

Oust Saffron, Save the Republic

In the face of country-wide protests, Thackeray has finally withdrawn his call to disrupt the Indo-Pak cricket series. A few days before, Vajpayee also had to declare that his government was not contemplating any constitutional amendment to ban religious conversion.

This is of course some victory for popular protests but we must not lose sight of the danger which still looms large on the country even as the nation celebrates the 49th Republic day. Thackeray has relented only after his Sainiks held the country to ransom for months on end with absolute impunity. And he has relented only to announce a "temporary suspension" of his campaign. Worse still, the face saving deal has been brokered by the central government and BJP while the RSS openly supported the Sena's crusade against having any cultural or sporting ties with Pakistan.

There is a disturbing but uncanny similarity with the Ayodhya developments in 1991-92. The then central government had brokered similar peace deals with the Sangh Parivar. Narsimha Rao had asked the nation to trust Kalyan Singh, and the laws of the land and history took their own course. The nation and the republic can certainly not live on the edge of small mercies borrowed from the unholy Sena-BJP nexus.

Meanwhile, after initially waxing eloquent against the persecution of Christians, Sonia Gandhi has also started echoing the worn-out saffron theme of Indian secularism being a great Hindu virtue. We have heard this argument so many times from Advani's mouth: "India is secular precisely because it is a Hindu-majority country".

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Every religion preaches harmony and tolerance, yet there is also a fundamentalist streak in every religion and under favourable historical conditions, it can be exploited to the hilt to articulate the most sectarian and fascist variety of politics. Secularism, as distinct from harmony consists entirely in separation of politics from religion and as such it cannot be the virtue, unique or otherwise of any religion.

We have had all these arguments six years ago. Liberal Hindu opinion certainly does have a role to play against the communal fascism of Hindutva, but diluting and degrading the communist-atheist current of secularism to the liberal Hindu discourse of harmony can only weaken and disorient anticomunal resistance on the whole. Faced with the growing fascist offensive against minority communities, our CPI-CPM friends have however once again opted to fall back on the Gandhian plank.

While not refusing to join hands even with the liberal Hindu school, revolutionary communists will always uphold the real meaning of secularism and remain the most consistent bulwark against communal fascism and for secular democracy. On the eve of the 49th Republic Day, we vow to intensify our resistance against the saffron anti-republican offensive. And our resistance will continue to draw inspiration from the glorious legacy of all who have shed their blood for

Anti - Corruption Committee Programmes

The Anti-Corruption Committee continuously holds street corner meetings and demonstrations in order to arrest the corruption prevailing in all the govt. departments which is spreading disease like AIDS.

The Corner meeting held at Bazar near Municipal Park From 5.00 pm to 6.00 pm on 31.1.99 was well attended by the public. The speakers explained in details about corrupt practices systematically being done by the Head of departments in the matter of appointments and purchase of stores thus looting the govt. funds beyond any limit. The demonstration and slogan shouting in front of the Bungalow of the Director Shipping Services on 3.2.99 at 4.00 pm drew a good gathering. The corruption committee observed that a number of govt. servants of the Marine department were undertaking construction work of the compound wall of the DSS Bungalow at Marine Hill. The house in which the DSS is residing is belong to APWD and therefore whatever construction/alteration is to be carried out by the APWD only and not by the occupants. The Deputation period of the said incumbent is already over and we do not understand why this men is continuing the marine department like a parasite.

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Text of the Letter Addressed to the Director of Postal Services by Shri M. Sadasivan, President Andaman Nagrik Samaj

You may perhaps be aware that one sub-post office is functioning in the premises of A&N Secretariat Complex since last several years for the benefit not only to the secretariat but also to the public attending there for various purposes.

The Postal Department had recently introduced the speed post system in this islands in all most all the Post Offices functioning in these islands and the general public of these islands are enjoying the benefits. But unfortunately, the speed post service has not been introduced in the Post Office functioning in the Secretariat Premises on reasons not known to us. If the speed post service introduced in the said post office also, it will benefit both the Secretariat as well as the public.

I shall be grateful if you would kindly introduce the speed post service in the Secretariat Post Office also for the convenience of all.

Yours faithfully,
(M.Sadasivan)
President.

a modern, secular and democratic India, from the martyrs of 1857 to those of Teangana and Naxalbari, from Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekar Azad to Charu Mazumder and Vinod Mishra.

ML Update