

Mahatma Gandhi.



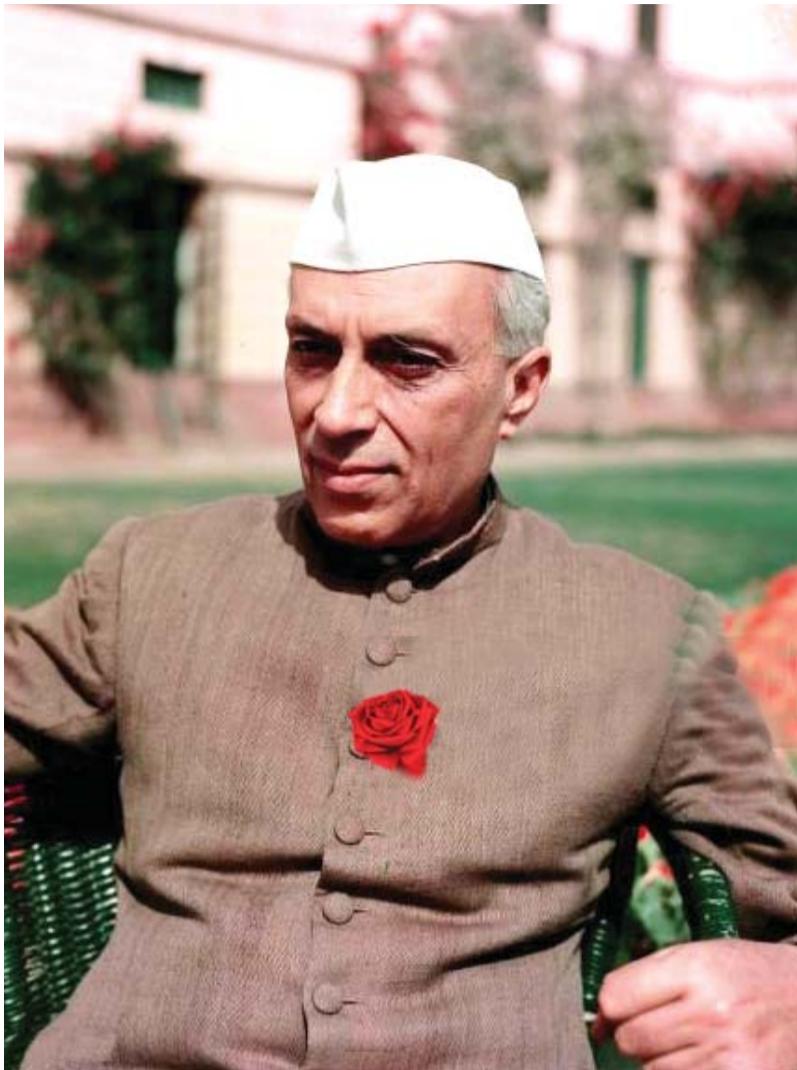
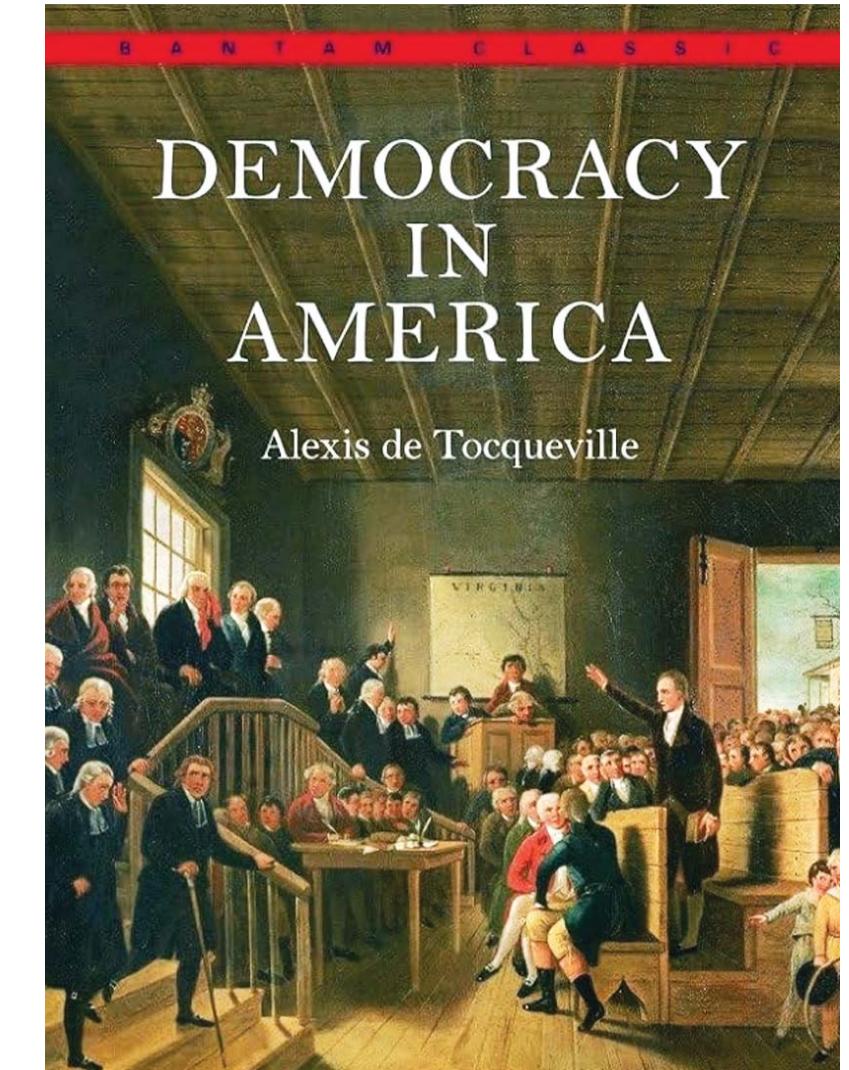
Alexis de Tocqueville.

It Is A Natural Match-Lawyers And Politicians



Celebrating National Almond Day

ational Almond Day, observed annually on February 16th, honours the humble almond, a nut celebrated for its nutritional value, versatility, and cultural significance. Rich in vitamin E, magnesium, and fibre, almonds support heart health, digestion, and radiant skin. Culinary enthusiasts mark the day by enjoying almond milk, flour, butter, and sweet treats, while incorporating the nut into everyday recipes. Beyond the kitchen, almonds symbolize wellness and tradition, reflecting centuries of culinary and cultural appreciation. The day encourages people to savour almonds, embrace their health benefits, and celebrate their enduring role in diets worldwide.



Jawaharlal Nehru.

• Shweta Bansal
S hannon Alder summed up their lives when she said, "There comes a time in life when you can no longer put off choosing. You have to choose one path or the other. You can live safe and be protected by people just like you, or you can stand up and be a leader for what is right. Always, remember this: People never remember the crowd; they remember one person that had the courage to say and do what they should do."

"Politicians were mostly people who had too little morals and ethics to say lawyers," said George RR Martin, and yet these nine chose to play the game of thrones and win and lost and still live to tell the tale. I did say nine charmed lives. I hope that their fascinating stories will captivate the reader for their obvious relevance in decoding India as we see it today. Indian society today has evolved over the last 70 years around the enshrined in the Constitution and men like these have been keepers of the flame. They have looked at the laws and the directives and tried to walk the tightrope of interpretation with not just an eye for the greater good, but also through the prism of their own ideologies, for what are men if not partisan creatures?

Pratap Bhanu Mehta points out: "During the national movement, the ideas and ideals of the lawyer-politicians were more pronounced. One knew what Ambedkar stood for, what Gandhi aligned with and what was Nehru's ideology." Contemporary lawyer-politicians

are party men who draw their identity from the political parties they represent, rather than the ideology they are wedded to. But that can also be attributed to the change in the nature of politics in the past few decades and the emergence of multiple national and regional parties. Therefore, contemporary lawyer-politicians play the role of key strategist to their political masters and are in a symbiotic relationship with the decision makers, they represent and defend their party and are its voice at public forums. Their role gets further enhanced because every socio-political crisis finds at least an expression, if not a solution, in politics.

In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville in his book Democracy in America wrote: "There is hardly any political question in the United States that sooner or later does not turn into a judicial question." Nearly two centuries later, this observation by Tocqueville has emerged as conventional wisdom and his observation is especially apt within the Indian context. In every democracy, the electoral arena is in close competition with the judicial arena in determining its course. This is especially true of India. The freedoms that all democratic societies hold sacred are mostly sanctified at the altar of the judiciary. This is especially true of India. The freedoms that all democratic societies hold sacred are mostly sanctified at the altar of the judiciary. This is especially true in the Indian context. India has a lengthy Constitution, which is a document that reflects a variety of influences; at the same time, India is a society fractured by multiple fault lines of caste, class, gender, and region. It is therefore no surprise that the law and its practitioners have acquired primacy in its public life. As things stand today, the nation State in India and its Constitution are



Ravi Shankar Prasad.



Abhishek Manu Singhvi.



Shannon Alder.



Salman Khurshid.



Arun Jaitley.



Kapil Sibal.

men, it is conventional route of student politics before they became politicians. Salman Khurshid plunged into politics as the heir to a political legacy. Ram Jethmalani, Shanti Bhushan, Kapil Sibal, and Abhishek Manu Singhvi have taken more circuitous routes, ending up as politicians only after establishing themselves as very successful lawyers with political clientele. P Chidambaram's big break in politics came with Rajiv Gandhi and once he entered politics, law became incidental to it. While Baig, Chidambaram, Sibal and Khurshid have successfully contested Lok Sabha elections, the rest have been elected through the Upper House of Parliament. With the exception of Baig, all have been at the national centre stage, although Baig enjoys mass popularity.

Unfortunately, a woman lawyer-politician does not find a place in this final list of nine and there is a fair explanation for this. Though, women have made great strides in law, particularly so in law firms, the nominal number of successful and established women litigators also explains their scant presence in politics. Women law firm partners rarely converge with politics. Certainly, cultural and political components also factor in. While there are some successful politicians - Sushma Swaraj, Mamata Banerjee, and Mayawati - who hold law degrees, they have a negligible legal practice. On the other hand, women like Meenakshi Lekhi, Pinki Anand, and Indira Jaising have impressive legal careers, but prime political berths still elude them. Jayanthi Natarajan and Pramila Narsari are examples of women who have been successful in both law and politics, but have largely remained confined to regional spheres. The underrepresentation of women lawyers in Indian politics raises grave concerns. A central criteria in evaluating the health of democracy is evaluating the degree to which all its citizens - men and women - are encouraged, willing to engage in the political system and run for politics, the legal political history of India would not be the same.

The argument, however, is that though, there may be some dysfunctional aspects of this relationship between law and politics, many of the qualities and skills that lawyers possess during their professional training and polish in their daily practice are essential for success in politics. The problem with lawyers is that they look at politics from the prism of technology. Politics and legal profession are two different streams, but political professionals are political solutions. "Though, Jaitley is different from specifying names, his colleague Sharad Yadav, the Jamata Dal (United) leader in Lok Sabha, made a pointed remark at Sibal: 'You are in charge of two ministries, yet you have to negotiate with Ram Dev as well as play the government's chief spokesperson and principal defender, although sometimes, you get assistance from Chidambaram.' Yadav took digs at both Chidambaram and Sibal for denying Anna supporters a venue for peaceful protest under the garb of provisions of law and called them lawyer ministers as to indicate the profession as a problem to the solution. The irony of the argument is that Jaitley himself is a lawyer, and the speaker Meira Kumar, whom he was addressing, is also a lawyer. Team Anna, comprising Prashant Bhushan, Shanti Bhushan, and Kiran Bedi, all hold degrees in law and the Congress

spokesperson, Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Manish Tewari, who launched attacks on Team Anna, are also lawyers. This demonstrates a crucial point that as much as certain traits help in politics, a lawyer must unlearn a few traits while in politics. The citizens of our country share a complex view of the lawyer-politicians. On one hand, they want the lawyer to prevent, cur or at least shield them from the law, on the other hand, they are often dissatisfied with the results.

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Drawing up any kind of list is fraught with danger, especially a list of India's foremost lawyer-politicians. I will almost certainly be accused of acts of omission and commission. I have tried to be as thorough as possible in telling stories of men who have played a key role in the seminal cases of our time, shaped the opinion of government, the judiciary, and the public.

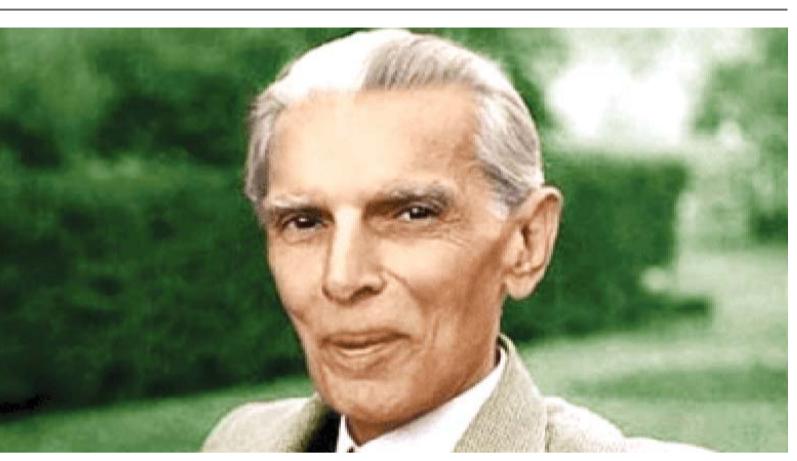
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Bill Clinton.



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.



Muhammad Ali Jinnah.



Bill Clinton.

The United States had a background in law before they entered the White House. Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama were all lawyers. Last year's presidential candidate Hillary Clinton too is a lawyer. The United Kingdom tells a similar story - the long list of lawyers who have made the political grade includes recent Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair, and other notables such as Dominic Grieve, Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, and Baroness Sayeeda Warsi.

It is evident that the lawyer's relation to politics is not the product of any single factor. Politics is not an easy game; it requires a certain set of analytical and communication skills that do not come naturally to professions outside of law. Debating and public speaking are skills that all politicians need, since they are required to spend a lot of their time in the firing line being grilled by fellow politicians and the media. The legal profession is all about intense public interaction, that's great training for political life where one spends their day dealing with an incredibly diverse range of people.

For Max Weber, lawyers are the prototype of the modern professional politician as they can free their time for politics and continue to receive an income or at least can expect to return to a secure and profitable profession when their political activity has come to an end. Their occupations can be left for a time and resumed without loss of skill and earning capacity. After the electoral defeat of the Congress in 2014, its top lawyers, Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi, and Subramanian further

explain, "Lawyers are really an extension of the judicial arm. They realize the value of political power and its necessity for political discourse and for legitimacy. Lawyers have always been influential in Indian politics and there exists a natural affinity between the legal profession and politics. Knowledge of the Constitution and the judicial system enables lawyers to be active politicians. Given that lawyers in their training are continuously taught that they are public servants' and have a role to play that is larger than merely acting for their client, it is so ingrained in a law student by the time he graduates and joins the profession that his primary responsibility is towards the people. This may also give him a utilitarian view to issues, much like that of politicians."

There is also a flipside to this complex relationship. There have been criticism and arguments by several commentators that the presence of many lawyers in government produces a concern for procedures and processes over substance. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why we haven't been able to pass litigation free legislations in more than six decades since Independence. When Arun Jaitley as a leader of the opposition targeted Mammootty Singhvi's ministerial advisors, blaming them for the confrontation with Anna Hazare, he said, "The problem with this government is that it has too many lawyers advising it. The problem with lawyers is that they look at issues through the prism of technology. Politics and legal profession are two different streams, but political professionals are political solutions." Though, Jaitley is different from specifying names, his colleague Sharad Yadav, the Jamata Dal (United) leader in Lok Sabha, made a pointed remark at Sibal: "You are in charge of two ministries, yet you have to negotiate with Ram Dev as well as play the government's chief spokesperson and principal defender, although sometimes, you get assistance from Chidambaram." Yadav took digs at both Chidambaram and Sibal for denying Anna supporters a venue for peaceful protest under the garb of provisions of law and called them lawyer ministers as to indicate the profession as a problem to the solution. The irony of the argument is that Jaitley himself is a lawyer, and the speaker Meira Kumar, whom he was addressing, is also a lawyer. Team Anna, comprising Prashant Bhushan, Shanti Bhushan, and Kiran Bedi, all hold degrees in law and the Congress

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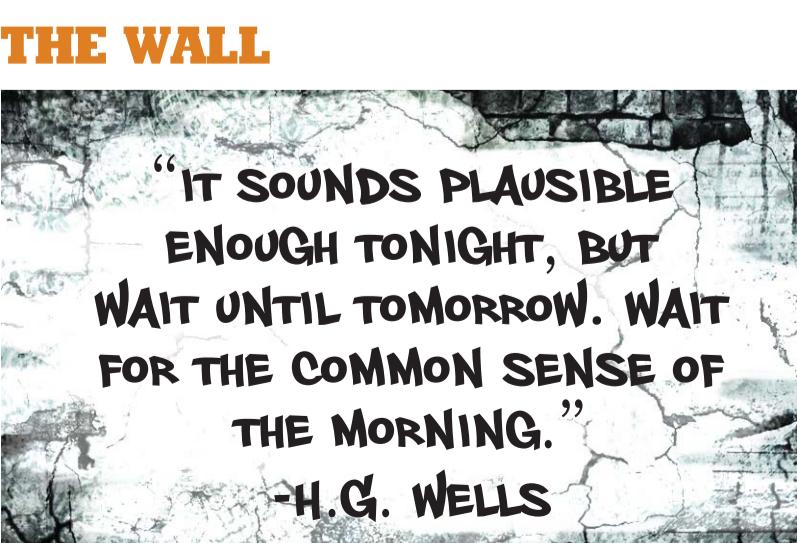
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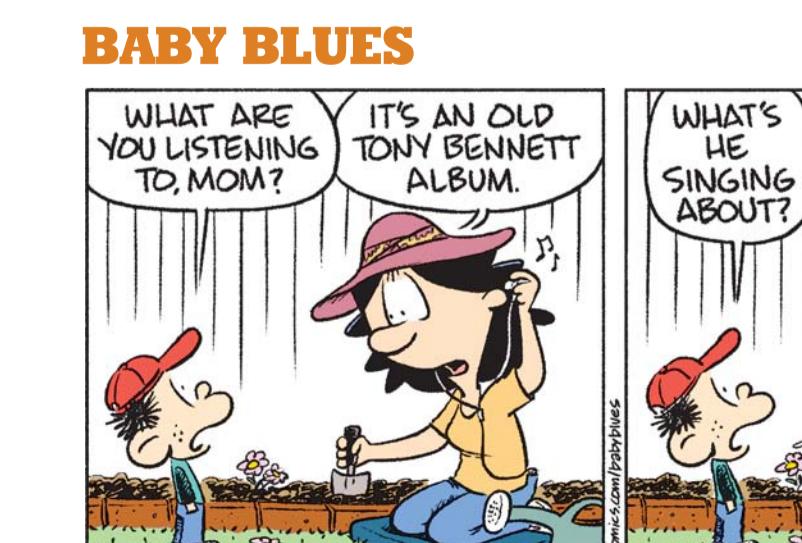
Courting Politics, however, deals with only lawyer turned politicians. The book talks about some of India's most distinguished legal luminaries who have gone on to dominate the political arena and continue to hold sway. They may have entered both law and politics at very different junctures, but they all have one thing in common - their utter and complete dedication to every cause - legal and political - that they espouse. Among these



Margaret Thatcher.



-H.G. Wells



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman