then answered that the latter does not convey the concept of secularism with which we have to fight the evil of communalism.

Having given a little more consideration to the matter, I felt that it is not just an omission of bringing the word 'secularism' into the definition. It may be stated that point (b) of the operative part of the definition conveys the essence of secularism.

A still more important defect of that definition is that it clubs together "religious, linguistic and other narrow considerations" and brings into the definition of communalism the intrusion of all these factors into the political, economic and other fields.

In thus attempting to put all fissiparous tendencies into communalism, it fails to make the distinction between communalism and other fissiparous trends. I would, therefore, like to give below what I consider to be the specific features of each of the fissiparous trends and how each of them has to be fought.

*Casteism* is the tendency to mould the present-day social life of the nation on the basis of caste, the outmoded mediaeval organisation of Indian social life.

In relation to casteism, therefore, it should be the endeavour of the nation to see that the system itself is abolished as speedily as possible. All means of realising this objective, including inter-caste marriages, should, therefore, be adopted ; those who adopted them should be given the maximum extent of co-operation and assistance

At the same time, positive help should be given to those, who belong to the oppressed castes and have, therefore, remained socially, educationally and economically backward to overcome their economic backwardness.

*Communalism* (see the definition given on page 128 in my note of 28-7-62).

*Linguism* is the tendency of one language to set itself above the others. It takes three distinct forms : (a) demand that English should continue as the medium of instruction and the language for official use; (b) demand that Hindi should replace English, thus denying the right of other regional languages to become official languages and media of instruction in the respective states; (c) refuse to recognise the special status which Hindi should occupy as official language to be used at the all-India Centre and look upon it as only one of the regional languages of India. All these tendencies can be combated only if the policy is one of simultaneous transition from English to Hindi at the Centre and to regional languages in the States and if English is kept as a compulsory subject.

*Provincialism and Regionalism* are tendencies which so distort the legitimate demand for the overcoming of provincial and regional disparities as to mean denial of the need for central co-ordination and direction. The remedy for this is not to try to work out a highly centralised economic and administrative set-up, but to (a) fairly and equitable distribute the resources utilised for national development among all the states and regions of the country ; (b) give practical shape to the idea of "decentralisation of power, combined with an effective Centre".

The definitions given above are, of course, not fully, satisfactory. But there is one idea which I would like to emphasise; with the possible exception of casteism, every other fissiparous tendency is a mixture of good and evil.

*Communalism*, for example, has behind it the legitimate desire of every religious community to see that no encroachment is made by the State on freedom of conscience, guaranteed by the

Constitution. In this sense, it is unexceptionable. Particularly is this true of minority religious communities if and when they are under attack from the majority. At the same time, there is another side of it: it divides the people on the basis of the religious communities to which they belong. Furthermore, it distorts freedom of conscience to mean that religion has the right to interfere in secular matters.

Similarly, *linguism* has its positive content to the extent that it emphasises the need to so develop regional languages as to make them official and educational languages. It can, therefore, lead to such a magnificent literary and cultural advance as has never been seen in our history. At the same time, it gives birth to a certain amount of narrow sectarianism which makes each linguistic group think that it is superior to the others. It, therefore, leads to conflicts between the various linguistic groups.

*Provincialism* and *Regionalism* too are expressions of the legitimate aspirations of the people of the various states and regions of the country for rapid development in their economy and culture. To this extent, it is healthy and should be fostered. Any attempt to denounce these provincial and regional demands as opposed to national integration will itself be opposed to integration. At the same time, these legitimate aspirations become disruptive of national unity when they are set against the need for central co-ordination and direction.

But when we come to casteism, there is very little that is positive and healthy. Even here, however, it should be pointed out that the aspirations of the people belonging to castes which have been socially and culturally oppressed for centuries should not be denounced as indicative of casteism. Their desire that they should become equal to the upper castes is legitimate and should be appreciated. Every encouragement should be given to them to overcome all manifestations of their backwardness. But the aim of our efforts for national integration should be to put an end to the caste system itself.

These differences as between communalism on the one hand and other fissiparous trends are not adequately brought out either in Mr. Viswanathan's or in Mr. Vijpayee's definition. I am sure you would consider these points and revise the definition accordingly.

Yours sincerely,  
Sd/- E. M. S. Namboodiripad

### **Language Crisis or National–Political Crisis ?**

The problem of India's educational and administrative language or languages is undoubtedly assuming serious proportions. It has led to a series of political crises in one or another part of the country on one or another occasion, such as

the upsurge in Andhra preceding and following the martyrdom of Potti Sri Ramulu;

the crisis in Bombay City, as well as in the Maharashtra and Gujarat regions, centring around the demand for the formation of Samyukta Maharashtra and Maha Gujarat States;

the prolonged tension in the Punjab over the question of the Punjabi Suba as well as on the relative roles of Hindi and Punjabi in that part of the country;

the clashes that took place in Assam which led to a large number of non-Assamese-speaking people from that state leaving their hearts and homes and becoming refugees outside;

finally, the recent disturbances in Madras which forced the hands of the Congress High Command to accept the principle of equality of all Indian languages to one another.

But is it correct to say, as the author of the book under review seems to imply, that our country is to-day going through a "language crisis"? Is it not true, on the other hand, that India is actually going

through a many-sided crisis, of which the "language crisis" is only a part ?

The view held by the late Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and other leaders at one time was that the crisis being faced by the nation touched not only the language but such facets of our social life as caste and communal relations, the tribal problem, provincial and regional disparities, etc. That was why they talked of the problem of National Integration which covered what were called Casteism, Communalism, Tribalism, Provincialism and Regionalism along with linguism as the forces of disintegration. Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Chairperson of the National Integration Committee set up by the Congress High Command, wrote as follows in her introductory note to the report of the Committee presided over by her :

"In recent years many thinking people have been greatly distressed to note that the fissiparous and separatist tendencies which had seemed to merge in the upsurge of Nationalism during the freedom struggle were again becoming aggressive. It appears as if almost every move in the country is being exploited, by some section or another of the people, for appealing to the narrowest group loyalties..... Starting from the first General Elections, these tendencies have been gaining strength in every election. The reorganisations of States, boundary disputes and the concern over language have played up local pride to limits which verge on the dangerous, from the point of view of National unity."

It was this understanding that led the Central Government to convene a National Integration Conference. One of the participants at the Conference was the late Ajoy Ghosh who, in his speech at the Conference, posed the problem as follows :

"India is today administratively more united than ever in its history. Economic planning is carried out by a Central body. Above all, State power is no longer exercised, as was the case in the past, by the British who were interested in keeping up and accentuating conflicts inside the country. All these factors are favourable for

the consolidations of the unity of the country and of the Nation. Yet, as would be denied by none, fissiparous and disruptive tendencies have grown more alarmingly in recent years. They threaten one of the most precious heritages of our freedom movement—the unity of the nation. Why has this happened? How has this happened?"

Ajoy Ghosh in his speech naturally dealt with the Punjabi Suba, linguistic minorities, status of Hindi and other aspects of what the author of the book under review calls "language crisis". He however did not do this in isolation from communalism in general and Hindu communalism in particular; the grievances of minority religious communities and backward castes; the problem of the tribals; and so on. He on the other hand pointed out how all these (language and other) crises are the result of the basic political weaknesses of the freedom movement in the pre-independence period which have been further accentuated in the post-independence years. The essence of the solution offered by him to the problems of National Integration consisted in "a determined and uncompromising struggle against powerful vested interests"; for, "in the final analysis, National Integration is a problem of democracy and of far-reaching socio-economic transformations".

Absence of this correct approach to the problem of India's language[s] problem, the consequent attempt at treating the problem of language[s] in isolation, detracts from the value of the book as a study of the problem about which we are all concerned.

To make this criticism of the book is not to deny the valuable contribution which it makes to an understanding of how the problem of our National Language [s] developed from stage to stage. On the other hand, the book would undoubtedly help the reader to understand the intricacies of the problem in the limited field in which it attempts to study it. It brings together the story of how the alien rulers of pre-independence India foisted English on the Indian people whose own languages were prevented from developing as they should; how the freedom movement had included in its programme the replacement of the alien language by the languages

of the Indian people ; how the concept arose of Hindi as the link language (rather than as the National language—this latter role was to be taken by the mother-tongue of the people of states formed on the linguistic basis; how the implementation of the above concept of National Language[s] was not applied in practice and how this created a series of intricate problems; etc.

Bringing the story uptodate right up to the developments of 1965 (January-February) the author in his concluding chapter pleads for "the elevation to a sovereign position of the languages of the masses of our people, the ancient languages of our land". One of the appendices added to the book is on "the experience of the USSR" in which the author tries to point out the similarities and differences between India and the Soviet Union.

The book would thus have been an admirable guide to the understanding of India's languages problem if we were concerned with the problem of language alone. Unfortunately however, we are not. The emergence of the problem of languages in our country (as in every other country in the world) is integrally connected with the growth of modern nations which, in its turn, is connected with the development of capitalist society. Let us recall how Lenin formulated the problem of languages and nationalities in the epoch of transition to capitalism.

"Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. The economic basis of these movements is that in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically-united territories with a population speaking the same language, and all obstacles to the development of this language and to its consolidation in literature are removed. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity of language and unimpeded development are the most important conditions of a genuinely free and extensive intercourse on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all their separate classes and lastly, for the

establishment of close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or small, seller or buyer. Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The profound economic factors drive towards this goal and therefore, for the whole western Europe nay for the entire civilised world, the typical, normal state for the capitalist period is the national State" ("On the Right of Self-determination").

The problem of language[s] is thus part of the manysided transition from feudel (or pre-capitalist) to capitalist society. That is why the problem of 'linguism' has come to be associated with such other 'problems of national integration' as 'casteism', 'communalism', 'tribalism', 'provincialism' and 'regionalism'. The writer of these lines had occasion to deal with these problems elsewhere (in a series of articles printed in the Sunday Standard in 1963 and in the forthcoming book, "Economics and Politics of India's Socialist Pattern"). His views on this question may, however, be summarised here, since it would bring out what, according to him, are the main weaknesses of the book under review.

(1) The beginnings of capitalist development in the field of Indian economy could be seen long before the British rulers came to India and established their rule here. As Dr. B. B. Mishra points out in his "The Indian middle-classes : their growth in modern times" : "Institutions conducive to capitalist growth were not lacking in India before British rule.... (there existed organisations) comparable to mediaevel European traders' associations which exercised a great measure of autonomy in the regulation of commerce....The Indian traders employed what might be called a sort of managing agency which operated throughout the country....a money economy had developed in India at an early period of her history....The Shroffs, a class of money changers were an ancient community who specialised in coinage and issued drafts (Hundis) or letters of credit against the money deposited with them—a freedom which greatly facilitated the movement of trade."

(2) Parallel to the growth of elements of capitalism in the economic field was the linguistic and cultural upsurge which swept

over the country from the 12th century onwards. Known as the Bhakti movement, it led to a regeneration and development of all the Indian languages. In place of two developed languages, one in the north (Sanskrit) and another in the South (Tamil) and innumerable undeveloped folk languages which had been the pattern till then, a new pattern emerged—the simultaneous development of several languages both in the north as well as in the south. Furthermore, the spirit animating this religious-cultural upsurge was one of revolt "against forms and ceremonies and class distinctions based on birth". This religious revival, says "a well-known Indian historian" quoted by Ramakrishna Mukherji in "The Rise and Fall of the East-India Company" was the work also of the people, of masses and not the classes. As its heads were saints and prophets, poets and philosophers, who sprang chiefly from the lower orders of society—tailors, carpenters, potters, gardeners, shopkeepers, barbers and even mahars (scavengers)—more often than from Brahmins.

(3) The two-fold development of capitalist economic relations and the national cultural upsurge as represented by the Bhakti movement had to face two obstacles :

Firstly, "the limitations arising from the existence of caste, the foundation of the Hindu social system", and other aspects of pre-capitalist society which, together with the despotism of the feudal rulers of the time, created a situation in which "in spite of the potential of a middle-class bourgeoisie development, the immobility of the caste organisation and the despotism of the bureaucracy precluded such a development" (Dr. B. B. Mishra in the above-quoted book).

Secondly, the British Rulers who established themselves in India for over a century and a half arrested the natural process of capitalist development in the economic, political and cultural life of the country. India was transformed into the backward agrarian hinterland of the developed metropolis, rather than itself developing into an independent capitalist society. In order that such a process may be facilitated, the British Rulers preserved and protected the

backward forces of pre-capitalist society in all fields. Above all, the natural development of Indian languages was thwarted by the imposition of English over all the linguistic cultural groups of the Indian people. The natural process of capitalist development leading to the formation of national states was thus distorted into a "United India" whose unity depended on the strength of the British bayonet.

(4) The freedom movement whose growth was partly facilitated by capitalist development which continued (though in a distorted way) under British Rule was therefore objectively an attempt at resuming the thread of capitalist development which had been broken by the establishment of British Rule. The movement was consequently an attack on the pre-capitalist institutions (such as caste society, joint family, inequality between men and women). Its programme included the demands of tenancy and other reforms of an anti-feudal character. The movement for replacing English by the people's own languages in the cultural and administrative fields, leading to the demand for the reorganisation of States on the basis of language, was also integrated into the programme of national freedom.

(5) The leadership of the freedom movement, however, was in the hands of a class (bourgeoisie) which, due to various objective reasons, could not take an uncompromising stand either in the field of social reforms or in that of the national-cultural regeneration. The hold of mediaeval obscurantist ideas and institutions on the bourgeois leaders of the national movement was so strong that a concerted all-sided attack on caste and other precapitalist institutions could not be launched. Nor could it carry on a principled fight for giving all the national languages their due place. As for the demand for the formation of linguistic provinces, the clear-cut line of equality of all Indian languages was replaced by the supremacy of Hindi and the consequent denial of the need for states reorganisation.

(6) These weaknesses of the freedom movement which prevailed even in the pre-independence period got accentuated in the post-independence years when, once again to quote Ajoy Ghosh, "something like an ideological vacuum came into existence. Old

ideas which stirred those fighting for national freedom did not have the same appeal now. No new modern idea had taken their place. In this situation, antiquated and even obscurantist ideas which had been never completely rooted out began to operate on the minds of men. Certain elements made full use of this situation and of the popular mood of frustration and discontent".

It would thus be totally unrealistic to consider the question of language[s] as a question in itself. It should be seen as part of the problem of building the unity of the Indian people belonging to various castes, having faith in various religious beliefs, speaking various languages, etc. into one unified political community. This unified political community has to carry forward the struggle for freedom by consolidating the political independence won in 1947 into a state which completes the democratic revolution and lays the basis of the socialist revolution. It is this that the author of the book under review fails to see.

All the more serious is the author's failure in this respect in that he himself hails from, and is dealing with, a State where the connection between the social reform (anti-caste) movement, the movement for linguistic-cultural autonomy if not independence (anti-north), provincial, regional rivalry of one group of big bourgeoisie against another (the Madrasi against the Marvari-Gujarati) and so on merged themselves into the Justice Party (twenties), Self-respect movement (thirties), the Dravida Kazhakam (forties), and Dravida Munnettra Kazhakam (fifties and sixties). Not a word about these developments in the whole book which looks upon the present crisis as a "Language crisis", rather than as a "National-Political Crisis".

## **Mohan Kumaramangalam On Dogmatism**

I am, according to Sri Mohan Kumaramangalam a “dogmatist”. My criticism of his book on “Language Crisis”, it seems, is “escapist”.

The reason for this characterisation of my person and my comments on his book is that I pointed out the very serious limitations of the effort he was making to isolate the “Language Crisis” of Congress Government’s National Policy as a whole. I pointed out that the “Language Crisis” is only a part of the national crisis whose other forms are the crisis of casteism, of communalism, of tribal separatism, of provincialism and of regionalism.

In making this criticism of his book, he complains, I “distorted both the purpose and the scope of (his) book. Necessarily when dealing with the language crisis and not with other aspects of the crisis in our country’s life, it is all aspects of *this problem* that are discussed and developed. Hence the charge made at the end of (my) review that (he is) looking upon the present crisis in our country as a language crisis, rather than as a ‘national-political crisis’ is a charge which, I feel, is neither fair nor correct”.

I agree that the purpose and scope of his book is limited to the discussion of the language crisis. That precisely is the point of my criticism. It would not, according to me, help the understanding or the solution of even the limited question of language without relating it to the other aspects of what has come to be known as the “problem of national integration.”

I may once again draw the attention of the author of the book to the last paragraph of my article where I pointed out that the language crisis in Tamilnad (with which his book is particularly concerned) is connected with the anti-Brahmin and the anti-north movements which, together with the movement for Tamil language, lie at the root of the DMK.

Does Sri Kumaramangalam agree or disagree with this understanding of the DMK movement (which stands behind the

language crisis in Tamilnad) as given above : Does he agree that the initial form of the Tamilian revolt which culminated in the emergence of the present DMK was the anti-Brahmin movement whose origins should be traced to almost half a century ago ? Does he agree that it was the anti-Brahmin movement that subsequently developed into various forms such as radical social reforms and rationalist thinking represented by the Self-respect Movement; the all-caste Tamilian revolt against North Indian domination; attempts at establishing the superiority of Tamil culture over the Northern, Aryan culture; and so on ?

Does he agree or disagree with the formulation in my article that Madras is a state where “the social reform (anti-caste) movement, the demand for linguistic cultural autonomy if not independence (anti-north), provincial and regional rivalry of one group of big bourgeoisie against another, (the Madrasi against the Marvari-Gujarati) and so on, merged themselves” into the present-day DMK ? If he agrees with it, he will also agree with the utter futility of examining this problem in isolation from the other aspects of the problem on National Integration.

I am rather surprised that Sri Kumaramangalam should quote Togliatti against me. After all, the essence of what Togliatti says is that one should not satisfy oneself with “the consideration of general subjects” but should go on to “concrete problems of our current policy”. This can be quoted against me only if the phenomena of casteism, communalism, tribal separatism, provincialism and regionalism are not “concrete problems”, but “general subjects”. The ridiculousness of the whole thing can be seen from the fact that these concrete problems, together with the problem of language, came before the people and led to the outbreak of so many crises that the late Prime Minister decided to call a National Integration Conference. Would Sri Kumaramangalam contend that it was “dogmatism” and “escapism” on Nehru’s part to consider “linguism” not in itself, but together with casteism, etc. ?

However pleasant and self-satisfactory it might be for Sri Kumaramangalam to dismiss me as a horrible “dogmatist” and

“escapist”, he cannot deny that I have made my humble contribution to the application of the general principles of Marxism-Leninism to the problem of National Integration which is the totality of several “concrete problems of our current policy”. The conclusion arrived at by me is that the various aspects of the problem of National Integration are inter-connected and that none of them can be examined in isolation from the rest.

I hope it would not be immodest on my part to claim that the work I did as a member of the National Integration Committee and the articles and documents written by me on the basis of my experience of this work, are a serious contribution to that very type of serious study of concrete problems for which Togliatti pleads. Sri Kumaramangalam would have done well if he had tried to point out the defects of my study in this respect. That would have done him good as much as it would have done me good. That would also have helped the process of that serious discussion on the problems of National Integration for which I have pleaded in my article on the problems of National Integration published in the Sunday Standard in 1963. Let me here quote the relevant para from that article :

“It is proposed in the following pages to make an objective study of the issues involved in what is called the problem of National Integration. It is necessary at the outset to state that the conclusions arrived at by the writer are tentative. They are offered with a view to provoking discussion rather than by way of giving final conclusions. It is hoped that the points made here will be subjected to serious criticism by those who hold different views and that the writer will be able to profit by such serious criticism.”

Sri Kumaramangalam has not cared to make his critique of my work on the problem of National Integration. I do not know whether he considers it so “dogmatist” and “escapist” as to deserve no consideration, no comment at his hands. Does he perhaps consider it beneath him even to read the work of such a horrible “dogmatist”? How otherwise could he have asked me whether I agree or disagree with the concrete detailed solution that he has put forward for the

solution of the language crisis in our country ? After all, I have dealt with the language problem, offered solutions for it, in the course of my articles and documents on National Integration.

From the way he put the question to me, it would appear as if Sri Kumaramangalam considers himself to be the first and only person in India who put forward such propositions as the equality of all Indian languages, the need for elevating the mother-tongue in the states to the sovereign position, the necessity for abolishing the supremacy of English, the role of Hindi only as a like language and not in any position superior to other Indian languages, etc. Let me humbly point out to him that he is a little immodest in making this claim.

These are propositions which have been the basis of the practical work of the Communist movement for the last several years. As for myself, let me quote several parts from my article on National Integration published in the Sunday Standard in 1963 :

“The leaders of the ruling party and several publicists include, along with casteism and communalism, what they call ‘linguism’ in the category of fissiparous trends. As a matter of fact, it is not unusual for some of them to call the demand for the strict application of the linguistic principle to the formation of states and for the fixation of their boundaries as one variant of communalism.

“This, however, is opposed to the best democratic traditions of our freedom movement. The necessity to use the mother-tongue for all political administrative and cultural activities has always been recognised by the leaders of the freedom movement since the days of Tilak and other leaders of the radical national movement. This was further carried forward in the Gandhian phase of the freedom movement. It was in this new phase that the Congress organisation began to transact its business at the State level through the mother-tongue ; to this end it accepted the principle of linguistic homogeneity in fixing the boundaries of provinces for the organisational work of the Congress. At the all-India level too, Hindi was recognised as one of the two languages in which work was to be done, the other being English.

“Our freedom movement respected all Indian languages not as ‘vernaculars’ with an inferior status, as they used to be under the British rule, but as people’s languages which are neither superior nor inferior to any other language. Such an approach to Indian languages has thus become part of the democratic consciousness generated by the freedom movement. It is not disruptive of national unity if those who speak any Indian language desire that their own language should have a status not inferior to either English or Hindi. It is, on the other hand, disruptive of national unity for the enthusiasts and advocates of either English or Hindi to demand that either of these or both should become the national language[s], all the other languages being relegated to the position of ‘regional languages’.

“Recognition of our country as multi-lingual with equality of status given to all the Indian languages as national languages does not, of course, mean denial of the necessity for a common language or languages to be used for inter-provincial communication and all-India contact. Such a language or languages are obviously essential if different linguistic groups are not to remain isolated from one another, if the Indian people are to have a common economic, political and cultural life.

“Such a common language or two common languages, however, cannot take the position which English used to occupy under the British regime. It (they) cannot become the language[s] of administration at any level other than the central ; even at the central level, those who do not know enough of the common language[s] to speak and write in it should be permitted to use their mother-tongue. Business of the administrative and political organs at the state and lower levels should necessarily be transacted in the language of the State. Education too cannot be imparted in the common all-India language[s] but in the mother-tongue. In neither of these respects should the common language[s] be equated with English.

“The recognition of the multi-lingual character of India and of the need for a common all-India language or two all-India languages does certainly raise several practical problems. Linguistic minorities

are bound to exist in every State. They cannot be expected to get their children educated in the mother-tongue of the State in which they happen to live for business or for employment. Nor can they be fluent enough in the language of the State to use it in all their businesses with the Government. Some arrangements for the use of minority languages or the all-India language will, therefore, have to be made to meet the requirements of these linguistic minorities.

“Again, in relation to the work of the Centre, while working towards the progressive introduction of the all-India language as the vehicle of consultation and administration, the use of other Indian languages will also have to be permitted. Deliberations of Parliament and other all-India bodies for consultation will have to be arranged in the way in which it is done in several multi-lingual countries : simultaneous translation of every speech into languages other than the one in which it is delivered. This will enable every member who cannot follow the common all-India language[s] to follow the proceedings and participate in them. (Contrast this with the present position when no less than 20% of Members of Parliament are unable to follow proceedings because they have no knowledge of either English or Hindi.)

“The secretarial and other work of the Centre too will have to be so arranged that, while keeping broadly to the use of the common language[s], the use of other languages is also permitted ; this would require the setting up of adequate machinery for the translation of notes, memoranda, etc. from one language to another.

“In the field of education too, practical problems of a rather difficult nature would arise. For, while it is necessary that the mother-tongue should be used as the medium of instruction even for higher education, every student will have to acquire a high standard of knowledge in the all-India language and at least in one foreign language. Every linguistic area will also have to cater to the needs of linguistic minorities in that area, as well as of those students from the linguistic majority itself who want to take the all-India language as their medium, since they would like to go in for all-India work.

“Providing for all these requirements would naturally raise difficult problems. The question however is : are these difficulties to be stated in order to solve them, or as arguments with which to prevent the recognition of India as a multi-lingual country ? If the difficulties are recognised with a determination to overcome them, everyone of these problems can be resolved.

“Use of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction even at the University level; provision of facilities for linguistic minorities to get their children educated through their own mother-tongue at lower levels and through the all-India language at higher levels; use of the common all-Indian language as medium of instruction even for students belonging to the linguistic majority of a state if they so desire; progressively greater use of the common language by the administrative organs of the Centre even while use of all other languages is permitted and arranged for; setting up the machinery for the simultaneous translation of all speeches delivered in Parliament—all these can be arranged if only the political leaders of the country recognise the multi-lingual character of the country with equality of status for all-Indian languages, even while using one of them as the all-India language. The real question is : Do they recognise India to be a multi-lingual country and the need to assure every linguistic group that theirs is not an ‘inferior’ language but has equality of status with other languages ?”

Several months before I wrote the above, I submitted a note on the National Integration Problem to the National Council of the Communist Party of India in which I said :

“*On the question of language* : We firmly adhere to the principle of replacing English by the regional languages at the state level and Hindi at the Centre as official language. The transition from English to Hindi at the Centre should be simultaneous with the same from English to the regional languages in the states. The preparation for this transition which is being made by the Centre with regard to Hindi should also be made with all necessary central assistance in the states. At the same time, for the transition period (the duration of which should be decided with the consent of the

non-Hindi-speaking regions), English should be given the status of an associate official language. The above guiding lines should be applied to the question of medium of instruction as well, the aim in this respect being as rapid a transition as possible from English to the regional languages with necessary guarantees for a high standard of knowledge of Hindi and English”.

The above passage with some modifications and several additions has been included as item 18, changes in the state structure, outlined in the programme of my Party. Ideas not dissimilar in content have also been incorporated in the programme of the Party to which Sri Kumaramangalam belongs. To conceal all these facts and to claim that it was Sri Kumaramangalam who for the first time offered “a solution for the language crisis” is, to say the least, the height of arrogance.

Anybody who is unprejudiced and patient enough to study what I have written on the problem of National Integration will see that I am the last person to deserve the epithets used by Sri Kumaramangalam against me. It will, on the other hand, be recognised that I have given thought to the many-sided problem of National Integration which I have tried to understand through painstaking study of its different aspects. It is this study that brought to me the conclusion stated in my critique of Sri Kumaramangalam’s book. That conclusion, it may be recalled, is that—

“It would be totally unrealistic to consider the question of language[s] as a question in itself. It should be seen as part of the problem of building the unity of the Indian people belonging to various castes, having faith in various religious beliefs, speaking various languages, etc. into one unified political community. This unified political community has to carry forward the struggle for freedom by consolidating the political independence won in 1947 into a state which completes the democratic revolution and lays the basis for the socialist revolution.”

This probably is not acceptable to Sri Kumaramangalam. If so, he would better try to challenge my conclusion by doing what precisely is suggested by Togliatti—making a serious study of such

“concrete problems of our current policy” as casteism, communalism, tribal separatism, provincialism and regionalism, as well as their relation to the linguistic-cultural factor. I would have respect for Sri Kumaramangalam if he had done this and if, on the basis of such a painstaking study of the problems of National Integration, he were to prove that I am such a horrible “dogmatist” and “escapist” as he now calls me without any proof.