

for maintaining law and order, but was soon also to become the agency for developmental work.

The basic structure of civil and criminal law as well as of its administration was also inherited from the colonial period. The major difference, of course, was the creation of a Supreme Court and its position within the new constitutional system. However, apart from the new issues that arose regarding relations between the legislature and the judiciary, the working of the high courts and district courts maintained an unbroken history from colonial times, continuing the same practices of legal tradition and precedent.

The Indian armed forces, too, maintained a continuing history from the colonial period. The British tradition of a professional army strictly under the control of the political leadership was successfully maintained in the period after Independence, and unlike most other countries, there was not even a joint command of the army, navy, and air forces except in the office of the political head of government.

#### STATE AND POLITICS, 1947-67

Politics in India from 1947 to 1967 is usually characterized as 'the Congress system'. The Congress party ran governments at the Centre as well as in the states. The provincial party units enjoyed considerable autonomy in relation to the central party leadership. This was also the period of the formation of a developmental state which intervened in the economy, planning and guiding its growth and trying directly to promote the welfare of the population. This was perhaps the principal governmental function that legitimized the postcolonial state. It meant considerable state intervention in the economy through the progressive taxation of personal and corporate incomes, and the provision by the state of public services such as education, health, and transport. In addition, the state in India in the Nehru period consciously chose elements from socialist systems such as that of the Soviet Union in order to create a planned economy, albeit within the framework of a mixed and not a socialist economy, where the state sector would control 'the commanding heights of the economy'. The idea was to industrialize rapidly by setting up new public enterprises in heavy

industries, while confining the private sector to consumer and intermediate goods. Rapid industrial growth was seen to be the key to the removal of poverty and the provision of welfare for the people. The shortcomings of the strategy became clear by the middle of the 1960s, when there was an acute food shortage in the country, making it necessary for the government to import large quantities of foodgrains. There was also a severe foreign exchange crisis, exacerbated by the hugely increased defence expenditures in the wake of the wars with China and Pakistan. Soon after its formation in 1966, Indira Gandhi's government was forced to devalue the rupee. With high food prices and slowing down of growth, economic hardship was at its peak. This was reflected in massive, and often violent, agitations all over the country. The 1967 elections saw a sharp fall in Congress votes, and as many as nine states had non-Congress governments. This brought in a completely new situation in Indian politics, not only because the Congress lost its overwhelming dominance at the Centre, but also because the federal structure was now called upon to deal with relations between a Congress government at the Centre and several non-Congress governments in the states.

#### ANALYSING THE STATE: THE FIRST TWO DECADES

Early attempts to present a systematic account of the Indian state, such as those by Palmer (1962) and Morris-Jones (1964) were usually framed within a liberal modernization theory, and, more often than not, were celebratory in tone. Key institutions of the state were shown to have been put in place in the period of British rule. It was believed that with a liberal democratic constitutional system and universal suffrage, the Indian political system would gradually develop its own processes of democratic decision-making, rational administration, and modern citizenship. Features such as patronage relations based on caste, or religious loyalties and solidarities based on ethnicity were regarded as vestiges of underdevelopment that would go away. Later, more complex variants of the modernization theory were produced, most notably by Rudolph and Rudolph