The relationship between politics and society is to be seen, says Desai (1998:136), as “the root cause of the inability of the political order to counteract the pressures of a traditional, feudalistic, social structure.” Transfer of power, to Desai (2000: 55), was “not the result of a victorious political revolution” but “a constitutional device arrived at by negotiation.” As new organs of struggle had not been devised during the nationalist movement, so the leaders of the INC failed to create a new type of state and administrative machinery to suit the specific socio-politico-economic-cultural situation of free sovereign India. Consequently, the colonial state in India with its “administrative machinery, an efficient loyal army, industry and trade, civic bodies and municipal politics and an educated middle class” (ibid: 56) continued with power being transferred from the hands of the colonial bourgeoisie to the Indian bourgeoisie. Hence, a bourgeois-democratic welfare state originated without a bourgeois-democratic revolution in India under the stewardship of the INC. This State, in spite of its professed responsibilities of social services to the mass of citizens, representative institutions and universal adult franchise, was a class-state because the entire framework of governance was within the matrix of capitalist economic structure. Here Desai reiterates (ibid: 63) the views of Professors Laski and Saville that a state “by being changed into the social service or welfare state does not thereby cease to be a class state of the bourgeoisie.” Following the model of development undertaken in India Desai says (1989:1888), “I have emphasized the need to recognize the path of development pursued by the rulers as the capitalist path because during the last forty years certain crucial, consistent trends of change in Indian society are taking place which cannot be explained in any other terms. Nor can one explain the process of social transformation generated since independence.” Desai continues (1991:V–VI) that, “My studies point out how this choice of capitalist path of development, *ab initio* placed
numerous constraints on the type of development, in the context of vast majority of population in an ex-colonial, overwhelmingly backward labour surplus economy.”

Desai strengthens his argument by pointing out (2000: 58) that the Constitution of India guaranteed the Right to Property, thereby representing the particular interest of the propertied classes, mainly the bourgeoisie. Originally, it was a fundamental right under Articles 19(i) and 31, but later by Constitution (44th Amendment) Act, 1978 it was deleted as a fundamental right. However, it still remains a Constitutional right under Article 300A to be enforced by a Court of Law. This position was further reinforced by the relegation of the right to work in the non-enforceable section of Directive Principles. To Desai (ibid), the implication is that the State, from the moment of its inception, had forfeited its claim to be called a representative of the propertyless classes because the guarantee of work—a condition of survival—“is the basic interest of propertyless citizens and hence primary duty of a state claiming to be the representative of people” (ibid) which the Indian State failed to fulfil. Various policies adopted by the Government of India have reflected the class bias of the Indian State towards the propertied classes. In the circumstances, feels Desai (ibid: 64), “the reactions of various sections of the Indian people to these in the form of diverse movements constitutes the content of the national movement in India” after independence.

It is true that various classes had varying conception of the form of state and politico-economic power in independent India. But the enlightened sections of all classes also realised that their sectional advancement was bound up with sectional advancement of other classes. For instance, rapid industrial expansion required restoration and reorganisation of agriculture which would operate as the chief supplier of raw materials. Again industrialisation would relieve the overburden on agriculture. At the same time, self-sufficiency in food products would leave the precious resources free for import of items necessary
for industrial growth and general development. Furthermore, prosperity of intellectuals and professionals would depend upon general prosperity of society. Hence, there were efforts at building up a united national consciousness among various classes and groups in society (Desai 1981: 216).

But the growth of this national consciousness was limited and slow in tempo, uneven and sporadic in development. As the class interests remained predominant over national interests, so nationalism meant different things to different classes though it emerged with the primary objective of liberation from foreign rule. However, the cleavages and differences present had not been removed in the course and process of the movement. As an adherent of Marxist ideology, Desai had seen the fulfilment of the nationalist aspirations in the capture of state-power by the masses led by the proletariat on the one hand, and socialist transformation of society and economy on the other. But as the nationalist movement had not been a bourgeois-democratic revolution in the European sense, so the post-colonial State witnessed a ruling coalition of industrial and landed propertied classes while the proletariat and other labouring classes remained too weak and passive to bring about a socialist revolutionary transformation.

Hence, neither goals were realised with independence—political freedom came before the emergence of the nation because at the time of independence the synthesis between universal class interests and particular ethnic/ caste/ communal identities had not occurred. “This peculiar method of formation of states...take place only where feudalism had not yet been eliminated, where capitalism was feebly developed, where the nationalities which had been forced into the background had not yet been able to consolidate themselves economically into integral nations” (Stalin 1993:12). A large number of eminent Marxist thinkers like Ernest Mandel, Hansen, Novack, Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, David Horowitz, Gunder Frank, etc., have pointed out (Desai 1979b: 757), that India, as many other underdeveloped societies, is not at
an earlier or immature stage of capitalism; on the contrary, partial penetration of capitalism in a semi-feudal, backward, colonial structure has made these societies 'hybrid' or 'mutant'. "Their problems stem not from failure to develop, but from a distorted development, one that leads not along a path to eventual self-sustained growth but to an economic cul-de-sac" (ibid). Desai continues (ibid) that real growth in such mutant economies "cannot be achieved by organic, evolutionary processes within the basic existing structures (least of all by an influx of foreign capital), but only through a revolutionary transformation of the structures themselves and cutting off dependent and dependency-generating ties."

Consequently, post-colonial India became a hotbed of various movements and uprisings. Moreover, caste on the one hand, and ethnic identities based on language, region, culture, etc., on the other, overlapped to create new groups, identities and movements. The state apparatus was used by the ruling class to perpetuate and continue with their exploitation and the victims—property less, oppressed, marginalised—voiced their protests. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the labouring classes became manifest as 'national' to the perpetrators but 'sub-national' or even 'anti-national' to the state. During colonial era the target had been the colonial state which, being in the hands of foreign rulers was overtly exploitative and easier to identify as the enemy. The illusion had been that the ouster of the foreign ruler would resolve the conflicts and ensure fulfilment of the aspirations of the people. The vast mass of workers, peasants and other exploited-oppressed-toiling people had been under the impression that "freedom would at least ensure them security of jobs, adequate purchasing power in the ever-expanding market economy, availability of essentials necessary for dignified existence, provision of minimum needs in the form of education and medical facilities and removal of caste, communal, ethnic, class, gender and linguistic discrimination, exploitation and oppression...The consequences of government policies, based on the pursuit of
the capitalist path, slowly generated a sense of disillusionment and discontent among the people" (Desai 1989:1889) as the new independent state became the new exploiter. Hence, this state, after independence, became the new target of nationalist aspirations, as redressals from grievances were sought from it. Though the ruling bourgeoisie branded the anti-state movements as anti-national, it was not necessarily so according to the struggling classes and groups.

The bourgeoisie, at the helm of the State in India, has been unable to forge a nation and has succeeded only in preserving and furthering the social and cultural cleavages and reactions. The bourgeoisie has been unable or unwilling to root out the ascriptive identities and replace them by a national identity. This was not done because a non-ascriptive, and therefore, egalitarian society would be detrimental to their class interests. Consequently, in the absence of the colonial state, protest movements are organised against the post-colonial state which is perceived to be the major obstruction to the various aspirations of the people. Hence, certain questions come to the mind: did the 'nation' ever emerge in India? Or can it be said that the 'nation', the building of which began in the colonial period, ever became vast enough to accommodate the multiple identities and groups in independent India? It is apparent that the nation-building process that began in the colonial era did not culminate in a homogenous, unified nation, nationality, nationalist feelings and sentiments. Geographically and politically India is a nation-state—but can the same be said in a cultural sense? The objective material conditions were different for the emergence and development of various classes—this had a bearing on their consciousness as a class as well. In most cases, class interests were so varied and different that a genuine national consciousness could not emerge out of contradictory class interests. Consequently, pre-independence period witnessed a fragmented nationalism which has been India's legacy and has influenced the course of the post-colonial state under the dominance of the bourgeoisie-feudal combine.
For Desai, the development of nationalism is the base from which he has analysed the State in India. In his opinion, the State should have developed in a specific direction in the face of the surge of nationalism during colonial days. But contrarily, the development of the state took off in another trajectory which, instead of bringing nationalist movement to its fulfilment with the birth of the nation-state, has actually ensured its continuance, often violent and subversive. One can reiterate after Stalin (1993:19) that a "national movement...is essentially a bourgeois movement." Thus, "it is possible to reduce the national struggle to a minimum, to sever its roots, to render it as innocuous as possible for the proletariat;" hence, "only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established" (ibid). For a successful culmination of nationalism what is necessary, says Desai (2000:138) is a socialist state of the working class based on a higher socialist liberty of the individual. This state, Desai continues, "alone can carry out the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution as well as further advance the Indian people on the road of a still higher socialist material and cultural existence" (ibid).

Desai, thus, starts from the premise that as the State in India opted for a capitalist path of development, so the aspirations of the common, labouring people remained unfulfilled. "...the state is in essence a coercive apparatus to buttress a particular type of property system and is an instrument of the economically dominant class to regulate the class struggle in favour of that class" (Desai 1998:137). The unfulfilled popular aspirations are being manifest in the form of numerous movements, 'nationalist' to the protagonists and 'anti' or 'sub-national' protest movements in the perspective of the ruling elites. These movements can be seen at two levels: one, in the more overt level they are voices of dissent for non-fulfilment of aspirations— political, economic, social, and cultural. At this level they can be identified as ethnic, religio-communal, caste or linguistic movements. But at a more basic level, these are movements for
emancipation of the labouring classes from the exploitation and oppression of
the propertied classes. As F.Engels had recorded in 1885 (1977: 396-97) in the
Preface to the Third German edition of The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte
that Marx "had first discovered the great law of motion of history, the law
according to which all historical struggles, whether they proceed in the political,
religious, philosophical or some other ideological domain, are in fact only the
more or less clear expression of struggles of social classes..." Hence, at this level,
the tensions and antagonisms between classes operate at a more covert level
because the ruling classes always try to garb these class contradictions with
traditional-parochial-ascriptive identities.

M.N.Roy, as early as in 1922, had already witnessed the development of
class struggle side by side with the national struggle. In his words (1971:129),
"the modern bourgeoisie, which is leading the national struggle, could not have
come into existence and power without bringing in its train the other side of the
social picture, namely the proletariat, which in its turn must initiate and lead the
struggle for the emancipation of the exploited class. The class-struggle is raging
in India simultaneously with the struggle for national liberation." The national
liberation movement "may still have the appearance of a national struggle
involving masses of the population, but fundamentally it is a social strife, the
revolt of the exploited against the exploiting class, irrespective of nationality"
(ibid: 203).

Desai basically subscribes to this view and he regards the entire issue of
social protest movements as having underlying 'class' conjectures. He is of the
opinion (1998:139ff) that the socio-political order, in respect to property
relations and class systems, generated after independence had actually existed
during the colonial period. The only visible difference is that in the earlier
period the British capitalist had been the ruling class and had moulded the
State apparatus in such a way as to suit its own class interests. In the post-
independence phase, the Indian capitalist class replaced its British counterpart
while continuing with the same State apparatus whose major socio-economic premise is the capitalist system. This State, protecting the capitalist mode of production, may assume diverse forms like monarchy, oligarchy, presidential, parliamentary, federal or unitary, or may be a combination of the forms.

Desai had serious reservations (ibid: 142) regarding the capacity of a state, wedded to a capitalist mode of production, to develop a prosperous economy and ensure higher living standards for the entire population. In his words, “My findings lead me to a firm negative answer” (ibid: 144). He says (ibid, 142) that the weak capitalist class, while assuring and augmenting its own profit, will not be able to “simultaneously assure employment, secure minimum purchasing power, adequate education, medial facilities, shelter and other ordinary basic human needs for the vast mass of the toiling people”(ibid). However, on the other hand, the toiling masses are acquiring an awareness regarding the necessity of securing the basic needs. Their “rising expectations,” says Desai, “are revolutionizing their consciousness and making them indignant towards their present plight which they now increasingly realize is man-made and not god-made, and due to a system of property relations where the owners of the means of production exploit them and permit the socio-economic formation to persist” (ibid). This fundamental contradiction of the socio-politico-economic system leads to the antagonisms and clashes between various sections of the people.

From here the question comes up that, does the parliamentary democratic form of government really represent the will of the people or whether the “institutional devices evolved within the parliamentary form of government adequate enough to allow full participation to people in the political processes and also provide appropriate constitutional channels to redress the grievances, wrongs and harms done to the people or sections of people” (ibid: 87). Hence, the democratic content of the parliamentary government comes under scrutiny because ideally public protests should not
occur in a democracy. If public protests do occur then it can be implied that the parliamentary form of government cannot be “an adequate institutional device to realize the ‘spirit of democracy’” (ibid). Here two questions are of crucial importance. As Desai elaborates (ibid), if the popularly elected government encroaches into the realm of fundamental human rights or exercises its authority in such a way as to prevent the enjoyment of the fundamental rights of a large section of the people, then can the latter resort to violence and lawlessness against the State. Moreover, how much public protest or Direct Action can be permitted or is “compatible with parliamentary form of government” (ibid). The related question is that one of the major functions of the State is to maintain law and order. In view of the performance of this task, how much coercion is the State entitled to in order to reestablish peace and order in society. Furthermore, which is the point that signifies that the State has overstepped its jurisdiction and its actions are branded as ‘Terrorist’. These are the crucial questions that need to be understood and answered for a correct comprehension of the protest movements in India.

Desai reviews (ibid: 88) the opinions of Y.B. Chavan, David Bayley and Rajni Kothari regarding the definition, nature and content of public protests which are commonly called Direct Action. For Chavan (1961: 6), peaceful demonstrations for expression of grievances is permissible in a parliamentary democracy; “but Direct Action, i.e. ‘organized defiance of law on a mass scale has no place in parliamentary democracy because it means the end of it’.” Chavan continues that Direct Action can be permitted only in situations comparable to those in which Gandhi had undertaken Satyagraha or by eminent representatives of the people who have ‘moral stature’. It is also permissible in cases where the government, being the custodian of parliamentary democracy, itself misuses, manipulates and/or destroys the basic values of parliamentary democracy (ibid: 11).
For Bayley (1962), the government wishes to suppress Direct Action for maintenance of law and order on the one hand, and speed up the economic advance of the country on the other. But Bayley's apprehension is that the government in the process of doing so will be liable to violate some of the basic canons of democracy and thereby endanger the very democratic foundations of its existence. Thus, it is imperative for the government to strike a balance between restraining public protest and maintaining the basic tenets of democracy. Bayley gives (ibid: 663) an alternative term to public protests, coined it "Coercive Public Protest" to describe movements by people against constituted authority" (Desai 1998: 93). To Bayley these protests are 'aggregative', 'public' as opposed to 'conspiratorial' or 'clandestine' and 'imposes a constraint upon government by its presence and action' (ibid). Furthermore, the goal of such protest is to influence and affect the decisions of the government. The latter, on its part, tries to control these movements for various reasons like preserving the minimal conditions of law and order, protection of the very base of majority rule, economic advancement of the state, etc. Moreover, the democratic government signifies transformation of society through peaceful means and continuing and escalating public protests will "destroy the assumption of natural harmony, and social accommodation based on compromise by all groups and 'generate a belief that certain deeply felt needs, desires or interests are beyond compromise and that extreme solutions are appropriate to satisfy them'" (ibid: 94).

However, Bayley (1962: 664ff) is apprehensive that in a backward country like India, "where the democratic spirit does not prevail in the society", the process of curbing public protests has grave consequences for the democratic parliamentary form itself. For instance, suppression of all unwanted opinion by the government, in the process of disciplining public opinion, expressed through Coercive Public Protests may stop the socially useful function of response and feedback, weaken the consensus between the rulers and the ruled
or alienate the people from the police-juridical-administrative systems. Another more dangerous possibility of authoritarian suppression of protests is bureaucratic dictatorship. As Bayley (ibid) very correctly points out that the administrators and policy-makers in India already constitute a very elite group and are “separately from the masses by a chasm of education, training and experience, and are likely to easily extend a policy of tutelage in the rules of democratic interaction. Thus this elite group would tend to practice authoritarian suppression of opposition viewpoint, thus transforming democratic pedagogy into a crutch to Elitism” (Desai1998: 95). Hence, it is also necessary to impose some controls and checks upon the government in order to prevent the government officials from acquiring the habit of using more and more power for solving the problems, thus, becoming more and more authoritarian. Seen from this perspective Bayley thinks that “coercive public protests have a certain functional utility even in a parliamentary form of government. More so in countries like India” (ibid).

Next, Desai reviews (ibid: 101), the opinion of Rajni Kothari (1960), who discusses the issue of Direct Action in a parliamentary democracy at a deeper level. For Kothari, Direct Action is a technique of political action and directed against the constituted authority; it always takes on the character of group-action, either spontaneous or engineered, it is extra-constitutional and finally, “it is aimed at some political change; a change of particular policy or policies or a change in the constitutional machinery, or a change in the government in power. In all cases, a change is desired” (ibid: 27). Kothari feels that there are basically two types of Direct Actions. One type is based on careful selection of means, democratic content of actions and is judged not by success alone but other considerations as well; this type gives “to the parliamentary form a greater democratic content” (Desai 1998:102). The other type leads parliamentary form towards authoritarian degradation because they “use ‘any means’, are ‘unmindful of consequences’ and consider ‘success as sole justification’” (ibid).
Kothari then connects Direct Action to parliamentary democracy by saying that as the latter allows freedom of expression, so, "That makes a direct action possible" (ibid). However, in practice, Kothari feels (1960: 24) that the parliamentary government has failed to become an adequate political and institutional framework for realising the essence of democracy. The chief reason to Kothari (ibid: 25) is the little or no scope for political participation in the political processes which makes the people feel insignificant and "they groan under a sense of powerlessness" (ibid)—a feeling which is sharply contradictory to the ideology of democracy. The individual, by casting his ballot at regular intervals, maintains his functional link in the whole mechanism of parliamentary democracy, but beyond that he has no role to play. The other channels of political participation are absolutely closed and thus, the representative government also does not evoke the feeling of 'self-government'. The elections, to Kothari (ibid: 26), "are no more than a rubber-stamp on one party's manifesto or another's which may be drawn up deceptively leaving out measures which are likely to be unpalatable to the public." The decision-making apparatus is controlled and used by a ruling minority and the output of this apparatus comes as a fait accompli to the people. The grievances accumulate in the face of lack of adequate channels for removing the same and the growing sense of impotency and frustration of the people seek expression—"The stage is set for Direct Action" (ibid: 26; Desai1998: 99).

Hence, Kothari concludes that in a parliamentary democracy as the government and the governed become rigid categories and alienated from each other, so Direct Action becomes inevitable. Parliamentary sovereignty is exercised and enjoyed by a minority where "the curious fact, indeed, is that the only real participation possible for a majority of people under such a form of Government is the participation in Direct Action" (Kothari1960: 26).

Desai, however, feels that all these scholars have discussed the issue of public protests or Direct Action essentially from a Liberal approach which
precluded them from investigating into the root causes. Quoting Lenin, Desai says (1998:103) that the Liberal scholars “either remain blind to or want ‘to conceal the truth...that ownership of means of production and political power remain in the hands of the exploiters, and that therefore real freedom and real equality for the exploited, that is, for the vast majority of the population are out of question’.” Chavan had ignored this fact—in Desai’s words (ibid: 90), “He does not even refer to the crucial fact,...namely the growing concentration of power in the hands of a few, and the reduction of the mass of people to insignificance and their transformation into voting herds manipulated by powerful groups possessing economic power and monopolizing instruments of mass communication.” Under capitalist socio-economic postulates any form of government, even the most democratic republic, cannot be anything but a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Apart from ignoring this fact, Chavan failed to make any analysis of the causes leading to Direct Action or the possibility of transforming the anti-democratic measures adopted by the government to suppress public protests and maintain law and order.

Bayley also did not analyse the socio-politico-economic or cultural conditions which generate public protests, like the defects and weaknesses of the functioning of the parliamentary government or the alienation of individuals from not only the production system but the juridico-administrative system itself or “why people develop ‘fear of freedom’ or want to ‘escape from freedom’” (ibid: 96). Thus, Bayley does not probe into the most crucial issue, which is, why the parliamentary democratic governments themselves are becoming instruments to usher in authoritarianism. The parliamentary form of government, based on capitalist socio-economic postulates, is unwilling and also unable to remove and eradicate the underlying socio-economic causes generating-coercive public protests which, in its turn, threaten the very fabric of rule of law erected under the parliamentary democratic system. Seen from another angle, for this very reason, parliamentary democracy has betrayed a
tendency towards authoritarianism. To conclude after Desai (ibid: 97), Bayley “has nothing to offer to the majority of the population, as how they should develop movements which would help them to destroy restraints imposed by parliamentary government, on their concrete economic, political, social and cultural democratic rights.”

Kothari on the other hand, says Desai (ibid: 103), had recognised the failure of parliamentary democracy while glorifying the freedoms associated with it. His crucial lapse had been in not realising that these freedoms, in the context of a capitalist framework, are available only to a small minority of privileged, propertied sections while as Lenin rightly pointed out in his On Soviet Socialist Democracy (ibid) that the toiling strata “are in practice, debarred from democracy by the ‘sacred right of property’ and by the bourgeois state apparatus... The present freedom of assembly and press in Parliamentary capitalist democracy is false and hypocritical, because in fact it is freedom for the rich to buy and bribe the press, freedom for the rich to befuddle the people with the venomous lies of the bourgeois press...” Furthermore, as Desai alleges (ibid: 104), Kothari and other liberal ideologues do not explain why parliamentary democracy does not consider the rights to work, employment, education, etc., which affect the overwhelming sections of the working people as fundamental rights whereas right to property or undemocratic liberty-suppressing clauses like Preventive Detention Act are sanctioned by the Constitution. Thus, Kothari while identifying the parliamentary form of government as a useless shell of democracy in essence, ultimately becomes a defender of status-quo: “permitting only those Direct Actions which would according to him only fertilize parliamentary form of government” (ibid: 105). Curiously, Kothari finds instances of Direct Actions against communist governments as justifiable while totally ignoring the fact that the Congress government can itself become an enemy of concrete democratic rights.
Desai, thus, critically reviews the position of liberal scholarship towards the issue of public protests. To him (ibid: 106–7) clarification of two issues are important. On the one hand, clear reformulation of the concept of democracy, the content of a democratic society and the nature of parliamentary democracy is necessary. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the latter is only a political institutional device which may permit or encourage concrete democratic rights in society in certain historical conditions. Thus, it can be inferred that parliamentary democracy and concrete democratic rights are not synonymous but completely distinct from each other. From here follows the other point of clarification, namely, classification and prioritisation of democratic rights in terms of placing them in a hierarchical preferential scale. The Indian Constitution in Chapters III and IV has made an effort at grading and prioritising rights into justiciable and non-justiciable categories—the entire classificatory scheme reveals, says Desai (ibid: 107), “entire philosophies, ideologies, historical perspectives and conceptions of history and men.” From here Desai goes on to establish that the parliamentary form of government as a political institutional device, under the control of capital-dominated economy, has proved inadequate to provide democratic rights and freedoms to the people. The authority of capital in the process of perpetuating itself also obstructs and reduces the scope of public participation in the processes of society; increasingly it moves towards dictatorship where “capital sheds some of its democratic pretensions and rules by open, ruthless dictatorial means” (ibid: 109). In fact, Desai thinks (ibid: 107) that the existence of even “elementary civil liberties” are becoming “more and more irksome and dangerous” to the regime of capital. Furthermore, even formal democracy is “irksome” (ibid) to monopoly capitalism.

Desai also identifies the national state with its national economic, cultural and ideological precepts as a hindrance to the genuine enjoyment of rights and liberties. National exigency becomes an excuse for limiting fundamental
democratic rights and liberties. The national boundaries "with their concomitant armaments, competitive and conflicting policies, and restrictions on the citizens to serve the narrow military and other national interests of the state" have also become a fetter upon enjoyment of democratic rights. Thus, the national states, democratic and non-democratic alike, are becoming fetter on concrete democratic rights of the majority of the population; naturally, popular protests are also increasing in volume, intensity and ferocity.

However, it should also be borne in mind that neither did Desai (ibid) think the Stalinist totalitarian regimes suitable for granting proper freedom and liberty. These societies have done away with capitalist socio-economic system but the civil liberties of the people have been stifled by bureaucratisation. The destruction of the yoke of capital has not automatically broadened and deepened the scope of civil liberties. Hence, abolition of private property in means of production or the end of economic exploitation in certain circumstances does not "automatically result in securing civil liberties for the toilers" (ibid: 108). Thus, what is needed thinks Desai (ibid), is protest against bureaucratic totalitarian organisations on the one hand, and genuine democratic government over a frame of social ownership of the means of production. Ultimately, a cooperative commonwealth of various communities will have to be created with a view to providing concrete democratic rights and the scope of their enjoyment through increasing participation in social, political, economic and cultural processes. "Till such a social order is achieved," says Desai (ibid), "the people will not only carry on public protests, but will also slowly prepare (and justifiably) for the revolutionary overthrow of all forces which obstruct the realization of the goal."

Desai now tries to understand the reason behind the assault on democratic rights in a democracy. In his opinion (1984:130), within three decades after independence it has become clear that the government by relying on the
exploiting, profit-chasing proprietary classes as growth agents is actually “shedding their mask of welfarism, their pretensions concerning developing the country on the basis of ‘growth with justice’, as upholders of a strategy of redistributing incomes in favour of the poor.” Particularly during the regime of Rajiv Gandhi, keen competition to capture markets and gain control of government facilities by the propertied classes and the professionals and employees connected with the service sector respectively resulted in further concentration of assets and income in the hands of smaller and smaller groups. As Desai points out (1989:1888), “this process of asset and income concentration has been accelerated by the new policies adopted by the Rajiv regime which has been rightly described as armament, defence and luxury led growth.” Not only so, it is now “aggressively ordering toiling wage and salary earning classes and other poor citizens to bear all the consequences of this strategy of development…” (1984:130). Due to its policy of assisting the rich, the government, while facing difficulty in the mobilisation of resources, is using a variety of measures to throw greater burdens on the common people. Desai identifies (1989:1888) some of these measures which include “Deficit financing, increasing resort to borrowings, both internal and external, greater and greater reliance on indirect taxation, making public sector facilities more and more costly and economizing by lowering the quality and quantity of public sector products and services,” etc. Another important measure adopted by the government is the policy of streamlining and transforming of the organised sector which has resulted in the closure of numerous industrial and service units. This has led to severe socio-economic consequences. For instance, countless workers have lost their jobs or work under conditions lacking security, stability and other safety and labour prerequisites. Hence, people are forced to work in conditions “where they are underpaid, over-exploited and forced to work under insecure, unprotected and hazardous conditions at their work places” (ibid). This shift from the secure, stable and legally protected organised
sector to its absolute opposite informal sector is producing a chain of calamities. First, the employers are selectively employing people from various castes, communities etc., which are, in the process, generating caste, communal, linguistic and gender conflicts. Second, this policy, in turn, has led to tremendous increase in the volume of the under-employed and the unemployed. Third, consequently, there is fierce competition for procuring minimal survival needs and securing jobs and services. Rather than utilizing the vast human resources available in a productive and gainful manner, the “employing classes utilise the situation to promote various types of organised and unorganised criminal processes for their gains and to keep these strata divided and increasingly prone to internecine struggles” (ibid: 1889). In addition, a corrupt liaison between the political machinery, business and the emerging lumpen strata in society is on the rise, leading to the political, economic and socio-cultural processes themselves becoming criminalized, corrupt and authoritarian. Last, but not the least, for smooth maintenance of the capitalist production system and help the proprietary classes to carry on their activities unhindered and uninterrupted, the government, says Desai (ibid), “has also been intensifying its own brutal attack on the democratic rights of the ordinary people through diverse and draconic measures—all in the name of maintaining ‘law and order’.” Such trends of transformation of the democratic government will inevitably lead it towards authoritarianism.

These policies, based on capitalist postulates, have affected the overwhelming sections of women, scheduled castes and tribes, other poor and propertyless sections, and have also accelerated regional disparities. These people, who had participated in the national liberation movement in the hope of security of jobs, adequate purchasing power in the ever-expanding market system, provision of minimum needs in the form of medical and educational facilities and availability of the essentials necessary for a dignified existence had tremendous hope and desire for change. But their hopes, “in a situation of
inability to augment resources rapidly enough to satisfy it” (Desai 1971, 1: 467) were destroyed. Instead of having more active participation in the matters of the state or realisation of their wants, they found continuation, and in many cases, acceleration of caste, communal, ethnic, class, gender and linguistic discrimination, oppression and exploitation. Thus, slowly a sense of disillusionment and discontent fomented among the people. Desai summarises (1989:1889) it thus: “The illusion of growth resulting in trickling down of benefits to the poor was getting shattered. The discontent acquired greater poignancy and articulation after the mid-sixties. The decade of the seventies intensified the feeling of discontent and disillusionment and became a decade of growing protests and struggles by the exploited, petty proprietary and non-proprietary classes, both in the urban and rural areas. The decade of the eighties has almost turned into an epoch of explosive outbursts with the struggles of the people acquiring massive dimensions and taking resort to more and more militant forms.” Desai writes in the early 1970s (1971, 1: 468) that the mass demands “which articulates more and more aggressively, results, on the one side in the desire to destroy the present framework which does not give enough to the vast bulk of the population and, on the other, in a desperate struggle among those who already have something to modify the social structure in such a way that their share in the growing resources increases at a faster rate than that of the others.” Hence, it is inevitable that India would become the battleground for voicing numerous types of and a large number of grievances.

Apart from caste, communal, linguistic, ethnic, gender, regional and other types of conflicts and violence, what is very dangerous to Desai is the assault on democratic rights by the State itself. In his opinion (1991: VI), the rulers proclaim the Indian State to be the youngest and largest democracy in the world where the constitution has provided a very comprehensive charter of rights to the Indian citizens. However, he reiterates (ibid) after “a small section of intelligentsia, genuinely concerned about civil liberties, democratic and
human rights..." the major flaws of the Constitution in this regard, which on its part, has enabled the State to perpetuate violence upon the citizens. For instance, the phraseology of the rights in Part III of the Constitution is such that they can be made non-functional in the larger context of arrangements provided in other parts of the Constitution. Desai says (ibid: VII) after Prof. Upentra Baxi who "has pointed out in his book The Crisis of the Indian Legal System, the inclusion of parallel 'Preventive Detention System' embodied in the Constitution itself has created a situation wherein it negatives all rights provided in the Preamble and Parts III and IV of the Constitution." The State, says Desai (ibid), which proclaims it to be democratic, socialist, welfare-oriented and "claims to be deeply human and anxiously concerned about the well being and dignity of Indian citizens" is the biggest and most ferocious perpetrator of violence against the people.

In this context one question needs to be clearly answered: according to Desai (1984:133; 1985d: 7) there is a conception that the defence of concrete rights is necessarily and organically bound up with the defence of the bourgeois democratic state. Desai does not subscribe to this view. To him (ibid) capitalism is only concerned with rights relating to the creation, maintenance, preservation and protection of private property and private interests. Rights relating to civil liberties are useful in the struggle against feudal and colonial forces. Moreover they are affordable and tolerable so "long as capitalism is vigorous, expanding, or has sufficient resources to buy off the discontent of the non-owning classes" or "so long as the exercise of the 'proletarian rights' do not threaten the actual existence of the capitalist order" (ibid: 133–34). But when capitalism enters a phase of decline, the 'civil' and 'proletarian' rights threaten the survival of the capitalist order and, when the State is faced with such a situation it has no alternative but to launch an offensive to restrict and curtail the second and third categories of rights. In response, mass actions are organised for the defence of these rights "and such struggle finds itself in ever greater conflict with the
bourgeois democratic state, which itself is the agency that undermines
democratic rights" (ibid: 134). Indian economy is facing severe crises in the
form of ever-increasing inflation, stagnation and under-production. Thus, in its
drive for producing more surplus value and accumulate capital it is resorting to
more and more aggressive intervention “to ‘discipline’ and repress the working
class and toiling masses in the interest of capital” (ibid: 135).

To underline the level of repression upon the masses by the State, Desai (1990c:
3) begins from the point where “the state and its executive, legislative and even
judicial arms, create conditions where human rights cannot even be availed of
by vast section of the Indian people.” As has already been stated earlier,
curtailment of rights is done on the pretext of maintenance of law and order
because one of the pillars of democratic government is ‘rule of law’. Here Desai
points out (1986c: 1002) that the government forgets or disregards the fact that
the “Government and citizens both are subject to the rule of law.” Neither do
the public authorities remember that they “are not masters but servants of the
citizens” (ibid) and hence should exercise their powers only within the
parameters of ‘rule of law’. Seen from this perspective Desai feels (ibid.) that
violation of law by the government is more dangerous to democracy than its
violation by ordinary citizens “because the government possesses powers
ordinarily denied to citizens” (ibid). This power is reflected in “arbitrary action
of executive authorities, large-scale killing of police firings, the mysterious
disappearance of militant youth, and the continued imprisonment of large
number of undertrials...” (Desai 1984:131). More relevant details of the growing
assault on democratic rights are available (ibid) in a pamphlet named India
1947-79: Six Parliaments and Democratic Rights, published by the Peoples’ Union of
Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights, Delhi, 1979 which reveals instances of
imposition of extraordinary acts, laws and regulations, infliction of torture and
Following Upendra Baxi, Desai (1986c: 1002) distinguishes between governmental lawlessness on the one hand, and the State's weak commitment to the rule of values and the government's use of arbitrary powers acquired through legislation or ordinances permitted by the Constitution. The two issues are interconnected. The State may have a weak commitment to the rule of values; but governmental lawlessness implies non-obedience, non-performance or even active flouting of laws that it itself makes through the Constitution or duly constituted legal authorities. The latter, to Desai (ibid), is even more serious because for “proper implementation and observance” of these laws “the public authorities are assigned powers denied to ordinary citizens.” Governmental lawlessness in India has reached such high proportions that “it has acquired high visibility.” It not only prevents the ordinary citizens from enjoying their lawful rights but they are punished if they seek redressal from the State for violation of their fundamental rights by State institutions or officials and if they demand punishment of criminals patronised by the State. Thus, says Desai (ibid), State lawlessness acquires “monstrous implications for the normal functioning of even law-abiding ordinary citizens.”

Desai (ibid) next classifies instances of governmental lawlessness into a few categories. He identifies direct and deliberate violation or active abetting in non-implementation of duly and legally constituted law as governmental lawlessness. This is manifest in the violation of laws by the police—the coercive apparatus of the State—against citizens in police custody, or in prison as an undertrial or a convicted prisoner. According to Baxi (ibid) law is quite categorical that administrative instructions cannot be permitted to prevail over or interfere with statutory provisions or duly constituted law. However, as Baxi says, in practice this provision is often disregarded “for the simple reason that not all these can be brought for judicial scrutiny” (ibid). Such
directions operate at the level of law enforcement, as in police organisation or executive magistracy. Often, officials entrusted with the duty of settling disputes between the citizens and the State have to operate within departmental directions which may range from partial inconsistency with law to downright contradiction of the law declared by the Courts including the Supreme Court of India. Governmental lawlessness is also manifest through dual standards of justice and discrimination in law enforcement for the poor and the rich. Justice Krishna Iyer (ibid: 1003) had characterised the favourable approach towards the rich as 'soft justice syndrome'. Another manifestation emerges from the previous instance with the emergence of a privileged section. This section is rich and resourceful and includes certain sections of bureaucracy, those holding ministerial positions, members of political parties, captains of industry as well as captains of "the 'parallel' or 'black' economies" (ibid). This class is virtually beyond law; not only is it impervious to law enforcement but openly and flagrantly repudiates legality and rule of law on the one hand, and claim immunity or exceptions from laws and rules on the other hand. Some members may, at times, fall out of favour with those in power and be prosecuted but such instances are few and far between. Furthermore, governmental lawlessness becomes manifest "in the form of 'corruption' which broadly means 'abuse of public power for individual, and for political gain'" (ibid). This aspect of governmental lawlessness had been highlighted in the Report of Santhanam Committee (ibid) in 1964 which identified certain areas of governmental corruption. These included executive corruption, corruption by tax-collection agencies, judicial bodies, extraction of 'speed money', raising of election funds for political parties especially for those in power at various levels, and in the emergence, spread and operation of black money which has assumed the proportions of a parallel economy "which is impossible without tolerance and collusion by the governmental authorities" (ibid). However, Desai cautions that
governmental lawlessness is hydra-headed and may not restrict itself to the above-mentioned manifestations and take new forms.

After identifying the various aspects of governmental lawlessness, Desai (1994) now highlights instances of violation of laws and rights against particular sections of the citizens. He gives examples (Desai 1994) of various types of repressions perpetrated upon different sections of the population. These repressions are perpetuated by the upper caste-class combines who in most cases enjoy the patronage and protection of the State. The latter has also come to represent 'violence' in our society today. As has been noted earlier (Ch.3), right from the period during 1937-39 when the Congress had won the provincial elections, the state had been an epitome of violence; however, that state had been the colonial State. The situation after independence, rather than lessening, has, in fact, escalated. Desai follows (ibid: 3-4) Prof. Randhir Singh who in his work *Terrorism, State Terrorism and Democratic Rights* has identified the Indian State "as the single largest perpetrator of violence on the people today...There is the ever-growing draconian legislation and the ever-expanding apparatuses of repression and the ruthless use of both everywhere in this vast land of ours."

Repression and oppression of the lower castes, the downtrodden, the backward and the minority communities have been prevalent in our society for centuries because, as Desai observes (ibid: VIII), the social order was based largely upon exploitation of the weak like the peasants, labourers, women and other marginalised sectors by the powerful and dominant as represented by the zamindars, cultivators, merchants in particular, and the upper castes, in general. It had been hoped at the time of Independence that the State, representing the common people, would come to the aid of the underprivileged and try to better their lives. However, as the proprietary classes coming from upper and intermediate castes are seen as generators of development, so the masses are considered "to be the real enemies obstructing the path of development"
pursued..." (ibid: 2), i.e. the capitalist path, as pursued by the ruling classes and the State. State repression, in general, takes the form of ever-expanding offensive against the vast majority of citizens, preventing them even the enjoyment of constitutionally stated rights and freedoms. It seemed, as if, the liberal laws protective of human rights of the individual, also protected such rights of the criminal with the latter going unpunished. This tendency has escalated to the point where the State feels “an irresistible temptation to confuse every expression of popular protest, dissent or even recalcitrance with terrorism and therefore meant to be handled with ruthless brutality” (ibid: 3). State terrorism, in Desai’s opinion (ibid: VII) “takes dubious forms and develops in an unchecked manner for want of publicity, people’s concern and societal reactions.” Crimes, atrocities, terrorism, lawbreaking etc. directly attributable to State’s policies and actions go “unchecked, unnoticed, unabated and unreported with the result that the State is not held accountable for the same...” (ibid). Such instances of State terrorism are most apparent in relation to the labouring class, Dalits, tribals, women, slum-dwellers, etc.

State policies geared towards liberalisation since the 1990s has brought the working class under ever-increasing threats of voluntary retirement, retrenchment and higher unemployment, unbridled inflation, etc. All these results in the shrinking of the organised sector, to be replaced by the ever-expanding informal sector, where workers have hardly any rights. The State is a party to a number of industries being declared ‘sick’ and closure of such industries. In addition, the State either overtly or covertly supports the employers in preventing the workers’ efforts to form unions. The State has further, encouraged hazardous industries without ensuring any safety or compensation measures for the workers or neighbourhoods. In the words of Desai (ibid: 54–55), “There are umpteen cases...the saga of repression is the same all over.”
In case of Dalits and tribals exploitation occurs at two levels with the State being a participant at both. In case of the Dalits the most enduring and age-old discrimination is through the practice of untouchability. It prevails not only in the caste relations at the societal level, but also in the governmental occupational sector as well. Desai gives several examples (ibid: 68–69) in the state of Gujarat where this practice prevails at Panchayat meetings, in government services and even in the sphere of government facilities like housing, drinking water, Midday Meal Scheme, etc. Untouchability is found even among the Dalits themselves where sweeper castes are not allowed social interaction with the other Dalits. Basic needs like fetching water, barber or laundry, worship and other services are denied to them. Protests against untouchability inevitably leads to caste atrocities against the Dalits, ending in the latter being deprive of their land, homes, other properties or even their lives. The State either stays silent or sides with the upper castes in these instances. More serious to Desai (ibid: 70) is the event when the State itself becomes the perpetrator of atrocities like land grabbing, forcible expulsion from the land, or total dislocation of the Dalit from his home, workplace and environment in the name of development. Such loss of habitat and occupation for developmental purpose becomes even more serious for the tribal who, in addition, loses his traditions and culture as well. The tribal is torn from his traditional occupation, lifestyle and culture—from being a distinct and separate entity he gets swallowed within the proletariat and becomes an urban slum-dweller. S.L.Dube (ibid: 89) in a paper in 1977 has shed light on this issue, based on a major study done in 1974 by Mustaali Masavi of the Tribal Research and Training Institute—the moneylender grabs tribal land, by placing him within an unending debt-cycle, taking advantage of the poverty and simplicity of the tribal. Again tribal lands under Section 165 of the Tenancy Act of the state of Gujarat can be leased to non-tribals for cultivation. However, under Section 168 of the same Act if the lease exceeds a period of three years then the said land belonging to a member
of the Scheduled Tribe will pass into the hands of those who are cultivating it. The State's anti-tribal attitude is most apparent in developmental projects which frequently occur in tribal areas, as a result of which the tribals are most systematically and brutally dispossessed, dislocated and pauperised. In the Ukai Irrigation Scheme in South Gujarat more than 17,000 tribal families (ibid: 95) were uprooted and only a few were compensated. However, the compensation “was too paltry to sustain them. With the result they ended up as exploited workers in sugarcane or rotted in the slums of Surat and other towns struggling to eke out a living” (ibid). In the Narmada Dam Project in the early 1960s the tribal population of six villages in Gujarat “were ousted...to construct the massive Kavadia Colony to house the dam staff” (ibid). These displaced people had not been declared project-affected because they were technically not affected by the dam but by the colony. In this project tribal land of 19 villages in Gujarat will be submerged and over two lakh inhabitants in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat will be rendered home-and-occupation less and displaced.

The State has been terribly negligent regarding the compensation or rehabilitation of the displaced people, especially if they are Dalits or tribals. For example, in 1981 over 100 Dalits of Biliya in Gujarat, after being harassed by the Patels fled to Siddhpur town during anti-reservations stir. They addressed their grievances to the government, which inspite of being committed to the “Welfare of SCs” did not “even bother to compensate or rehabilitate them” (ibid: 83). Similarly, the government has been terribly unwilling to further any rehabilitation scheme for the project-affected-persons in the Sardar Sarovar Project.

Another major social group, facing tremendous exploitation and atrocities from the State, is women. Atrocities faced by women can be seen in terms of gender, caste and class. As women they are downtrodden and exploited in the patriarchal social system. They face familial violence ranging from verbal
abuse to suicide, bride-burning, murder and dowry-death. Both within and outside the family they face molestation, rape, sale, kidnapping and trafficking. Furthermore, in times of war and other such unrest and upheavals, women face atrocities and torture by the victors as representatives of the defeated. The victors by performing atrocities upon the women of the defeated actually establish their political dominance upon the vanquished community, nation or state. Women belonging to lower castes face atrocities from landlords, government officials, employers, work contractors, etc., through which the latter establishes their gender and caste superiority and dominance. Most seriously affected are the dalit women who face double atrocities as women on the one hand, and as Dalits on the other. Another serious area of the exploitation of women is in the sphere of domestic labour—it is an area of labour which is totally unrecognised and unpaid. The State, backed by the patriarchal society, simply refuses to acknowledge it as part of the labour engaged in producing social wealth. Domestic labour involving looking after the household and rearing up of children is taken as unpaid and reproductive labour as opposed to wage-earning productive labour, the latter being the exclusive domain of the men-folk. Women ranging across all classes, castes and communities are subject to this type of exploitation. So far as class exploitation is concerned, women are again the worst sufferers. It is mostly the poor women belonging to lower classes who offer themselves for whatever forms of employment are available. Women labourers are mostly employed in part-time jobs or in the unorganised sector, leaving the organised sector as well as the opportunity for learning specialised skills for their menfolk. As a result, they suffer from all the irregularities and instability of the unorganised sector. When there is retrenchment women first find themselves out of work. In equal work women are paid less wages, suffer from health disorders and face atrocities, ranging from financial to physical. Protection to women by law has also failed miserably. Desai cites (ibid: 65) a study by Bhagat Varsha, published in 1990, analysing the causes of unnatural
deaths of women in 1988. According to the study, a total of 1200 incidents were
investigated of which 560 had not even been recorded by the police. From the
remaining investigations were going on in 268 cases, in only 93 the offenders
had been arrested whereas punished in merely 5 cases. As Bhagat notes in his
1990 study (ibid), “This only proves that the police have been totally ineffective
in putting a break on the spread of unnatural deaths of women in the society at
large. Protection to women by law has miserably failed.”

Slum and pavement dwellers are another section which faces the brunt of State terrorism. As noted earlier, the rural poor comprising of landless peasants, out-of-work artisans and peasants, dispossessed dalits and project-affected tribals come to populate the ever-expanding urban constellations as slum and pavement dwellers. In Desai’s words (1991: X), they “are mainly those who are pushed out from the countryside, have migrated to cities for jobs, for securing some purchasing power and wanting some space as shelter for pursuing their activities for livelihood.” It is the state which is responsible for their ouster from their traditional habitats, occupations and life-styles. Development and industrialisation according to the postulates of capitalism along with privatisation in the countryside has torn a large part of the population from agro-based operations and brought them to urban centres where they are getting new identity as slum-dwellers and squatters. They find work mostly in the unorganised sector on a temporary basis or as daily wage labourers which is extremely irregular. Thus, they “remain engaged in highly insecure and lowly paid activities like vending, hawking, domestic and informal sector services, and finally all sorts of unauthorised earning activities such as illicit distilling, begging, prostitution and other illegal and corrupt forms of earning a livelihood” (Desai 1985f: 11). Here also they do not find any stability, their space is continuously shrunk and they are shunted from place to place to make way for State’s developmental and urban beautification projects. As land is a scarce commodity, and controlled and owned by the proprietary classes and used for making more
and more profits, so the poorest in urban centres are unable to secure “a resting place for their emaciated bodies” (ibid: 14). Desai gives example (ibid: 35) when after emergency “bulldozers had demolished thousands of jugghis near Jumma Masjid and Turkman gate, uprooting thousands of citizens from their only shelter they could afford in Delhi.” Desai cites (ibid.) another similar incidence in Bombay in the 1970s where the authorities of the Maharashtra State had demolished a huge, settled colony known as the Janata Colony comprising of more than seventy thousand residents and dismantled hundreds of such clusters rendering lakhs of citizens shelterless. Not only so, “The Rulers even dumped a large number of these squatters in trucks and vans like cattle and garbage, and transported them to distant places a few years back” (ibid). In fact, as Desai recounts (ibid: 36) the then Maharashtra Chief Minister Barrister Baba Sahib Bhosale had stated that in case of squatters originating from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and other states “the Government of Maharashtra had no responsibility of providing them shelter and other amenities. Even to Maharashtra squatters, Shri Baliram Hire” (Minister of Urban Housing) “categorically stated that they should go back to their villages and find their way for survival there rather than burden the city with their presence.” However, as Desai observes (1985:39) the government has resources “to spend about 700 crores of rupees to build stadia, swimming pool, Five Star Hotels, Flyovers for a carnival called Asiad lasting only a fortnight.” The government has resources to finance costly multi-storied residential mansions, posh offices, air-conditioned shopping and recreation centres for the rich; costly bungalows for ministers and high executives of the government while the resources become ‘scarce’ in the light of the needs of the poor. Not only so, the urban underemployed and unemployed poor “are considered threats to law and order, and the Government rapidly strengthens its executive arm to effectively perform what is scholastically called the tension management function against the wretched of the earth” (ibid: 12).
State terrorism is also being perpetuated through religious, caste and communal strifes. According to Desai (1990: 369; 1985g: 12) “The rulers of the State and the overwhelming majority of the ruling class in India are basically Hindus and are steeped in upper-caste Hindu cultural practices even in their daily personal routine.” Thus, on the one hand, we find generation and strengthening of upper-caste Hindu cultural traditions as the dominant and superior national ethos, being projected as identical with secularism. On the other hand, says Desai (1990: 368), complementary to the above-mentioned policy orientation, the State and the ruling class have systematically through legal enactments, actual practices and propaganda, “violated the principle of the equality of citizens based on the morality of the equal worth of human beings.” The State has in the name of tolerance, secularism and respect to all religions has, actually, enacted laws and public practices which offend “not only the religious faiths but also the moral susceptibilities of all who are believers and stand for humanism, who are atheists, materialists, in the philographical sense, and who consider man as supreme value” (ibid: 11, 368–69).

Similar is the picture in cases of caste and communal violence. Communal violence is more visible in urban areas while caste violence is more frequent in rural areas, though there cannot be any generalisation. Discriminatory religious attitudes and practices fostered by the State has extended the scope of communal violence from Hindu-Muslim conflicts to communal outbursts and riots between other communities like Hindu-Sikh, Hindu-Christian or between Muslim communities like the Shias and the Sunnis. Caste violence is most rampant against harijans and other lower, marginal castes. Desai finds (1990: 365) the new landowning, trading and bureaucratic classes utilise caste sentiments, ideology and practices “to augment their surplus value by forcing the untouchables and other lower-castes to work under semi-feudal conditions.” Not only so, the former also try to deprive the latter of their
legitimate and legally recognised share by terrorising and forcing them "to carry on in their old helpless lower caste oppressive situations."

According to Desai (1985g: 18) the State and the ruling classes follow double standards of norms and values. By making the rich, propertied classes the lynchpin of development, all facilities and resources of the State favour these classes; the legal and normative values are similarly supportive towards these classes. But these policies oriented towards benefiting the rich have led to limited economic growth, whereby the State, proclaiming itself to be a Welfare State, cannot find resources to serve all. To hide and distort this reality from the masses, the State takes recourse to supernatural, other-worldly religious norms and values. In other words, religion is used by the ruling class "as a cultural weapon to prevent a proper secular, human outlook among poor exploited and oppressed masses, which alone can enable them to relate their woes to the emerging capitalist socioeconomic order" (ibid: 19). Not only so, but this conscious policy of inculcating upper-caste, fanatical, intolerant Hindu religious fundamentalism provides the rulers with a handy weapon to divide the exploited and oppressed masses who are, nevertheless, developing various categories of struggles against anti-poor and pro-rich policies pursued by the Indian State, especially since the mid-1980s (1986c VI).

Desai comes to the conclusion that only protests and uprisings by different sections of the citizens are absolutely necessary to break out of the fetters of the capitalist developmental process. He has recorded (1994) the first glimmerings of protests by the common masses. For instance, he gives (ibid, 44) the example of a workers' strike in the Sardar Sarovar Project on January 30, 1989 to protest against the inhuman living conditions and dictatorial attitude of a major contractor: Jai Prakash Associates. The workers were living in concentration-camp situation with no scope for free movement and interaction; the workers were barred from meeting their family members or "could not even sit together in a meeting to discuss their problems at the gate" (ibid).
agitation, branded ‘anti-national’ by the government and the management, was ultimately ruthlessly suppressed and finally in May 1989 the striking workers “were all huddled in S.T. buses, dropped at the railway stations and forced to go to their native place” (ibid: 45). Similar repression was noticed in the Halpati agitation of 1974 where the Halpati Seva Sangh—a NGO of landless labourers—had challenged the agitation of prosperous farmers of South Gujarat against paddy levy. The latter also accused the government and the Naxalites of inciting rural revolt and unrest while terrorising and assaulting the landless labourers for asking more wages. The government ultimately resorted to the use of Section 144 and MISA to crush the unrest (ibid: 49). Agricultural labourers in Navsari and Valsad had started agitations from January 1976 onwards to bring to the notice of the government were not paying them the minimum wages prescribed by law, bringing in outside labourers and also employing outside guards to threaten them in order to deter them from demanding their legitimate dues (ibid: 50). Women’s organisations, similarly, have come forward to protest against atrocities committed on women like the custodial rape of a minor girl student of Dethli Ashram School in Matar, Kheda in 1987 by the school manager Lallu Shastri, custodial rape and torture of Bai Hansa and Bai Ganga in December 1969 by the police at Porbandar, or illegal arrest and torture of a slum activist named Rashidaben in 1988 by the police in Ahmedabad in order to crush her struggles and the organisation Jhudpavasi Ekta Sangathan which was fighting against the slumlords and their musclemen and paid hooligans (ibid: 65–66). Another NGO—AWAG—has been able to check the gender bias in books and has been able to influence the Textbooks Board to improve the books on this point. Other women’s organisations like Sahiyar of Baroda has taken up the issue of sex-determination and resulting female foeticide as a major issue “challenging the status of women in this anti-women commercial society and are mobilising opinions to check this malpractice” (ibid: 67).
In the case of the dalits and the tribals also we find a growing awakening which portrays their "urge to prevent further deterioration of their living conditions and their sense of dignity as human beings and citizens" (1990: 365). In the new competitive and economically deteriorating situation the harijans, unable to work as of old, are no longer prepared to suffer the old forms of oppression and humiliation in the guise of caste disabilities. They are, furthermore, demanding rights of citizens and better conditions of work and terms of pay in the emerging bourgeois economic conditions. For instance, on June 6, 1989, three hundred and fifty persons belonging to thirty-five dalit families of Sambarda in Palanpur had to flee the village after terrific harassment and clashes with the upper caste savarnas. The dalits, after staging a heroic struggle for one hundred and five days at the Palanpur Collectorate, at least received some land at Virpur and some cash doles to construct houses in October though the offenders went unpunished. Tribal welfare organisations like Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini (Mangrol), Rajpipla Social Service League (Rajpipla), Lok Adhikar Sangh etc. are active for rehabilitation and resettlement of the tribal population who have been ousted due to the developmental projects of the State. The struggles of the project-displaced persons of the Sardar Sarovar Project have forced the governments of the three states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat to issue liberalized provisions for resettlement and rehabilitation and consider more carefully the details of environmental and catchment area treatment. Desai reiterates (ibid: 96) after S. Sangvi who in his article "The Dam as Battlefront" published in September 1989 in *Land and Water Review*, wrote that, "The oustees have dared the World Bank, Planning Commission, the three state governments, the police, the hostile Gujarati press, and almost all the political parties in their states. It is in fact a milestone in the struggle for the cause of oustees which establishes the principle that people have right to question (and must) unjust, destructive projects pushed forward in the name of development, and that people have every right
(and should exercise it), to stall such projects, recall them and save human and 
resource destruction."

Desai gives instances of resistance by some other sections of the 
population like one by the educated middle strata against government's 
decision to shift the headquarters of Saurashtra University from Bhavnagar to 
Rajkot in May 1967. Another middle-class movement was witnessed in the same 
year in Mahuva in Bhavnagar where the people protested against inferior quality 
and meager quantity of sugar and wheat in ration shops on the one hand, and 
against the anarchy prevailing in the civil supply department, on the other (ibid: 
121–22). Similar protests against the discrimination in supply and distribution of 
sugar erupted at Kheda in 1972 where a satyagraha agitation was led by a social 
worker named Mahendra Desai.

Hence, it is clear that the path of modernisation adopted by the Indian State has 
been faulty in both orientation as well as in implementation. Modernisation, as 
adopted in India and many other pro-capitalist countries, essentially has a pro-
western bias. Consequently, this process of modernisation has willfully ignored 
the unique historical “inherent situations” (Desai.1971: 468), which is leading 
towards the possibility of a peculiar involutionary trend, viz. “breakdown of 
modernisation” (ibid: 474) because this path has proved its failure to either 
“charter a path of independent economic development or to relieve the 
Wertheim who has summed-up this crucial dilemma by posing a significant 
question: “Can underdeveloped countries modernise themselves and break the 
vicious circle of poverty by depending on the strategy of “Betting on the 
strong”?” The alternative for India should be a socialist revolution because “only 
socialism can end the present crisis of Indian society. It alone can carry out the 
tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution as well as further advance the 
Indian people on the road of a still higher socialist material and cultural
existence."

Desai observes elsewhere (1979b: 752) that experience of the non-capitalist countries have proved "that even the elementary bourgeois-democratic tasks, like the agrarian problem, education and others ... can be resolved in colonial and semi-colonial countries only through Socialist Revolution and only when the society has taken to non-capitalist socialist path after the overthrow of capitalism." Socialist revolution, in the words of Marx (1977:118), "is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority."

In the underdeveloped countries, the labouring classes have the duty of first completing the bourgeois-democratic tasks, namely, eliminating the medieval-feudal elements, like monarchy, landed gentry etc. from society. Once this is accomplished it is necessary to unite the poorest peasants, the semi-proletarians i.e. "all the exploited, against capitalism, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a socialist one" (Desai 1979b: 751). In identifying the two stages of revolution we are primarily indebted to Trotsky who had conceptualised his ideas through the notion of Permanent Revolution. This idea, says Kunal Chattopadhyay, Aninda Banerjee and Saurobijay Sarkar (2005: vii), had been "the original sin" of Trotskyism and had "evoked hatred and aversion not only amongst the Stalinists but also some other brands of ‘Marxists’" (ibid). However, according to Kunal Chattopadhyay et al the concept of a two stage theory of revolution can be traced back to Marx himself in the Manifesto of the Communist Party (1977:137). Here Marx clearly identifies two stages of revolution in Germany which at that historical moment was on the brink of a bourgeois revolution which "will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." "This", says Chattopadhyay et al (2005: viii), "contains the essence of the formula of permanent revolution" because the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution are not separate—they are "two phases of one and the same ongoing revolutionary process." Lenin initially had viewed the two stages of the revolution as separate
processes. In the opinion of Chattopadhyay et al (ibid: xiii) Lenin had originally visualised the Russian revolution as a bourgeois-democratic revolution and the possibility of a socialist revolution and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat would have to necessarily follow the former as well as a period of capitalist development. However, after the February Revolution of 1905 Lenin, says Chattopadhyay et al (ibid: xvii), “came to realize that proletarian revolution led by the working class would successfully combine the fulfilment of the tasks of the socialist revolution and the unfinished tasks of the democratic revolution; he came to realize that the two cannot be metaphysically separated into watertight compartments.” In other words, the two stages are overlapping—according to Lenin (Desai 1979b:751) in *Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*—“To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second stage (Ed.), to separate them by anything else than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means monstrously to distort Marxism, to vulgarise it to substitute liberalism in its place.” The goal of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is the abolition of the bourgeois state machinery while the proletarian state withers away after the socialist revolution (Lenin 1977a: 20). A two-stage revolution brings about the elimination of the state in stages. In the words of Lenin (ibid: 24), “The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, i.e. of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of ‘withering away’.” Lenin quotes (ibid: 25) Marx on this question, “...we have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy...” In *Manifesto of the Communist Party* Marx (1977:126) continues that “The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e. of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as

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rapidly as possible.” In the second stage of the revolution, as Marx writes in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1977: 477), the proletariat after perfecting the parliamentary power in order to be able to overthrow it, will, have to perfect the executive power, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, setting it up against itself as the sole object, in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it. Hence, after the completion of the bourgeois-democratic phase of revolution and capture of state power by the working class, this class and its allies will have to “use that power to abolish the socio-economic domination of the capitalists and other exploiters” (Zotov 1985:197).

In the twentieth century the socialist revolution begins with the national liberation movement in the colonial, backward, underdeveloped countries. In the words of Lenin (ibid: 198), “The social revolution can come only in the form of...a whole series of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the underdeveloped, backward and oppressed nations.” The national liberation movements do not culminate with political liberation of the dependent colony—on the contrary, they move farther and deeper with the aim of bringing economic liberation to the people that have won political independence. If the national-democratic liberation movement is to be brought to its proper fruition, then a fundamental reshaping of the economy is necessary with determined assaults on not only feudal and clan-tribal socio-economic structures and relations but upon capitalist structures and relations as well. At the stage of struggle for political independence from colonialism the proletariat had been weak and numerically small and the peasantry largely an unorganised mass; so there had been no possibility of establishing a bourgeois-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. Hence, the national liberation struggle was in most cases, and definitely in India, conducted and led by the national bourgeoisie and the intellectual circles linked to it. According to Chattopadhyay et al (2005: xxiv), in this respect Trotsky’s concept of ‘Permanent Revolution’ becomes useful. Trotsky’s thesis was that in
colonial and semi-colonial countries the national bourgeoisie was unable or unwilling to play a leading role in the democratic revolution. This was because in the epoch of imperialism and global triumph of capitalism, the national economy became tied with the global economy and from this perspective the national bourgeoisie was an agent of imperialism. In addition, as the principal aim of the national bourgeoisie had been the expulsion of the colonialists, so with the achievement of that task the requisites of the bourgeois-democratic revolution had been consigned to the pages of history. The Communist Parties and forces in India are all agreed on the issue that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the country is yet to be completed. The principal cause is that the bourgeoisie, while being historically weak due to its birth under conditions of colonialism, has been unable or unwilling to sever its dependence on imperialist powers or its tie-up with the native feudal interests. Desai is of the opinion (1974: 33) that the “…very weakness of its position as a class in that respect compels it to adopt a compromising attitude vis-à-vis world imperialism and native feudalism at every step. It has no other choice but to surrender willingly to the demands of big imperialist powers and native feudal interests instead of liquidating them.” We find an echo of this concept in Chattopadhyay et al (2005: xxv), where the authors are also of the opinion that “the Indian capitalists would not take any radical step forward towards the abolition of the local landlordism; rather they would collaborate with them.” Feudalism had been abolished partially from above to suit the capitalist mode of production, but not eradicated by a democratic revolution from below. Due to this unholy nexus the Indian state has remained backward with many of the tasks of the democratic revolution remaining unresolved. For instance, emancipation from imperial control has not been followed by radical agrarian reforms including expropriation of big landowners, abolition of all pre-capitalist modes of oppression, distribution of land to the poor and the landless peasantry etc., abolition of exploitation of various nationalities, castes, communities, race,
gender, etc., uneven development, corruption etc. that plague the country. Hence, the ultimate goal of the revolution—socio-economic liberation of the masses from feudal-capitalist clutches—is yet to be achieved. Thus, the working masses will have to deepen the revolution against the entire feudal-bourgeois-bureaucratic combine, controlling the State machinery as well as the developmental path of the country because it has become clear that capitalist development has been unable to meet and fulfil the vital interests of the Indian people.

Thus, the working class will have to complete the tasks of the bourgeois revolution and ensure smooth continuation of the revolution to its socialist phase. The Indian Marxists have been seriously debating over the nature of the revolution to be organised in India for establishment of socialism in this country. Four distinct positions regarding the nature, strategy and tactics of the Left Movement have emerged. The first three approaches, adopted by the C.P.I., C.P.I.(M) and the G.J.P.(ML) are convinced that revolution in India will have to pass through two stages. The first stage according to the three above-mentioned parties will be “National Democratic” or “People’s Democratic” or “New Democratic” revolution, respectively. The second stage will commence later and will be “socialist revolution.” These communist parties, according to Desai (1979b: 753), are more in favour of a peaceful parliamentary transition to socialism and alliance with the progressive, national, anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, anti-comprador bourgeoisie to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution, which is qualitatively quite different from the Socialist revolution. This view has been reiterated by Chattopadhyay et al (2005: xxx) who are of the opinion that a revolution in two stages actually “denotes the Stalinist-Menshevik variety of stagism, which preaches the revolution in two stages and assigns progressive roles to the national bourgeoisie in colonial, semi-colonial and backward countries even in the age of globalization.” As published in the journal The Call [25(2,3,4), October, November, December 1973] (Desai 1974: 40) the three
communist parties—the C.P.I., C.P.I.(M) and the C.P.I.(ML)—“are agreed that the immediate tasks of the Indian revolution in the present phase cannot be defined in terms of a socialist revolution or the overthrow of capitalist rule and establishment of a socialist state based on the power of the proletariat and toiling peasantry led by the proletariat or the working class.” Hence, ultimately they are not in favour of an advance towards socialism by a violent overthrow of capitalism, thereby not bringing the revolution to its proper culmination. Thus, in many post-colonial countries, as in India, the attitude of the Communist parties has allowed the adoption of the mixed economy-based capitalist path of development with reliance upon the rich propertied classes, thereby elaborating the public sector, strengthening the propertied classes, depending more and more on foreign capital and financial institutions, slow rate of industrialisation and increasing burden as well as decline of the agrarian sector. Such dual-economy postulates have strengthened the bourgeoisie and intensified capitalist exploitation and oppression. In the opinion of Chattopadhyay et al (2005: xxv-xxvi) India lacks a revolutionary party armed with a programme of Marxism and “Marxists should not simply confine themselves to opposing state terrorism and demanding economic development, but should also support the struggle for self-determination in genuine cases…”

Thus, the communist parties are thought to be unclear about the actual nature and tactics of the revolution. Desai reiterates (1979b: 758) after Kathleen Gough who, in her article entitled “Imperialism and Revolutionary Potential in South Asia”, was of the opinion that the C.P.I., C.P.I.(M) and the Maoist groups tend to confuse the socialist stage with National Democratic or People’s Democratic Revolution. She further points out (ibid) in the same article that such separation into two revolutionary stages is “unnecessary” and “mechanical” and “the time for an independent capitalist or even a ‘non-capitalist’ (but non-socialist), stage is past—that bus has been missed.”
A fourth alternative is possible, the approach taken by the Revolutionary Socialist Party and a few other groups, adopting the Trotskyite position. For them (Desai1974: 41ff) the Indian Revolution will be a Socialist Revolution. The RSP is of the opinion that the capitalist class, which is at the helm of State power in India, has been unable to completely and consistently fulfil the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This is because power, thinks the RSP (ibid), had not been wrested in a revolutionary way but through a political deal between British imperialism and bourgeois leadership of the nationalist movement. It is true that foreign imperialist force has been ousted with the national bourgeoisie capturing state power in 1947. India has become a sovereign nation with a parliamentary form of government based on universal adult franchise and representative institutions. The Princely order and hybrid feudal landlordism has been substituted by capitalist farming based on peasant proprietorship. However, all vestiges of feudalism have not been completely eliminated, especially from the countryside. In economic matters the path of independent capitalist development has been hampered by the dependence upon imperialist finance-capital of advanced metropolitan countries for financial and technological help. These have often forced the ruling capitalist class to compromise on issues of national interest and change the country's diplomatic stance. These limitations upon the democratic transformations of the country signal the halting and half-hearted manner of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the fact that many of its tasks were not completely fulfilled right from the early phase.

Hence, the working class must strive to fulfil the unaccomplished tasks of the democratic revolution. For this they will have to dislodge the ruling bourgeoisie from state power through a completely anti-capitalist political revolution. In this revolution the proletariat will have to align itself with “the toiling peasantry, toiling middle classes, the urban semi-proletarist (sic), toiling intelligentsia and so on...” (ibid: 42). The proletariat will have to take the
leading role because as Trotsky had said (Chattopadhyay et al 2005: 261), 
"...that no matter how great the revolutionary role of the peasantry may be, it 
nevertheless cannot be an independent role and even less a leading one. The 
peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois." The aim of the revolution 
will have to be "an end of the control and ownership of the ruling capitalist class 
over the decisive means of production, i.e. put an end to private property and 
the capitalist-controlled system of state capitalism and go over to socialism" 
(ibid: 43). The ideological dimension of the revolution will have to ensure a 
consciousness among the masses that "poverty and inequality are man-
made...and are therefore capable of being removed by the creation of a proper 
socio-economic framework" (Desai 1977a: 31). They should be further made 
aware that inequality is based on the private ownership of the means of 
production and unless such ownership is abolished the minimum conditions for 
eliminating other social inequalities cannot be created. However, Desai cautions 
(1998:108) that end of economic exploitation in the context of backward 
countries "will not necessarily, automatically result in securing civil liberties for 
the toilers. A systematic protest movement will have to be launched against 
Bureaucratic totalitarian governmental organizations." Not only so, a search has 
to be made for a government which will end the reign of capital on the one 
hand, and negate bureaucratic, authoritarian suppression of the people, on the 
other. It is necessary to realise that parliamentary forms of government have not 
only outlived their utility but themselves have become fetters upon qualitative 
advancement. Hence, Desai says (ibid: 109), "A search for such an institutional 
framework is the historical task of today." Only such knowledge and 
consciousness can generate optimism and determination of the propertyless and 
poorer masses which will, in turn, procreate tremendous capacities for struggles 
and sacrifice for the cause of a qualitatively higher socialist socio-economic--
formation.
In such formation the imperative should be availability and enjoyment of democratic human rights to all so as to ensure a richer participation of all in social, political, economic and cultural processes. To ensure this, the shackles of "national boundaries with their concomitant armaments, competitive and conflicting policies, and restrictions on the citizens to serve the narrow military and other national interests of the state, shall have to be eliminated...a cooperative commonwealth of various communities will have to be created" (Ibid: 108). Desai concludes (1977a: 32) that "it must be emphasized that since elimination of social inequality based on property is a logical imperative, we should help set in motion those significant forces, within the extant capitalist socio-economic formation, which would prevent further 'involution' and lead to the ending of the present system."