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# THE 1984 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN UTTAR PRADESH

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Paul R. Brass

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The 1984 parliamentary elections produced a stunning majority for the Indian National Congress under its new leader, Rajiv Gandhi. The results were all the more stunning for not having been anticipated by either Congress or opposition politicians and, with one notable exception,<sup>1</sup> by most observers. Most impartial observers expected a bare majority for the Congress in the country as a whole. No Congressmen whom I met in an election tour through Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) in December 1984 expected the Congress to win more than 60 seats in that state. The more usual calculation was that the Congress would win 50 to 55 seats. Opposition politicians and dissident Congressmen confidently predicted that the Congress would win no more than 30 or 40 seats. Instead, the Congress won all but two of the seats from U.P., 83 of 85, with a 50% vote share.

How did the Congress achieve such a huge victory? How could seasoned politicians have been so far off the mark? What are the implications for our understanding of Indian voting behavior? I propose to discuss these questions with respect to U.P. by identifying elements of continuity and discontinuity between the 1984 parliamentary elections and previous elections in this state.

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Paul R. Brass is Professor of Political Science, University of Washington, Seattle. Research for this article was carried out in Uttar Pradesh in December 1984 under a grant from the Special Foreign Currency Program of the Smithsonian Institution. The Election Commission of India provided the author with the provisional result sheets for U.P. and facilitated his work in the U.P. districts to which he traveled. Sri Ganesan, Secretary of the Election Commission of India, since retired, was most helpful in granting authorization to obtain the electoral results. The author also wants to thank J. C. Chaudhary, Under Secretary of the Election Commission of India, for his responsiveness to requests for electoral data. None of the above-named persons or agencies are, however, responsible for any errors or for the opinions expressed herein.

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1. Prannath Roy in *India Today*, December 31, 1984.

## Continuities

It was widely reported that Rajiv Gandhi and his advisors had dropped a large number of incumbents, particularly those with unsavory reputations for corruption and criminal connections, and had given Congress tickets to many new persons of character and probity. In fact, there was much more continuity than discontinuity in the selection of candidates. The Congress mandates, for the most part, were either incumbents or members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) who had won convincing majorities in the 1980 Assembly elections. Some former Congressmen who had gone into the opposition during the Sanjay Gandhi period and whose defection had caused a significant loss of support for the Congress in their local areas also were reintegrated into the Congress and were given tickets. For example, in ten U.P. constituencies that I have selected for detailed analysis,<sup>2</sup> four of the Congress candidates were incumbents (see Table 1). In the remaining six constituencies, the Congress had won three and lost three in the 1980 elections. One of the incumbent candidates had died and was replaced with a locally powerful former Congressman. Another incumbent, by his own choice, preferred to switch to another constituency and was replaced by a new candidate with a clean reputation. The third Congress incumbent was dropped because he did not have the support of the acknowledged leader of the Congress organization in the district; he was replaced by an incumbent MLA. All the Congress candidates who had lost in 1980 were denied a second chance in 1984. Two were replaced by incumbent MLAs and the third by a new candidate. Overall, therefore, the Congress chose proven vote-getters above all, incumbent members of parliament (MPs) or MLAs (7 of 10), and seasoned Congress or former Congress politicians.

This was not much different from the way the opposition chose its candidates. Most of the opposition candidates were either incumbent or former MPs or MLAs or had placed second or third in the 1980 Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly elections. There were a few new candidates and, occasionally, an incumbent MP was dropped in preference for a candidate considered to have a better chance in 1984.

A second element of continuity was in the caste of the candidates. As in 1980, most of the Congress candidates in the non-reserved constituencies

2. These ten constituencies fall in the five U.P. districts of Deoria, Gonda, Kanpur City, Aligarh, and Meerut, which I have visited on several occasions during the past 24 years in connection with my research projects on local politics and elections. Although not "representative" in any statistical sense, each district exemplifies one or more characteristic feature of U.P. politics, demographic structure, distribution of landholdings, and local political economy.

were either Brahmans or Rajputs. In a few constituencies with large Muslim voting populations, the Congress nominated Muslim candidates. Only rarely, and usually in constituencies where the backward castes are very strong and highly politicized and where the Congress had previously lost and stood little chance with a Brahman or Rajput candidate, did the Congress select a person from a backward caste. In some cases, as in Padrauna constituency in Deoria district, the backward caste candidates were from prosperous, even princely landed families. The Congress, therefore, made no significant effort in this election in U.P. to make a broader appeal to the backward castes. It remained content to rely principally on candidates from the elite castes, who constitute less than 20% of the total population of the state, and from the dominant land-controlling castes generally.

As in previous elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also selected most of its candidates from the elite castes of Brahmans and Rajputs, with only an occasional backward caste candidate. Also, as in the past, the Lok Dal candidates came from a broader spectrum of castes, including many Brahmans, more backward caste candidates than any other party, and even a low caste, Jatav candidate in the Aligarh parliamentary constituency.

On the whole, therefore, there was nothing unusual about the candidate selection process for the parliamentary elections in U.P. for either the Congress or the opposition. Most of the candidates were familiar to the voters because they were either incumbent or ex-MPs or MLAs, or had been strong contenders for Parliament or the Legislative Assembly in previous elections. Moreover, in interviews with local politicians and with voters, the assessments that were made of the candidates and their prospects were similar to those made in the past. Candidates were assessed by local politicians and judged by the voters with regard to their personal reputations and their willingness and ability to do things for people in their constituencies. Incumbent candidates were judged according to whether they took bribes, helped people, had built new houses since becoming MPs or MLAs (an indication of corruption), or had had new roads constructed in their constituencies. New candidates were judged on whether anything negative could be discovered about them, whether they had taken an interest in the problems of the people before, and whether they were local candidates.

Moreover, the structure of conflict in the parliamentary contests in most U.P. constituencies appeared to be quite consistent with previous elections. Whatever the castes of the leading candidates, there was the usual widespread division between the elite and backward castes. Everywhere, it was still assumed that the predominant tendency among the elite castes, particularly the Brahmans, was to vote Congress or BJP, and for the backward

castes, particularly the Jats and Yadavs, to vote for the Lok Dal/DMKP. Candidates and their political workers continued to estimate their chances in relation to caste calculations concerning the combinations and coalitions of caste groups likely to support them and their rivals and concerning the proportions of persons from specific caste groups that would be drawn away from the leading candidates by the hordes of independents set up just for these purposes. The Congress was still presumed to have a basic "committed" vote of Brahmins, other upper caste groups, and Scheduled Castes (ex-Untouchables), but there was some doubt about the Muslim commitment to the Congress this time. The Lok Dal, aware that its base among the middle castes is not sufficient to carry most parliamentary seats, selected many of its candidates with a view toward building coalitions with elite castes, with Muslims, and with Scheduled Castes. For example, in the ten constituencies I selected for detailed examination, the Lok Dal contested nine, of which eight were non-reserved constituencies. In those eight constituencies, the Lok Dal ran backward (intermediate status) caste candidates in only two, of which one was the constituency of Chaudhury Charan Singh himself. In the remaining six, there were three Brahman, two Muslim, and one Jatav candidate.

An example of the kinds of caste calculations that were made is that for Aligarh constituency. Congress had not won this seat since 1957. It had been won by the BKD/BLD/Lok Dal in the previous three elections. Since 1957, the Congress had attempted to win the seat either with a Muslim (1957, 1962, and 1967) or with a Rajput candidate (1971, 1977, and 1980). The BKD/BLD/Lok Dal had won the constituency with a Rajput candidate in the past three elections. The constituency had, in effect, become a Rajput constituency. In 1980, all three leading candidates were Rajputs.

However, in 1984, both the Congress and the Lok Dal decided to try a change in tactics. The Congress selected a new candidate, an elderly Jat woman from a former landlord family, while the Lok Dal selected a Jatav, B. P. Maurya, who had won the 1962 election on the Republican Party ticket but since then had not contested an election in Aligarh district. The calculations on both sides were obvious from their selection of candidates. The Congress hoped to wrest this seat from the Lok Dal by running a Jat candidate who, it was presumed, would draw 40% to 50% of the Jat vote away from the Lok Dal. If the traditional Congress "committed vote" remained, the Congress would get the votes of Brahmins, Scheduled Castes, Muslims, and most Rajputs as well, giving it an easy victory in the constituency.

For its part, the Lok Dal hoped to draw the Scheduled Caste vote away from the Congress by adopting a well-known Jatav candidate. It was hoped also that Maurya would be able to repeat his feat of 1962 of combining Muslim and Scheduled Caste votes. The Scheduled Caste vote, combined with its traditional vote among the Jats and other backward castes would, it was hoped, retain the seat for the Lok Dal.

Congress strategists, however, predicted that Maurya would not get many Scheduled Caste votes because he had left Aligarh years ago and allegedly had done nothing for them even when he was the MP from Aligarh. Moreover, it was felt that the Scheduled Castes (assumed to be generally hostile to the Lok Dal) would also be reluctant to vote for the Lok Dal, despite the presence of a Jatav candidate on its ticket, whereas the Jats would desert the Lok Dal because the party had selected a Jatav. Nor was it felt that Maurya would be able to draw upon the Muslim vote as successfully as he had done in 1962 when Muslims in Aligarh had been more disaffected with the Congress than they were now thought to be.

The BJP candidate, Indra Kumari, a Rajput, the incumbent MP who had been dropped by the Lok Dal, was expected to draw Rajput votes from the Congress and the votes of the Lodhas, an important backward caste in a segment of the constituency where the BJP MLA was a Lodha, from the Lok Dal. However, Indra Kumari could only have been expected to draw votes away from the two main contenders, not displace them.

It is possible to "explain" the election result in Aligarh in 1984 in terms of such caste calculations by arguing that the Congress strategy proved to be the correct one. However, the size of the victory was unprecedented for the Congress in this constituency (though the BLD won it with an even larger majority in the Janata-wave election of 1977). Moreover, the Congress victory in Aligarh was obviously part of a state-wide pattern that cannot be explained fully in terms of such local caste calculations. At the same time, the strategy of caste calculations remained an element of continuity for all sides in this election, which was not without a foundation in the reality of voting.

A further related element of continuity in this election concerned speculation about the trend in the Muslim vote. The Muslims in U.P. are considered part of the Congress committed vote, but they are also considered to be more volatile than other components of the Congress core support structure. There was a widespread feeling among both Congressmen and opposition politicians this time that the Muslims, discontented over recurring Hindu-Muslim riots, particularly in western U.P. where the police and the Provincial Armed Constabulary allegedly often attacked and killed Muslims during such riots instead of restoring the peace, would de-

sert the Congress. The Lok Dal hoped to capitalize upon this presumed anti-Congress Muslim sentiment by fielding a large number of Muslim candidates. My own observations during my tour of U.P. in December 1984 were that the Muslims in many constituencies did in fact desert the Congress en bloc, and that in most others the Muslim vote was divided in the 60–40% range on one side or the other. Such losses for the Congress among Muslims are not a discontinuity with the past. It happened massively in 1977 and the Muslim vote was also divided in U.P. in 1980. What is discontinuous with the past is a massive Congress victory in the face of major desertions from this important segment of the Congress's "committed vote."

On the whole, the elements of continuity identified so far add up to one central fact, namely, that the core support structures of both the Congress and its main opposition, the Lok Dal, remained largely intact. Although the Lok Dal won only two seats in U.P., it polled 22% of the vote, a loss of 7% from its popular vote share of 1980, but approximately the same vote share as it won in the 1984 legislative assembly elections. Moreover, the Lok Dal core support base remained the same as in the past, coming primarily from the leading land-controlling backward castes of Jats and Yadavs.

The Congress core support structure also remained largely intact. Brahmins and Scheduled Castes continued to provide overwhelming support to the Congress. The Congress also drew strong support again from other elite land-controlling castes, particularly Rajputs. There was some further erosion in its support base among Muslims, but this was neither unprecedented nor unanticipated. The Congress also retained some support among sections of the backward castes, particularly among the important land-controlling caste of Kurmis, and among the "lower backward" or poorer backward castes.

There were two other elements of continuity between this election and previous Lok Sabha elections in U.P. and in north India generally. The first was the "wave" itself. Ever since the "delinking" of parliamentary and legislative assembly elections in 1971 and the consequent freeing of parliamentary elections from their then much greater dependence upon local coalitions, all the parliamentary elections, with the possible exception of 1980, were "wave" elections. A "wave" election may be described as one in which a clear tendency begins to develop in one direction or another toward a national party or its leader(s). It is based upon an issue or set of issues that transcend local calculations and coalitions and draws the bulk of the uncommitted and wavering voters in the same direction with increasing momentum in the last days of the campaign as the word spreads

from village to village, tea shop to tea shop, across the vast north Indian plain.

The first such "wave" was the Indira wave of 1971, which was based, among other issues, upon an identification of voters with Mrs. Gandhi in her defiance of the old party bosses and upon her slogan of "*garibi hatao*" (eliminate poverty), which drew to her the bulk of the vote of the low caste poor and landless. The second wave was the massive Janata victory of 1977, which was based on the large-scale resentment among the people against Mrs. Gandhi's "Emergency" regime excesses and on the promise of a new era held forth by the coalition of respected and well-known older leaders in a single political formation. The third, much less formidable wave, was the 1980 Indira wave, which was made possible by a combination of three factors: the discontent of the people with the disintegration of the Janata coalition, a sense of identification once again with the lone figure of Mrs. Gandhi contending against a group of old men bent on harassing her, and widespread scarcities of essential commodities and high prices. The 1984 Congress wave was as impressive as the Janata wave in the north in terms of seats won and even more impressive in the country as a whole in that respect. It was also an unquestionably authentic wave in terms of the great increase in Congress vote shares. It was not, however, unprecedented. The Congress vote share in U.P. in 1984 was less than its vote share under Nehru in 1952 and far less than that of Janata in 1977. Its basis will be examined in the next section.

### Discontinuities

A striking discontinuity between the 1984 parliamentary elections and previous elections was the absence of major economic issues that had in the past been either central to election campaigns or, at least, important in them, namely, issues such as scarcity, high prices, poverty, low food grain and sugarcane prices for producers. Agricultural productivity has continued to increase in large parts of U.P., especially wherever new irrigation facilities, canals and tubewells, have been introduced. Diesel and electricity seem to be more available than previously. There were no evident major food scarcities. Many farmers had stopped growing sugarcane or reduced significantly their acreage sown to cane, as a consequence of which the cane price was high.<sup>3</sup> There were no promises to abolish poverty. Indeed, Congressmen hardly spoke about economic issues at all.

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3. This situation itself developed primarily out of discontent among cane growers over nonpayment of arrears of cane price to them in recent years. Even so, the issue was not in the forefront of this election campaign.

Lok Dal leaders, particularly Charan Singh, recited economic statistics to demonstrate that agriculture and the rural areas were being discriminated against in resource distribution, taxation, and parity of prices, but there was no single item of current distress prevalent in the countryside that could be identified to dramatize these general issues. When landholding villagers were asked what their main problems and concerns were or when candidates were asked what they perceived as the main problems in their constituencies, the most frequent item mentioned was the need for link roads from their village to main roads or to markets, or for bridges. This is clearly not the stuff to produce a great wave.

A second discontinuity was the inadequacy of caste calculations to predict the result. As one astute Congress political campaigner put it to me as he himself was reciting the usual kind of analysis of anticipated caste voting and caste coalitions during the election campaign, "It is all caste calculations and they are generally not correct." Similar remarks were made to me elsewhere in U.P. during the campaign. The statement does not mean that caste calculations are irrelevant or that the voting behavior of castes cannot be predicted, but that parliamentary election results cannot be accurately predicted any longer on the basis of such calculations.

There are three interrelated reasons for the inadequacy of such caste calculations as a basis for predicting parliamentary election results. The first is that the castes and communities counted are usually the leading land-controlling castes, the Scheduled Castes, and the Muslims. The proportion of voters represented in such calculations usually accounts for no more than 50% to 65% of a constituency. The old assumption that the land-controlling castes control the rest of the votes is no longer valid, though they do still have great influence over some low and lower backward caste voters in many areas of the state. When a wave develops, there remains a huge voting population whose behavior has not been accounted for at all in the usual caste calculations and which may move massively in one direction.

The second reason is that the parliamentary elections since 1971 have normally thrown up transcendent issues that can move millions of uncommitted voters and can sway previously committed voters to depart from former patterns of voting behavior. Such issues are usually not present in the legislative assembly elections where the old caste calculations do, therefore, provide a much more reliable basis for predicting the outcomes. However, *garibi hatao* in 1971, Emergency excesses in 1977, scarcities and high prices in 1980, and in 1984 the sympathy factor, the hope inspired by the "new man," Rajiv Gandhi, and the theme of the unity of the country in danger from internal and external enemies provided transcendent issues

that swayed whole categories of voters and the millions of uncommitted and "unaccounted for" voters in those elections.

The third reason for the inadequacy of caste calculations in predicting parliamentary election outcomes is that, as with all calculations of group voting in all countries, it is a mistake to neglect the minority in every group that does not vote with the general sentiment of the group as a whole. The politicians in India, of course, do not forget these minorities. In fact, the utterly astonishing numbers of independent candidates in the last two parliamentary elections reflect such awareness on the part of the leading candidates and their agents who support such "dummy" candidates just for the purpose of taking away 5% or 10% of a caste's vote that will otherwise, it is assumed, go to one's opponent. At the same time, most voters in India, as in most countries with competitive elections, do not care to throw away their votes. Many voters in India especially see no point in voting for candidates and parties who are bound to lose; they prefer to be known as supporters of the candidate and party likely to win. In most elections, the party is the Congress. In most parliamentary elections, therefore, there is a percentage of voters from every caste, including those presumed to be with the opposition, who vote Congress. In the aggregate, that minority percentage from each caste and community adds up to a percentage in each constituency that may be as large or larger than the vote for any of the parties from any of its more unified and cohesive caste supporters.

Part of the explanation of the massive Congress victory in December 1984, therefore, is that this was an authentic wave election that built upon Indira Gandhi's assassination, the personality of Rajiv Gandhi, and the issues raised by him in the campaign in such a way as to transcend caste calculations and carry along with it the uncommitted voters, the unaccounted-for voters, and the minority voters from groups, most of whose members were committed to other parties.

A third discontinuity between this election and previous elections was the extent to which voters self-consciously rejected local considerations to cast a vote for a party, the Congress, which was perceived as the best party for the good of the country. This was not the first parliamentary election in which voters saw their votes as being cast, not primarily for the MP in their constituency, but for one of the national leaders or parties, for Indira Gandhi or Charan Singh. However, as I went around the U.P. districts, I found voter after voter who told me their Congress MP or the Congress candidate was worthless, a bad character, a person who had nothing for his constituency, but that they intended to vote for him anyway because they were voting for the party. Thus, although, as noted before, the voters

continued to judge the candidates and their performance in the old ways, they did not necessarily vote according to their judgment of the candidates. This was a "lamppost" election in which large numbers of people voted for any lamppost or worthless, corrupt, and lazy politician who was lucky enough to have the Congress ticket.

There was also a corresponding negative vote against a discredited and disunited opposition that had proved incapable of governing effectively when in power, of staying united, and of offering a credible alternative to the Congress. Among the opposition leaders, only Charan Singh had a strong image as a political leader in U.P., but only or primarily among the already-committed, backward caste voters. As one Brahman pradhan (who would naturally vote Congress anyway) put it, "There is no one else to vote for except the Congress."

The other side of the negative vote against the discredited opposition leaders was a positive vote for the new man, Rajiv Gandhi. This was not, however, an election swayed by a charismatic personality. Rajiv Gandhi was probably the most colorless national leader in the history of modern Indian politics and the dullest public speaker, who did not even hold the attention of his crowds very effectively. He was, however, a known personality with nothing to be said against him (except by the Sikhs, who condemned his failure to stop the murder of thousands of Sikhs after the assassination of his mother), with a so-called clean image. However, even Brahman voters had nothing in particular to say about Rajiv Gandhi personally. People voted for him without enthusiasm, but with hope.

We come now to the fourth discontinuity between this election and previous ones, the so-called sympathy vote for Indira Gandhi, or rather, in respect for her martyrdom and for the bereaved son. I heard conflicting reports concerning the extent of this "sympathy" factor and its effects on the campaign from both candidates and voters. Most Congressmen thought there was such a sympathy vote, especially among women; most opposition politicians thought otherwise. The Brahman voter quoted above, who had nothing to say about Rajiv Gandhi, spoke of his great sorrow over the assassination of "our leader." Yadavs and other backward castes, however, who normally vote for the Lok Dal, did not seem swayed in their voting by the sympathy factor. They said that everyone was sad after the assassination, but that there was no sympathy because sympathy and politics were two different things. It is likely that the sympathy factor did affect uncommitted voters and that women voted disproportionately in favor of the Congress for the same reason. After the election, however, few observers credited the sympathy factor as causing a

vote shift towards the Congress of more than 5% to 7%. The increase in the Congress vote share in U.P. was 15%.

I believe, therefore, that the primary reason for the massive Congress victory in U.P. had more to do with other factors than the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi and the favorable image of her son. Here we come to the major discontinuity between this election campaign and all others: a shift in the attitudes of Congressmen toward the minorities, and an election campaign that focused nearly exclusively on the dangers to the country posed by internal and external enemies and on the need for Indians, meaning Hindus, to close ranks to save the country. Although it was Mrs. Gandhi initially who instituted scapegoatism, blame displacement, and paranoid fear of foreign enemies into election campaigns, there was never an election in which such themes and slogans were so prominent, to the exclusion of even a semblance of debate and discussion of other issues. Nor was there ever an election before in U.P. in which Congressmen expressed less concern about the loss of Muslim votes. There was even some openly expressed antagonism to Muslims by Congressmen, some of whom lumped the Muslims together with the Sikhs as internal threats supported by external agents and foreign countries.

Only two themes were played upon by Congressmen in this election: "*Desh Akhand*" (One Country or The Country Indivisible) and the dangers to the country from foreign agents. The first theme was nothing but a rewording of the old Jan Sangh slogan, "*Akhand Bharat*." The second was more in tune with Mrs. Gandhi's manipulation of such notions in the past, but Rajiv Gandhi carried the theme to a new level by singling out for a special mention a book written by an American political science professor in which the author speculated at one point on the question of "After Mrs. Gandhi, what?," as evidence that the U.S. had foreknowledge of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination.<sup>4</sup> Both themes combined into one—namely, the need to save India from its enemies.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr., had written a group of speculative papers for the U.S. State Department on the future of India that had been published under the title, *India Under Pressure: Prospects for Political Stability* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1984). In this volume were a couple of paragraphs speculating on the consequences for the country if Mrs. Gandhi should die before or after the election. Rajiv Gandhi used these paragraphs in his election campaign to insinuate foreknowledge on the part of the U.S. government of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and, therefore, a foreign hand in it. See the very fair review of Hardgrave's book and the political uses to which it was put by Sandhya Jain in the *Overseas Hindustan Times*, February 16, 1985.

5. Rajiv Gandhi obviously knew about the spy ring involving French embassy and business personnel as well as other unnamed foreign governments during the election campaign, for the news of it broke just after the election. Perhaps the knowledge he had of this spy ring

To what extent was the theme of "save India" decisive in this landslide victory of the Congress? Partly it cannot be separated from the feelings aroused by Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, which was depicted as a martyrdom caused by enemies of the country, a murder of the nation's leader and defender. The feeling was widespread among middle and upper class people in the cities and towns that the Sikhs who had been killed by the thousands in Delhi, Kanpur, and Begusarai had gotten what they deserved. But in the countryside in December 1984, I did not hear such sentiments expressed widely. Those voters who were committed to the Lok Dal certainly paid no attention to these themes. The Yadav farmer already quoted, when asked about the Congress campaign's emphasis on unity, threats to the country, and *Desh Akhand*, said simply, "Corruption is the main problem and there is no problem about unity."

Yet there is no doubt that the Congress succeeded in capturing a large number of votes that used to go to the Jan Sangh. It was reported widely, in fact, that prominent present and past Jan Sangh/BJP leaders had openly or secretly urged voters to support the Congress this time as the best hope for preserving the unity of the country. Some RSS workers, usually thought of as only supporters of the BJP, also were reported to be working for Congress candidates. In some areas, however, I witnessed RSS workers supporting the opposition to the Congress even where there was no BJP candidate. It is certain that the RSS was not united in its support of the BJP and against the Congress this time, but rather was supporting the BJP here, the Congress there, and other non-Congress opposition candidates elsewhere. In some places, RSS workers were divided even within a single constituency.

However, we need not speculate overmuch or overinterpret what the voters said or the RSS did. The election results are clear. The BJP, the main remnant of the old Jan Sangh (which had merged previously into the former Janata party) was reduced to a very minor force in the 1984 parliamentary elections. The bulk of the increase in the Congress vote share came from the former Janata party/Jan Sangh. That means, inevitably, that the Congress reinforced still further its support among the elite castes, the Brahmans and Rajputs, who had been among the principal supporters of Janata/Jan Sangh in the past. Since the Jan Sangh used to get some support as well from some of the backward castes and the Lok Dal lost some ground in this election, it means that the Congress increased its strength somewhat among the backward caste voters as well, such as the Kurmis, who are not committed to the Lok Dal. The Congress coalition,

then, this time was nearly at its maximum, with greater strength than ever among the elite castes, with its hold on the Scheduled Caste and lower backward votes intact, and with a stronger base than before, even among some of the middle castes. In the face of such a massive coalition, the erosion of the Congress base among the Muslims was not even felt except in a few constituencies.

What had been a three-way contest in 1980 became a two-way contest in 1984. Taking a 12.5% vote share (the amount required to avoid losing one's security deposit) in a constituency as the dividing line for a significant showing, Table 1 shows that in nine of the ten constituencies selected for detailed scrutiny in 1980, the contest was a three-way, in most cases between the Congress and two other parties, usually the Lok Dal, Janata (S), or Janata. In contrast, in 1984, only three of the ten contests were three-way. Of the seven two-way contests, all but one were between the Congress and the Lok Dal.

Taking the results for the entire state, in 60 of the 85 parliamentary constituencies in 1984, the first or second party was the Congress or the Lok Dal (see Table 2). The BJP came in second in only seven constituencies in the state (compared to nine second-place showings for independents). It came in second or third in only 27 constituencies. In only 39 constituencies in the state did the BJP have a candidate who polled at least 5% of the vote. In effect, therefore, the major discontinuity in the 1984 parliamentary elections has, paradoxically, sharpened the single most important trend in post-independence U.P. politics. The Congress having donned the mantle of the former Jan Sangh and thereby having undercut the social base of its main remnant, the BJP, the *only* electorally significant struggle in U.P. as a whole has become that between the Congress and the Lok Dal. However, this increasingly dualistic struggle is also a lopsided one. The Congress is by far the stronger of the two parties, with a much broader social base. It has reinforced its position as a party of extremes, drawing from the top and the bottom of the U.P. social order, and has gripped the Lok Dal and its middle peasant, backward caste following in a vise from which it cannot escape.

**TABLE 1** *Parliamentary Election Results in Ten Selected Constituencies of Uttar Pradesh, 1980 and 1984*

<i>Caste/Community</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Valid Votes Polled</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Candidate Background</i>
<i>Constituency No. Name</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>% Turnout</i>		
<i>32 Balrampur</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>54.15</i>		
Not known	INC	128,207	32.23	Incumbent MLA
Muslim	Ind.	119,551	30.06	2nd place, 1980 assembly
Rajput	BJP	85,273	21.44	3rd place, 1980 parl.
12 others		64,743	16.27	
<i>Total valid vote</i>		<i>397,774</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>32 Balrampur</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>43.97</i>		
Brahman	INC	110,767	35.84	
Brahman	JNP	89,781	29.05	
Muslim	JNP (S)	62,855	20.34	
5 others		45,617	14.77	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>309,020</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>33 Gonda</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>51.88</i>		
Rajput	INC	260,112	67.54	Incumbent MP
Brahman	LKD	94,136	24.44	3rd place, 1980 assembly
7 others		30,856	8.02	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>385,104</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>33 Gonda</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>35.18</i>		
Rajput	INC	125,196	52.29	
Brahman	LKD	52,270	21.83	
Rajput	JNP	38,849	16.23	
7 others		23,106	9.65	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>239,421</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>40 Padrauna</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>52.36</i>		
Sainthwar	INC	189,209	47.70	Incumbent MP
Muslim	LKD	112,831	28.45	2nd place, 1980 assembly
Not Known	BJP	30,926	7.80	New candidate
9 others		63,709	16.05	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>396,675</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>40 Padrauna</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>49.85</i>		
Sainthwar	INC	119,734	35.51	
Muslim	JNP (S)	96,758	28.69	
Brahman	JNP	92,369	27.39	
6 others		28,356	8.41	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>337,217</i>	<i>100.00</i>	

TABLE 1—Continued

<i>Caste/Community</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Valid Votes Polled</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Candidate Background</i>
<i>Constituency No. Name</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>% Turnout</i>		
<i>41 Deoria</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>55.44</i>		
Brahman	INC	239,708	55.71	Incumbent MLA
Sainthwar	LKD	94,607	21.97	2nd place, 1980 parl.
Not Known	Ind.	34,145	7.94	
Not Known	BJP	24,466	5.69	
6 others		37,353	8.67	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>430,279</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>41 Deoria</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>46.68</i>		
Bhumihar	INC	110,014	32.83	
Sainthwar	LKD	109,937	32.81	
Rajput	JNP	81,337	24.27	
5 others		33,823	10.09	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>335,111</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>42 Salempur</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>47.93</i>		
Brahman	INC	152,231	39.73	Incumbent MP
Brahman	LKD	91,695	23.93	New candidate
Not Known	JNP	82,383	21.50	
Koiri	BJP	19,444	5.07	
8 others		37,390	9.77	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>383,143</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>42 Salempur</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>51.07</i>		
Brahman	INC	121,340	34.30	
Koiri	JNP (S)	105,386	29.79	
Brahman	JNP	104,639	29.58	
4 others		22,426	6.33	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>353,791</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>65 Kanpur</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>56.74</i>		
Brahman	INC	214,160	56.92	New candidate
Muslim	JNP	76,791	20.41	New candidate
Brahman	BJP	37,451	9.95	
Brahman	LKD	23,439	6.23	
35 others		24,375	6.49	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>376,216</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>65 Kanpur</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>51.28</i>		
Muslim	INC	163,230	45.49	
Muslim	JNP	88,049	24.54	
Brahman	Ind.	51,717	14.40	
Yadav	JNP (S)	42,795	11.93	
14 others		13,057	3.64	
<i>Total valid votes</i>		<i>358,848</i>	<i>100.00</i>	

TABLE 1—Continued

<i>Caste/Community</i>		<i>Party</i>	<i>Valid Votes Polled</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Candidate Background</i>
<i>Constituency No. Name</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>% Turnout</i>			
75 Hathras (SC)	1984	50.61			
Jatav			INC	165,387	44.51
Dhobi			LKD	120,749	32.50
Aheriya			BJP	46,771	12.59
9 others				38,637	10.40
<i>Total valid votes</i>				371,544	100.00
75 Hathras (SC)	1980	49.86			
Jatav			JNP (S)	136,293	40.15
Jatav			INC	101,440	29.88
SC			JNP	73,644	21.70
7 others				28,069	8.27
<i>Total valid votes</i>				339,446	100.00
76 Aligarh	1984	55.17			
Jat			INC	216,329	54.33
Jatav			LKD	114,098	28.65
Rajput			BJP	45,418	11.41
17 others				22,363	5.61
<i>Total valid votes</i>				398,208	100.00
76 Aligarh	1980	50.22			
Rajput			LKD	128,353	38.49
Rajput			INC	110,375	33.10
Rajput			JNP	61,158	18.34
23 others				33,613	10.07
<i>Total valid votes</i>				333,499	100.00
80 Meerut	1984	64.70			
Muslim			INC	238,236	50.36
Muslim			LKD	141,718	29.95
Not Known			BJP	55,728	11.78
30 others				37,427	7.91
<i>Total valid votes</i>				473,109	100.00
80 Meerut	1980	62.29			
Muslim			INC	179,004	42.15
Not Known			JNP (S)	121,787	28.67
Baniya			JNP	101,219	23.83
11 others				22,697	5.35
<i>Total valid votes</i>				424,707	100.00

TABLE 1—Continued

<i>Caste/Community</i>		<i>Party</i>	<i>Valid Votes Polled</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Candidate Background</i>
<i>Constituency No. Name</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>% Turnout</i>			
<i>81 Baghpat</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>63.48</i>			
Jat		LKD	253,463	53.72	Incumbent MP
Not Known		INC	167,789	35.56	Incumbent MLA
Rajput		Ind.	33,664	7.14	Ex-MP
16 others			16,898	3.58	
<i>Total valid votes</i>			<i>471,814</i>	<i>100.00</i>	
<i>81 Baghpat</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>70.34</i>			
Jat		LKD	323,077	65.21	
Gujar		INC	157,956	31.88	
9 others			14,434	2.91	
<i>Total valid votes</i>			<i>495,467</i>	<i>100.00</i>	

NOTE: INC = Congress party; Ind. = independent; BJP = Bharatiya Janata Party; JNP = Janata Party; LKD = Lok Dal.

TABLE 2 Seats Won and Second Place Positions by Party in Parliamentary Elections, Uttar Pradesh, 1984

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats Won</i>	<i>2nd Place</i>
Congress	83	2
Lok Dal	2	58
BJP	0	7
CPI	0	3
Congress (J)	0	3
Janata	0	3
Independents	0	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>