

COMMUNIST PARTY
AND
THE PROBLEMS
OF
MUSLIM MINORITY

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MUSLIM MINORITY AND ITS PROBLEMS

THE NEARLY SIXTY MILLION MUSLIMS constitute the largest religious minority in our country, and in the state of Jammu and Kashmir the majority community. Spread all over the country, from Kashmir to Kerala and from Assam to Gujarat, their population in a number of states is considerable. More than half of them live in what is known as the Hindi-speaking region, comprising Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Haryana. The problem of the Muslim minority is particularly acute in this region.

It is interesting to note that, barring Pakistan and Indonesia, India has the largest Muslim population in any country of the world.

Indian Muslims are an integral part of the national life and have made rich contributions to the glorious cultural heritage of this great and ancient land. Leaving aside the British and some stray invaders whose sole desire was to loot and plunder the wealth of India, all the peoples and races that came in various waves from outside throughout the centuries settled down here and made it their home. This applies to Muslims as much as to the early Aryans. Indian historical development is a continuous process and those who consider the so-called 'Muslim period' as a 'gap' are only replacing history by religious bigotry. If the British imperialists had not intervened, the Indian society might as well have taken the next step in its development—from feudalism to modern capitalism. Sher Shah Suri's famous Grand Trunk Road, with its milestones and 'serais' (rest-houses), couriers and police protection given to the people 'to go along tossing about their gold', is an index of the growth of the forces of merchant capitalism within the womb

of feudalism. It is sheer distortion to place the so-called 'Muslim period' in the same category as British rule.

It was under the British rule that Indian history was written with communal overtones and those who received their education under this dispensation began to think and talk of a 'Hindu period' and a 'Muslim period'. The British policy of 'divide and rule' had many facets and this was about the worst. In spite of this poisonous 'education' Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder many a time during the nearly two hundred years (from the battle of Plassey in 1757 to independence in 1947) to overthrow the British rule. The history of the freedom movement is rich with many demonstrations of Hindu-Muslim unity. But the national freedom movement also developed certain negative features. Religion and politics were mixed up frequently and religious revivalism was encouraged by many national leaders. The negative features were utilised by the erstwhile British rulers to create serious divisions on a religious basis and ultimately to partition the country on the eve of their departure.

When the partition took place in August 1947, the overwhelming majority of Muslims living in the areas of present Indian state decided to stay in their homeland, i.e. in India. In fact many of the 'Indian' Muslims who are now in Pakistan would never have gone there but for certain compelling factors beyond their control. Many others who went to Pakistan under extraordinary circumstances following the partition would have liked to come back to their homeland when somewhat normal conditions returned. Thousands of 'Pakistanis' are in India on temporary permits and they are genuinely anxious to settle down here. The fact has to be recognised and appreciated that in spite of partition and the terrible circumstances created thereafter millions of Indian Muslims decided not to migrate but to stay in the land of their birth.

Soon after the partition certain communal forces, particularly those represented by the RSS and its political protege, the Jana Sangh, started sowing suspicion about the loyalty of Indian

Muslims towards India. All Muslims were called Pakistani agents. However, the behaviour of the Indian Muslims during the Indo-Pak war of 1965 (and of the Kashmiri Muslims earlier when the Pakistani raiders and armies came some time after independence) exposed the utter maliciousness of the RSS-Jana Sangh theory and propaganda. The heroic valour displayed by Abdul Hamid and many others at the front and the fact that Pakistani spies were mostly discovered not among those hitherto suspected but in some other quarters showed that patriotism is not the monopoly of any particular section.

SECULAR CONSTITUTION

The partition was accompanied by communal massacres both in India and Pakistan. It is known that these abominable happenings on both sides were the handiwork of the British imperialists, of the administrative apparatus that they had left behind and of the organised communal gangs that they had always encouraged.

However, our national movement for freedom had inherited certain positive traditions and Hindu-Muslim unity was one of them. In the midst of communal carnage there were many voices of sanity and reason that were raised in defence of the minorities. The Communist Party, in spite of its numerical weakness, defended and protected the minorities. Many communists gave their lives for this cause.

Mahatma Gandhi made the supreme sacrifice of his life in this noble cause when he fell to the bullet of an assassin, a Hindu youth, who was the product of the RSS, of its organisation and ideology. This paramilitary fascist and communal organisation considered the time opportune to impose a constitution and a way of life that it had been preaching since its birth—a constitution based on what is known as the theory of 'Hindu rashtra'.

However, the founders of our constitution, in spite of their many weaknesses, made a constitution based on secularism. In

part III, dealing with fundamental rights, the constitution of India declares:

'15. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. . . (1) the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to. . . etc.'

Further, article 16 declares:

'(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the state.'

In another place, in article 28, the constitution has separated religion from the state:

'28. Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions — (1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds.'

That no religious instruction will be imposed on anyone in an educational institution recognised or aided by the state is also clearly laid down in subsection 3 of the same article:

'No person attending any educational institution recognised by the state or receiving aid out of state funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.'

The constitution guarantees protection of cultural and educational rights of minorities under articles 29 and 30:

'29. Protection of interests of minorities — (1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part

thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

'(2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

'30. Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions — (1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

'(2) The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.'

What is the significance and meaning of these provisions of the constitution? The Indian state is a secular state, the state has no religion, it treats followers of all religions (and no religion) as equal citizens and assures full protection to their religious and cultural rights.

It might be added that Urdu which is spoken by most of the Muslims in the Hindi-speaking region was included in eighth schedule of the constitution as one of the 14 (now 15) languages of India. Facilities for instruction in the mothertongue and for the appointment of a special officer for linguistic minorities are provided for in article 350 A and B.

Good and sound principles for building a modern secular state, free from fanaticism and obscurantism.

However, in sharp contradistinction certain pernicious ideas were enunciated and preached by the RSS ideologue—the guru—and in the conditions following the partition these ideas found a fertile soil, particularly in the north.

PERNICIOUS IDEOLOGY OF RSS

When the British were here, the RSS, which not only never participated in the freedom struggle but was consistently pro-

British, had started preaching its ideology of hatred of non-Hindus, of the glorification of the caste system, of the superiority of the Hindus a la the Hitlerian theory of the superiority of the German race and of the hatred of the Jews. In fact the RSS guru drew quite a lot of inspiration from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

In his *Bunch of Thoughts* the RSS guru, M. S. Golwalkar, pronounced:

'Those who declared "No *swaraj* without Hindu-Muslim unity" (reference is to a famous statement of Gandhiji—M.F.) have thus perpetrated the greatest treason on our society. They have committed the most heinous sin of killing the life-spirit of a great and ancient people... The direct result was that Hindus were defeated at the hands of Muslims in 1947.'

So August 1947 did not bring independence to India but defeat of Hindus at the hands of Muslims!

As early as 1939 in his book, *We And Our Nationhood Defined*, Golwalkar had warned the minorities:

'The non-Hindu people in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-long tradition but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead, in a word, they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country wholly subordinate to the Hindu nation, claiming, deserving no privileges, far be any preferential treatment—not even citizens' rights.'

It was not just a question of preaching such ideas. The RSS organised its activities on their basis. After the assassination of Gandhiji the RSS was banned and the Government of India, the then prime minister and home minister (Nehru and Sardar Patel) took a serious view of the antinational activities of the RSS.

In reply to a letter that Golwalkar wrote to prime minister Nehru, the latter's secretary replied on 27 August 1948:

'... he wants me to inform you also that he is not prepared to accept your statement that the RSS are free from blame or that the charges against them are without foundation. Government have a great deal of evidence in their possession to show that the RSS were engaged in activities which were antinational and prejudicial from the point of view of public good. Just before the banning of the RSS he is informed that the UP government sent you a note on some of the evidence they have collected about such activities of the RSS in UP. Other provinces have also such evidence in their possession. Even after the ban we have received information about the undesirable activities of old members of the RSS. This information continues to come to us even now. You will appreciate that in view of this government cannot consider the RSS as a harmless organisation from the public point of view.'

Thus in the most crucial phase of our life as an independent nation we are confronted with two ideologies and two outlooks on how to build the new India; one secular and modern and the other, obscurantist and communal. The RSS challenged the entire basis of our national movement, its heritage and traditions. It challenged the very basis of our constitution.

But what did the congress rulers do to contain this menace, to liquidate it ideologically and politically, to educate the younger generation in the ideas of secularism and democracy?

It did not take the congress leaders long to be convinced that after all the RSS was a 'cultural organisation'! Sardar Patel was anxious to lift the ban and he did it in 1949. Is it any wonder that today the RSS-Jana Sangh glorify the Sardar and denigrate Gandhiji and Nehru? After a brief 'cultural interlude', the RSS revived its hate campaign against the minorities in general and the Muslims in particular and even founded an open political party called the Jana Sangh.

With the passage of time the RSS-Jana Sangh and their guru have also grown bolder and their selfconfidence about

establishing a 'Hindu rashtra' as opposed to the concept of a secular democratic state (which the guru considers to be pure humbug) has considerably increased.

According to a write-up in the New Delhi edition of *Indian Express* (January 1969): 'During 1967 there was a 13 per cent growth in the membership of the RSS and a 20 per cent increase in the "guru dakshina"—cash offerings to the guru. The number of persons trained through "shakhas"—branches—is estimated to be 30 lakhs, the number of wholetime workers at its disposal about 30,000.'

Which democrat will not consider it to be a menacing development?

A Jana-Sangh-minded daily, *Pratap* (Urdu), published from New Delhi has recently declared that in no democratic country of the world do the religious minorities have the same rights as the majority enjoys! Writing editorially on 8 December 1968, this paper stated:

'Some people have it in their mind that they have certain rights. In any democratic country only the majority has rights. The minority has to be tolerated, but it has no rights of its own. I know some Muslims will get terribly disturbed after reading this. But what is the remedy if even 20 years after independence they are happy to live in dreamland. Maybe in dreamland the minorities have some rights. But in the world of reality the minority will only have those rights which the majority bestows upon it at its pleasure.'

(The *Pratap* was commenting upon a recent supreme court judgement on 'music before mosque')

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CONGRESS

For full two decades after independence, the Congress party enjoyed the monopoly of political power in the country. It was the ruling party at the centre and in the states. Many of its leaders, and above all Nehru, were men of good intentions

and their outlook was modern and secular. They desired to build India on the basis of secular democracy, in terms of the constitution of India which they themselves had helped to make. But good intentions are not enough to build a nation.

There were some others in the Congress party, at the centre and in the states, whose outlook on life was obscurantist and who displayed, in vital matters of policy, communal tendencies or showed weakness for communal elements. Since many of them occupied important positions in the administrations, they allowed, by their conduct, violations of the vital provisions of the constitution and of important declarations in relation to the minorities, to Muslim minority in particular.

SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

Firstly, no serious attempt was made to rewrite Indian history and to provide a uniform textbook of history throughout the country. In fact, after independence, if anything, history has been further distorted and all sorts of 'historians' have been allowed to have a free play with the mind of the new generation.

It took the congress government almost 20 years to set up a committee to examine the textbooks that are being prescribed in schools in various states of India. The committee set up by the union ministry of education on 1 September 1966 consisted of Prof K. G. Saiyidain (chairman), Shri J. P. Naik, Dr V. S. Jha, Shri Hayatullah Ansari, Shri Gopinath Aman, Dr R. H. Dave and Mrs S. Doraiswamy. The report was recently submitted to the ministry. Here are some of the important points from the report.

No attempt has been made so far by the government to lay down any clear-cut policy or guideline on how religious and historical material should be presented in textbooks for young children.

The present-day textbooks used in our schools suffer from very serious defects not only of content, presentation and pro-

duction but also of another kind, namely that they contain passages which are likely to hurt the religious sentiments of certain minority communities. This has naturally led some people to voice their grievances openly in the press as well as in Parliament.

In some history textbooks certain historical incidents are depicted in such a manner that they tend to arouse ill will or hatred against certain other religious groups and personalities. This is obviously detrimental to the promotion of mutual understanding, tolerance, and good will among young people belonging to different religious communities. It hampers attempts to bring about national integration.

For an instance, *Hamara Itihas*, part II (a Shankar Prakashan Publication) which is taught in the UP schools, abounds with references tending to be disparaging to one particular community and is likely to engender a feeling of ill will towards that community.

The object of education imparted in the schools is not primarily to train children as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, etc. but as good, broadminded, tolerant Indian citizens receptive to the new ideas of space travel, nuclear energy and other spectacular technological changes.

Much of the difficulty in the selection and treatment of historical matter would be overcome if we remember that, generally speaking, the future is more important than the past and instead of spending time and energy in schools on unimportant controversies over past history, we laid stress on the fact that as a people we have to learn to live together and use the lessons of history for that purpose.

The problem of selecting content is thus of great importance in the early stages of teaching history when the guiding principle should be not to give all the facts but to pick out those which may exercise the desired influence on the minds of children. One of the most objectionable features in the teaching of history, as well as in the writing of textbooks, is that it allows the actions of individuals to be interpreted as an

expression of the faith that they happened to profess. This should be avoided at all costs and the children should be definitely guided against communal or sectarian 'stereotypes' which are often foolishly or maliciously built up in their minds. (*Secular Democracy*, New Delhi, November 1968)

Secondly, Urdu language has not been given its due. Crores of Urdu-speaking people rightly feel that the language has been allowed to be almost killed in the Hindi-speaking region. Whether or not Urdu should be given the status of a second regional language in UP, Bihar, etc. may be debated. But it has been denied even the facilities that it should have got as a minority language—in terms of the constitution.

The so-called conflict between Hindi and Urdu is artificial and in any case no one is demanding that Hindi should not occupy the place of honour in the states of the Hindi-speaking region. What is demanded are certain facilities for the Urdu-speaking people and it is quite a democratic demand.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF MUSLIMS

Indian Muslims are a part of Indian society and, generally speaking, along with other segments of this society, they must also face the consequences of a certain type of economic development that has proceeded during the last two decades of independence, i.e. capitalist development and development of monopoly capitalism. It means more unemployment, greater misery, rising prices and corruption for the common people, whatever their religion, region or caste.

Therefore, in order to get rid of their miserable plight the working people of India must fight against monopoly capital and establish a national-democratic state. Indian people cannot solve their problems of bread, clothing and shelter without taking this path.

But thanks to certain communal policies and practices the Muslims have suffered certain discriminatory treatment within the present framework of Indian society.

Take the position of Muslims in the administrative services. A recent survey conducted by a supreme court lawyer and published in an English weekly of Delhi revealed the startling fact that in ministry after ministry in the Government of India there is hardly a Muslim, even at the petty officers' level. There may be a few clerks here and there.

The editor of a journal revealed to this writer that in the School of Indian Administrative Services at Mussoorie he discovered only one Muslim among 500 or so undergoing training. He added: 'How much difference would it have made to this institution if 50 Muslims were studying here! Then the vision of the trainees would have been much broader.'

Take another aspect of the economic condition in which Muslims find themselves in the Hindi-speaking region—UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, etc.

A large number of Muslims who stayed on in India after the partition were engaged in traditional handicrafts like manufacture of cloth (Eastern UP and Bihar, the Momin community), glass bangles (Ferozabad, UP), brass utensils (Moradabad, UP), leather (Agra), zariwork (Banaras), scissors (Meerut), locks (Aligarh) and a number of other crafts. Lakhs were employed in these traditional crafts and their products were famous all over India and even abroad.

It is interesting to note that Muslims engaged in these traditional industries were, by and large, followers of nationalist Muslim organisations and were, therefore, opposed to the Muslim League ideology of separatism. Even in the heyday of Muslim League popularity in the undivided India this section of Muslims generally voted for nationalist Muslims (who were allied to the Indian National Congress) and against the Muslim League candidates. The influence of nationalist Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind and of the Momin Conference was considerably strong among them.

And the strange thing is that this section of Muslims suffered the most economically after the partition. The traditional centres of handicraft industries were ruined and the congress

governments that were in power in these states throughout the two decades failed to protect them. A survey of these handicraft centres made by a representative of the Communist Party of India about two years ago showed the deplorable economic condition in which lakhs of Muslim artisans find themselves. The grip of the moneylender has tightened, because the congress government did not take active steps to encourage the formation of cooperatives, to provide them with necessary raw materials and cheap credit facilities. If these things had been done, the economic life of Muslim artisans would have become stable.

THE RIOTS

Perhaps no other factor has demoralised Indian Muslims so much as the series of riots that have been taking place in different parts of the country during the last 20 years. Their incidence has increased during the recent period and even states and areas which were comparatively free from these ugly developments have been affected. There is hardly a state in the Indian union which has not witnessed a riot recently.

It was a series of serious riots in the late fifties that compelled the Government of India to call a conference on national integration in New Delhi in 1961 presided over by late Jawaharlal Nehru. A repetition of the same phenomena, and this time more widespread and more menacing, brought about the holding of another national integration conference in Srinagar in June last year. Prime minister Indira Gandhi presided over this conference.

The term 'riots' is in fact a misnomer. What in fact is communal violence directed against a particular minority community passes by the name of 'riot'. It has been generally noted that there is an *organised hand* behind these so-called riots, that they are not spontaneous outbursts of frenzy. A minor incident is created or utilised by well-organised gangs to attack the minorities. The administrative apparatus, which

has been infiltrated in the recent period by nonsecular or communal elements, does not offer the necessary protection nor does it take stringent measures to curb and punish the organisers of the 'riots'.

There is enough evidence to show that the RSS and Jana Sangh bear a direct responsibility for these developments. The Communist Party of India is not alone in coming to this conclusion after a close and thorough study of the various developments connected with 'riots'. This is also the opinion of many other secular parties and individuals.

A write-up in the New Delhi edition of the *Indian Express* (1 January 1969) on the activities of the RSS-Jana Sangh is revealing in this context:

"The growth of the RSS has coincided with the recent wave of communal riots in the country. The total number of deaths in communal riots between 1954 and 1962 was 314, but in 1967 alone the number touched 301.

"During the first six months of 1968, this figure had already been surpassed. And in all the killings the percentage of Muslim deaths was consistently 84.

"The tribal belts in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh too have shown signs of communal tension for the first time in their history—only after the RSS began its work there.

"Besides the extraordinary ferocity of these riots, there were some other peculiar features of the situation. New areas have been infected by the communal virus. There were fewer incidents of mob violence, but longer spells of planned "stray stabbings". There were few lathi casualties, more knife wounds.

"The knife, used in a particular manner showing a trained hand behind it, was very much in evidence in places as far apart as Allahabad and Karimganj. The home ministry has had reports of the RSS hand in these riots and killings. The congress president, Mr S. Nijalingappa, too has said that the communal riots were preceded by tours of RSS leaders at several places.

"The home minister, Mr Y. B. Chavan, has characterised the RSS as "antinational inasmuch as it was antiseccular". He has also described it as a political organisation and, therefore, its members are barred from government services.

"The government is "concerned" about the long-range plan of the RSS to enter the services and is understood to have instituted an inquiry into the extent of such infiltration.'

Confronted with a mass of evidence against itself the Jana Sangh is now trying to hoodwink public opinion. In November 1968, the Jana Sangh president, A. B. Vajpayee, released to the press a report on 'communal riots' prepared by a sub-committee of the Jana Sangh. The report makes strange reading.

Firstly, an attempt has been made to show that the original sin in each case was committed by Muslims. Then it is admitted that everywhere Muslims in the main were the sufferers. Wherever an official happened to be a Muslim he is shown to be always partial.

Secondly, there is a crude attempt to involve the Communist Party in certain 'riots'.

The suggestions made by the Jana Sangh working committee are interesting. The Jana Sangh demands that 'Police and administration must be encouraged to perform their duties in such situation boldly and impartially. Political leaders should not meddle with the processes of law.'

It appears to be an innocuous suggestion. But in fact it is not so. The implication of the suggestion is that the officials are already performing their duty well and that they should not be asked to catch and punish the rioters.

'A close watch... on elements suspected to be accumulating arms' is recommended. But this is after the Jana Sangh has already reached the conclusion that in every riot Muslims were collecting arms. So no watch on RSS-Jana Sangh!

There are some other suggestions too. They appear to be very nice principles. But the context in which they are enun-

ciated in the report makes it clear that the Jana Sangh considers that the source of communalism is somewhere else—in any case the Jana Sangh is absolved of communal politicking!

However, facts speak against the conclusions of the Jana Sangh report.

MUSLIM SEPARATISM: WHOM DOES IT HELP?

We have examined some of the main problems which Indian Muslims have been facing since independence. We have pinned down the responsibility of the Congress party which ruled the country during this period as well as of the vicious communal organisations which have thrived on a pernicious ideology. We have also pointed out how this situation would not have come about if the secular and democratic provisions of the constitution which the Indian people gave unto themselves had been implemented in letter and spirit. Now let us examine the other aspect of communal politics.

Taking advantage of the frustration of Muslims, certain Muslim communal organisations have been active among them with their own dangerous ideas of separatism. They preach communalism and attempt to create antisecular and antidemocratic outlook. The aim of their activity is to create a permanent cleavage between Hindus and Muslims and to keep the Muslim community away from the common national stream. The Jamaat-i-Islami, the Majlis-i-Mushawarat and now the Muslim Majlis have become vehicles of a separatist ideology among Muslims. It is unfortunate that of late certain sections of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, the organisation of nationalist Muslims, have also been drawn into this dangerous business.

Muslim separatism as represented by the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Muslim Majlis (of Dr J. A. Faridi) on the one hand, and the aggressive communalism of RSS-Jana Sangh on the other, are in fact two sides of the same coin. While preaching hatred between Hindus and Muslims, the two sets of communalists would not mind having joint confabulations to

divide their spheres of influence. It is interesting to record that some months back a foremost leader of Jamaat-i-Islami, Mohammed Muslim (editor of their party organ, *Dawat*), held secret parleys at Lucknow with the Jana Sangh leader, Ram Prakash (ex-deputy chief minister of UP). What they discussed is not known. But it is reported that the Jamaat-i-Islami leader would have liked his organisation to be recognised by the Jana Sangh as the representative of Indian Muslims!

About the same time as this conference between two communal leaders took place, the *Dawat*, Urdu daily of Jamaat-i-Islami, published from Delhi, carried an article on Hindu-Muslim relations which reveals the same mental outlook as is being displayed by the RSS guru. Here are some relevant quotations from that article (25 June 1968):

‘Hindus and Muslims are in reality two separate social structures, standard-bearers of two separate cultures and are separate entities.

‘As long as the Government of India and Hindus of Hindustan will go on repeating that Muslims are a part of a composite nation, that their culture is the same as that of their community (Hindus), their social customs and institutions are the same, their thoughts should also be the same as that of the whole nation, till then there is no solution of the conflict.

‘Is the Hindu of today prepared to accept that Hindus and Muslims are not one nation? Even now if he considers Hindus and Muslims are one nation, then it is useless to search for a solution.’

For the Jamaat-i-Islami nationalism, secularism and democracy are alien concepts borrowed from the west and must be discarded by Muslims. In his book: *Introduction to Jamaat-i-Islami*, the leader of the Jamaat, Moulvi Abdul Lais, has made the position of his organisation quite clear in this respect. It is repeated in the *Dawat* from time to time.

In this context it would be worth while examining the attitude of the Jamaat-i-Islami in connection with the Israeli aggression against the Arab countries of UAR, Syria and

Jordan. It is well known that the Jamaat-i-Islami displays a hostile attitude towards President Nasser of UAR and the Jamaat's interpretation of defeat of the Arabs in the war launched by the Israeli aggressors (supported by the US, British and West-German imperialism) was that the concept of Arab nationalism was a deviation from Islam. Hence the defeat! So discard Arab nationalism, i.e. discard anti-imperialism, and in that lies the salvation!

The Jamaat-i-Islami preaches the concept of a theocratic state (*hakumat-i-ilahia*). Moulana Moududi, the main ideologue of Jamaat-i-Islami (who has settled down in Pakistan), calls it theodemocracy in which the ameer (head) and the council to advise him will be elected by the *Muslim elite alone*. In case of difference of opinion in the council, the *ameer's* verdict shall be considered final.

The moulana considers socialism to be against Islam; defends private property and right of the capitalists to exploit. Nationalisation is not permitted in his concept. Without touching upon the question of the monstrous growth of capitalism today and of the development of monopoly capitalism, the moulana brings in the question of *zakat* and division of property after the death of a person, as if they can be the answer to modern capitalist exploitation. The essence of the matter is that the Jamaat-i-Islami is opposed to abolition of capitalism.

The Jamaat is also opposed to the separation of religion from politics. How the Indian state can be a religious state and yet reconcile the concepts preached by the moulana on the hand and the guru on the other is not explained.

It is no coincidence that both the moulana and the guru were opposed to the freedom struggle and both are admirers of Hitler and Mussolini. When in the postwar period the people of India, Hindus and Muslims, were fighting the British, Moulana Moududi was advising the Muslims to keep away from the struggle. Speaking at Pathankot on 10 May 1947, the moulana said:

'As far as Muslims are concerned, I speak to them frankly, that the nonreligious or secular national democracy is opposed to Islamic thought. If you bow before it you will be turning your back to Quran. If you participate in its formation and growth you will be doing treachery with your rasool. If you unfurl its flag you will be raising the flag of revolt against god... Wherever you may be you should condemn this nationalistic, secular (nonbeliever) democracy.'

The admiration for fascism is expressed in the following terms. In his book *Political Conflicts*, the moulana said:

'The question of majority and minority arises only for the nationalities and not for parties. The parties that have a strong ideology and living collective philosophy are always small in number in the beginning. In spite of being small in number, they rule over vast majorities. Such was the position of the Fascist Party of Mussolini and the Nazi Party of Hitler. A strong and organised party comes to power only on the basis of its strong belief and strict discipline. "Islam does not accept majority as the basis of rights."'

The Jamaat-i-Islami has thus worked out a full ideological scheme to encourage separatism among Muslims. Not satisfied with ideological preachings, the leadership of the Jamaat-i-Islami recently assumed an active political role. It took a leading part in organising all the Muslim organisations into what is known as 'Muslim Majlis-i-Mushawarat', in August 1964, under the presidentship of Dr Syed Mahmud. The Majlis-i-Mushawarat took an active part in the general election of 1967 and supported a large number of candidates. It claims that in UP alone 38 MLAs and 2 MPs were elected because of its support. The Jamaat-i-Islami conceived of the Muslim Majlis-i-Mushawarat for two reasons: one, to get a broader political base; and the other, to use 'Muslim consolidation' as a bargaining counter either with the Congress party or with any other party that can deliver the goods, not even excluding the Jana

Sangh. (We have already referred to the talks which a Jamaat-i-Islami leader recently had with the UP Jana Sangh leader, an ex-deputy chief minister).

MUSLIM MAJLIS: ANOTHER VARIANT OF SEPARATISM

Towards the end of last year, Dr Faridi, one of the leaders of the Mushawarat, felt confident to launch a separate political party of Muslims and called it Muslim Majlis. It was started in UP to which state the overambitious Dr Faridi belongs and the proposal is to spread it to other states. Dr Faridi, the founder-president of the Majlis, likes to call himself the 'Quaid-i-Millat' or the great leader of the Muslim nation. He has also started publishing an Urdu daily (from Lucknow) called *Quaid*. In one of its recent issues (9 December 1968), a certain A. M. Azad wrote an article on the Muslim Majlis and explained its *raison d'être*.

How does he argue for a separate party of Muslims? After the partition the Muslim leaders ran away to Pakistan; Indian Muslims were left leaderless. The formation of the Mushawarat (in August 1964) was the first attempt to bring Muslims together. Then followed the general election. A large number of candidates were elected with Mushawarat's support. But they did not prove worthy of the trust. Hence arose the need for a regular party of Indian Muslims. The Muslim Majlis (formed in October 1968) in UP fulfils the need.

Azad sums up the position (of Muslim separatism) in these words: 'Today the situation is that in the country there is no political party, the Congress, the Communist Party or any other party, which can render justice to Indian Muslims or heal their wounds which are still fresh even after a lapse of so much time... Today Muslims will have to take their destiny in their own hands and will have to create their own beacon-light to blaze the path of their future.'

The new trend of thinking that is being actively encouraged is to bring the Muslims and the scheduled castes, the backward classes and other minorities together. According to Dr Faridi and his school of thought, which includes several scheduled caste and backward caste leaders also, this conglomeration will constitute 94 per cent of population in India. Confronted with this 'mighty united front of 94 per cent', the upper classes (6 per cent) will come down on bended knees and with folded hands and surrender!

Neither Dr Faridi nor others of his way of thinking are so naive as to take their arithmetical formula seriously. Dr Faridi wants to create false illusions and a false sense of self-confidence among Muslims. They are being led to believe that a new 'quaid' has been born to deliver them from their misery.

Following the formation of the Muslim Majlis, Dr Faridi has succeeded in holding conventions of Muslims, scheduled castes and backward castes in UP in recent months.

It is known that Dr Faridi has high political ambitions which he wants to achieve at the cost of Muslims. The attempts to consolidate the Muslims 'and to consolidate a front of Muslims and scheduled castes, etc.' are being made with the ultimate eye on the elections. Perhaps the attempt will end up in some kind of a deal with the Congress party.

Not to be left behind a Muslim congressman of UP also sponsored a convention recently and produced the so-called 'Congress Minorities Front'. Since the Congress has lost the support of Muslims, as was clearly evident in the fourth general election in 1967, some of its leaders are now trying the trick of a Congress Minorities Front! That Muslims are not likely to be taken in by such tricks is shown by the fact that the Minorities Front has proved a damp squib.

The Communist Party considers it harmful to the interest of the Muslim minority to remain aloof from the broad national and democratic current. For them to think that if they 'consolidate' themselves as Muslims they will be able to defend their interests better will be suicidal. Those who conduct a separatist

propaganda among Muslims and attempt to organise them on that basis are no friends of Muslims.

The problem of the Muslim minority has to be viewed as a question of the defence of democracy and it can be solved only by strengthening the forces of secular democracy in our national life.

The Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of India held in February 1968 at Patna in a resolution entitled 'Defeat Communalism' had correctly warned 'the Muslim minority against those among them who take advantage of their present unfortunate plight in order to keep them away from the common national stream, from democratic ideas and parties'.

It added: 'Such communal elements among Muslims only bring grist to the mill of aggressive communal parties like the Jana Sangh-RSS and make the task of secular parties difficult. The interests of common people, Hindus and Muslims, are the same. They can be defended in common democratic struggle.'

FOR A SECULAR AND DEMOCRATIC PATH

The Communist Party is the party of the oppressed, the party of the working people. It is consistently democratic and secular in its outlook, and is opposed to oppression in any form. In its constitution the Communist Party of India declares that it 'fights for national unity and national integration and firmly opposes all disruptionist and obscurantist conceptions of communalism and revivalism, untouchability and casteism, religious discrimination and denial of equal rights to women. It stands for secularism and freedom of conscience, for equality of opportunity for all, for the uplift of all backward sections and regions and the equal development and progress of all languages and cultures of India.'

The Communist Party in its Programme lays down:

'The national-democratic government will take all measures necessary to safeguard fully the religious and cultural rights of all religious minorities.

'It will take effective steps to end all discriminatory practices against them in the economic, administrative and other spheres of life.

'It will ban all propaganda which incites communal or religious hatred.'

These are not empty declarations. Communists practise what they preach and the history of the communist movement in India bears testimony to a rich tradition of promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, of the defence of the just interests of the minorities, of upholding secular democratic ideals even in the most difficult conditions. We do it not for getting votes of Muslims, but because our ideology of scientific socialism teaches us to follow this and no other course.

Wherever the theory of scientific socialism has triumphed oppression, inequality and discrimination have been abolished. The socialist revolution of 1917 led by Lenin emancipated the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. Today these Central Asian republics of USSR inhabited by Muslims are modern, prosperous regions, enjoying a high standard of living. They administer their own religious affairs and have full freedom of conscience.

Since communists fight for a lofty ideal, for socialism, they fight against all those who try to divide the people on the basis of religion, caste or region in order to maintain an oppressive system. Our opposition to communalism, Hindu or Muslim, stems from our communist outlook.

Since we do not view from a partisan angle the question of the defence of the Muslim minority against the aggressive forces of Hindu communalism, we make the greatest possible effort to unite the forces of secularism and democracy. That was the meaning of the magnificent convention against communalism organised by our party unit in Uttar Pradesh at the end of September 1968. A similar initiative undertaken by our Bihar party organisation resulted in a broadbased convention in

Patna in November 1968. The Bengal state council of our party has, in a recent meeting, taken a decision to launch a broadbased campaign against communalism. The efforts of the Communist Party in this direction have led to a great deal of realisation among the democratic forces to stand up to the challenge posed by the aggressive communal forces.

Muslims must realise that it is not separatism that will help them. They must have confidence in the evergrowing strength of the forces of secularism and democracy and they must do everything to support such forces. They should see the gathering momentum of public opinion among non-Muslims against the RSS-Jana Sangh menace. More and more people are speaking up against it today than before.

It is not a Jamaat-i-Islami or a Majlis-i-Mushawarat or a Muslim Majlis that can defend the real interests of the Muslim minority or fight the menace of aggressive Hindu communalism. The separatist Muslim organisations will be prepared to compromise with the RSS-Jana Sangh and join hands with the latter against secularism, nationalism, democracy and socialism.

The path advocated by the Communist Party, i.e. the path of unity with secular and democratic forces, is the only path that is going to help the Muslim minority.

In the words of the resolution of the Eighth Congress of our party 'we are confident that given such a unity, the aggressive forces of communalism can be defeated and secular democracy saved'.

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