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*Basic Ideas of Dr. Lohia :  
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*Some Historical Letters*

*Some Documents  
and  
Debates*

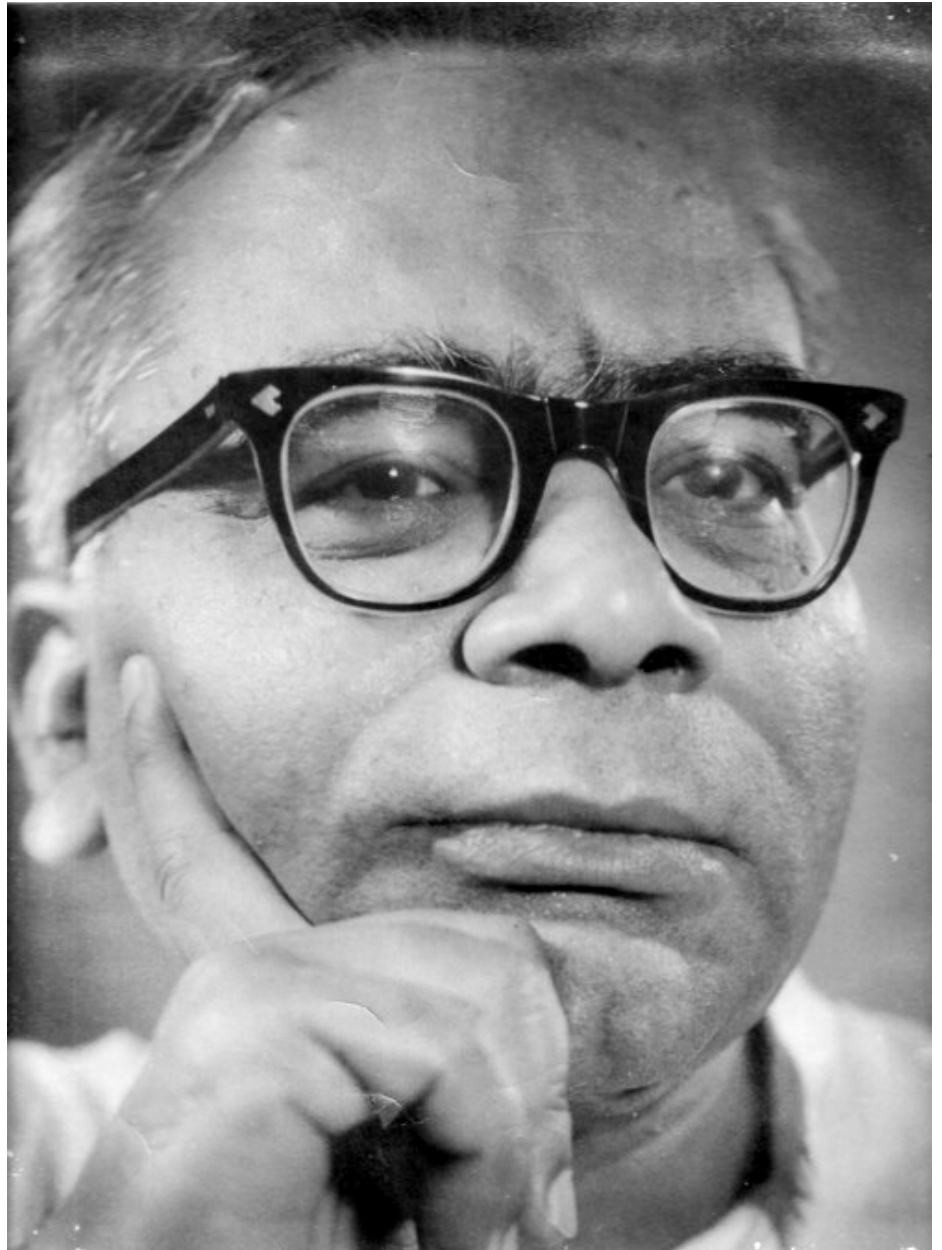
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**Rammanohar Lohia**



March 23, 1910 - October 12, 1967

JUST RELEASED



## COLLECTED WORKS OF DR. RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

Editor

Mastram Kapoor

Born at Akbarpur (UP), in middle-income Marwari family of Hiralal Lohia. Primary education at Akbarpur, Marwari High School, Bombay; higher education from Benaras Hindu University, Calcutta University; PhD from Humbolt University, Berlin. Founder member of CSP established in 1934; Secretary, Foreign Deptt of AICC during 1937-39. Opposition to war-efforts and imprisonment. Led underground 'Quit India' movement in 1942. Confinement and torture in Lahore Fort. After release initiated freedom movements in Goa and Nepal. Strong voice in opposition politics under SP, PSP, and SSP. Forceful critic of Jawahar Lal Nehru's policies and builder of strong opposition. Founder of alternative politics based on socialist ideology, with programmes of spade, vote and jail and seven revolutions. Court arrested several times under civil disobedience movement in independent India. His original and creative mind attracted writers and artists and inspired young generation. He instilled the spirit of self-respect among the classes, victims of the caste-system and enabled them to assert their will to power which transformed the political scene in India. In international politics he associated with World Government Movement, civil-rights movements for African-American, Asian Socialism, Third Bloc movement etc.

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## Remembering Dr. Lohia

*Janata* family feels proud to publish this special number to mark the birth centenary of one of its founders Dr. Rammanohar Lohia (23rd March 1910-12 October 1967). Gandhian Socialist, Dr. Lohia, was one of the founders of Indian socialist movement who gave dynamism to socialist thought and action beyond the doctrines of Marxist and Fabian schools. He propounded a new philosophy of human history (**Itihas Chakra**) and integrated programme of seven revolutions (**Sapta Kranti**). He preached and practiced non-violent militant action through civil disobedience. He was imprisoned 24 times in a four decade long public life including arrest by the governments of British India, Portugal, Belgium, Nepal, post-colonial India and the USA. He also perfected the power of ballot and art of parliamentary politics for socialist cause and accelerated politics for change through the national elections from 1952 to 1967. His contribution as parliamentarian has been published in sixteen volumes as '*Lok Sabha Main Lohia*' (Lohia in Lok Sabha) though he was a member of Lok Sabha for just four years.



Lohia presented a new methodology beyond the dichotomy of ballot or bullet through a three dimensional approach to create peoples' power for socialist transformation in the world by judicious combination of vote, jail (Satyagraha) and spade (constructive works). His theory of social change for making a better world beyond poverty, exploitation and inequalities recommended the programme of 'preferential opportunities' for the backward and depressed sections of societies and such regions of the modern world system. He wanted educational opportunities for all without any difference of caste and gender but preferential opportunities for the backward sections in the fields of jobs, leadership and public life. He was a great advocate of use of people's languages in the affairs of state and culture. He considered use of English language in offices, courts, media and legislatures as perpetuation of mental slavery and denial of democratic rights to common people. It resulted into a new orientation about the challenge of creating a casteless and classless society since Independence. He contributed towards political awakening among peasants, workers, students, intellectuals as well as women, the backward classes, and other marginal groups.

Lohia's interpretation of Indian icons, myths and traditions attracted creative writers, artists and thinkers for fresh thinking. His genius was demonstrated in his

commentaries about Ram-Krishna-Shiva, Draupadi and Savitri, Indian architecture, languages and scripts and history writing and university research. He believed in civilizational unity of the people of India as well as common destiny of the people of the world.

He felt betrayed and demoralized by the partition of India and criticized the leadership of Indian National Movement for being unable to prevent the communal blood bath between frenzied mobs of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others and remained relentless campaigner for healing the wounds caused by the fractures and ruptures in the name of religion and culture.

He was confident that there is no turning away from the quest for freedom, democracy, justice, peace and cooperation after the defeat of imperialism and colonialism. He rejected the claim that the world has to choose between the models of Ford (capitalism) and Stalin (Soviet communism). Because both were products of Eurocentricity, capital intensive big machine and greed based economic forces which were irrelevant for people of Asia, Africa and Latin America. He was a proponent of small scale intermediate technology and decentralized state based communitarian democracy and world government. His inspiring speeches and writings are collected in nine volumes in Hindi and nine volumes in English.

Rammanohar Lohia died early at the age of 57 years. But his legacy has continued in the political, intellectual and cultural spheres of people's lives. He is remembered as one of the most original thinkers and most dedicated mass leaders who gave his all for the cause of freedom and socialism. There has been celebration of his birth centenary from Banaras to Berlin through seminars, conferences, publications, and workshops by a variety of individuals, organizations, institutions and movements. We hope that this special number of *Janata* will be one of the memorable publications in honour of one of our greatest icons who motivated millions of men and women to get confidence for fight against injustices in personal and public life and to work together for a better world beyond hunger, humiliation, violence, domination and war. We dedicate this issue to the memory of Socialist thinker and former Editor of *Janata*, Late Surendra Mohan. It was his idea that *Janata* should publish a special issue to mark the birth centenary of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia. He was also instrumental for running the Lohia birth centenary celebrations for almost two years.

Anand Kumar  
Qurban Ali

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# Dr Rammanohar Lohia: A Profile

**Qurban Ali**

Gandhian socialist, visionary rebel, man of letters, great parliamentarian and crusader for the betterment of the poor and downtrodden of the country, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was born on March 23, 1910 in Akbarpur in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh in a Marwari Vaishya community. Lohia's father, Heera Lal, was a nationalist by spirit and a teacher and businessman by profession. The family got surname 'Lohia' for doing business of 'Loha' (hardware). His mother, Chanda, died when Rammanohar was very young. Lohia was introduced to the Indian Independence Movement at an early age by his father through various protest assemblies. Heera Lal, an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi, took his son along on a meeting with the Mahatma. This meeting deeply influenced Lohia and sustained him during trying circumstances and helped seed his thoughts, actions and love for Swaraj. Lohia was so impressed by Gandhiji's spiritual power and radiant self-control that he pledged to follow in the Mahatma's footsteps. He proved his allegiance to Gandhi, and more importantly to the movement as a whole, by joining a 'satyagraha' march at the age of ten. Lohia attended Indian National Congress' plenary session in 1923 at Gaya and the 1926 session at Guwahati.

Lohia received his early education at Tandon Pathshala and Visheshwar Nath High School in Akbarpur. He always topped in his class and remained favorite of his teachers. After his father shifted from Akbarpur to Bombay, he continued his studies at Marwari School there and passed the Matriculation examination in the first division in 1925. His Intermediate education took place at Banaras Hindu University and after a two-year course there, he joined the Vidyasagar College in Calcutta. In 1929 he passed his B.A. Honors examination in English Literature. Even in his student days he was attracted towards political agitation. He went to Germany for higher studies. Lohia wrote his doctoral thesis on 'The Taxation of Salt in India' (with special reference to Gandhiji's Salt Satyagraha). He was awarded the Doctorate in Economics and Political Science.

Lohia joined the Indian National Congress as soon as he returned to India in 1933. In 1934 he joined

the group of Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, Yusuf Meherally, Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta, Purshottam Tricumdas and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya and became a founder member of the Congress Socialist Party. These people dreamt of building a nation for the toiling millions, with the party declaring socialism as its objective, and stated that Marxism alone could guide the anti-imperialistic forces to their destiny and emphasized the need for democratizing the organizational structure of the Congress.

In 1936, Lohia was elected a member of the All India Congress Committee. Young Lohia was made the Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Department of the AICC, the same year under the leadership of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. He held that office till 1938. As Foreign Secretary of the Congress, Lohia was instrumental in laying the foundations of the foreign policy of India. He was in contact with the freedom movements, then going on in different parts of the world and developed close relations with progressive organizations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He had written a pamphlet "The Foreign Policies of the Indian National Congress and the British Labour Party" which was described as a "work of outstanding merit" by Pandit Nehru. He had also drawn the attention of the world towards the suppression of civil liberties in India and other countries.

Lohia was arrested, for the first time, for making anti-government speeches on 24th May 1939 by the British Government in Calcutta on the charges of sedition but was released by authorities the very next day fearing a youth uprising. He traveled all over the country and drew young men into the freedom movement. During the Second World War, he supported the view that India should not extend any support to the British and its allies and advocated complete non-cooperation. He said the supply of men and money to the then Government should be refused. When AICC passed a resolution in 1939 supporting the Britain in the war effort, Lohia opposed it and wrote an article "Down with Armaments". He was arrested for making anti-war speeches in 1940.

Soon after his release, Lohia wrote an article called “Satyagraha Now” in Gandhiji’s newspaper, *Harijan*, on June 1, 1940. Within six days of the publication of the article, he was re-arrested and sentenced to two years of jail. Announcing his sentence the Magistrate said, “He (Lohia) is a top-class scholar, civilized gentleman, has liberal ideology and high moral character.”

Gandhi and the Indian National Congress launched the Quit India movement in 1942. Prominent leaders, including Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, were jailed. The “secondary cadre” stepped up to the challenge to continue the struggle and to keep the flame for Swaraj burning within the people’s hearts. The leaders who were still free carried out their operations from underground. Dr Lohia played a significant role in the movement and directed its activities, remaining underground for nearly two years. He printed and distributed many posters, pamphlets and bulletins on the theme of “Do or Die” through his secret printing press. Lohia, along with freedom fighter Usha Mehta, established a radio station called Congress Radio and broadcast messages in Bombay from a secret place for three months before detection. As a measure to give the disarrayed Indian population a sense of hope and spirit in the absence of their leaders. He also edited *Inquilab* (Revolution), a Congress monthly along with Aruna Asaf Ali. Lohia then went to Calcutta to revive the movement there. He utilized the time by writing inspiring booklets, pamphlets and articles like “How to establish an Independent Government?”, “I am free”, “Prepare for Revolution”, and “Brave Fighters March Forward”. He also wrote a scholarly article “Economics after Marx” while he was underground.

He changed his name to hide from the police who were closing in on him. Lohia fled to Nepal’s dense jungles to evade the British police and was finally arrested on 20 May 1944, in Bombay. Lohia was taken to a notorious prison in Lahore. In the prison he underwent extreme torture. His health deteriorated but his courage and will power remained unbroken throughout the ordeal. While Dr Lohia was in prison, Gandhiji told a meeting of Congress Committee, “I cannot sit quiet as long as Dr. Rammanohar Lohia is in prison. I do not yet know a person braver and simpler

than him. He never propagated violence. Whatever he has done has increased his esteem and his honor.” Under Gandhiji’s pressure the Government released him on 11 April 1946 from Agra Jail.

After his release, Lohia decided to visit a friend in Goa to relax for a while. He was alarmed to learn that the Portuguese government had circumscribed people’s freedom of speech and assembly. He decided to deliver a speech to oppose Portuguese policy but was arrested before he could reach the meeting location. The Portuguese government relented and allowed the people the right to assemble. The Goan people weaved the tale of Lohia’s work for Goa in their folk songs.

Dr Lohia was arrested as many as 25 times for participation in freedom movements of India, Goa and Nepal and civil disobedience movements in free India and America.

As India’s tryst with freedom neared, Hindu-Muslim strife increased. Lohia strongly opposed partitioning of India in his speeches and writings. He appealed to all the communities in riot torn regions to stay united, ignore the violence surrounding them and stick to Gandhiji’s ideals of non-violence.

### **The Socialist Party**

In February 1947 Congress Socialist Party was transformed into Socialist Party at its Kanpur Conference under the Chairmanship of Dr Lohia by removing the word ‘Congress’ from the name of the party.

On August 15, 1947, India became free. But then it was divided. Lohia was unhappy on this account. Gandhi was murdered on the 30th of January 1948. The communal virus spread all over the country. The Socialist Party was not happy with the way in which the Congress leaders dealt with the situation. The Socialist Party decided to bring together the peasants, the factory workers and the working middle class. In March, 1948 Socialists left the Congress. One of the top leaders of the party was Lohia.

Thereafter Lohia toured the whole country. He strongly criticized the policies of the Nehru Government. In his inimitable style he argued in favor of the stand and the policies of the Socialist Party. He

stole the hearts of the youth of the country.

### **The Praja Socialist Party**

The first General Elections in free India were held in 1952. The Socialist party fielded candidates all over the country. Dr Lohia did not contest. He toured all over the country to explain the aims of the party and addressed hundreds of public meetings but the election did not bring much success to the Socialist Party.

On the first January 1954, Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party founded by Acharya Kripalani merged. The new party was named Praja Socialist Party (PSP). Acharya Kripalani became the President of the party and Dr Lohia its General Secretary.

During this period, the PSP was in power in Travancore and Cochin, the erstwhile princely state (which later merged to form the state of Kerala). Pattam Thanu Pillai was the Chief Minister of the state. Once there was an agitation by estate workers. The Government resorted to firing. Lohia could not condone this action of the government headed by his own party. His contention was that the people's party had no right to misuse its powers and unleash repression against its own people. He demanded that the PSP Government should resign immediately. Many leaders in the party did not want to accept his stand. But Lohia did not budge. Finally in 1955, the Praja Socialist Party took disciplinary action against Lohia and he was compelled to leave the party of which he was one of the founders.

In the field of social revolution Lohia was a galvanizing personality. Vast numbers of young men and women were attracted to his way of thinking. They resented the disciplinary action against Lohia. The idea of rebuilding the erstwhile Socialist Party began to take shape. In 1955, towards the end of December, the Lohiaite Socialists met in Hyderabad to exchange views and at last the Socialist Party was reborn under the Chairmanship of Dr Lohia. It was the midnight of the 31st of December 1955. The City of Hyderabad witnessed a torch light procession which symbolized the birth of the new party.

A great thinker, Dr Lohia believed in the ideology of democratic socialism and always stood for power

to the elected representative of the people through parliamentary system and at the same time supported the non-violent direct action against every form of injustice. His creative mind had a great fascination for new ideas and he spurned the doctrinaire approach to social, political, economic and ideological problems. A relentless fighter against injustice, he fervently pleaded for social equality and preferential opportunity for the socially oppressed sections of the society to enable them to overcome their centuries-old sufferings. The Socialist Party chalked out a specific programme. Lohia was the author of this programme. He explained the fundamental aims of the party and clarified its practical approach.

More than half of our population comprises women. Their condition is pathetic. Cooking food, breeding children and being a slave to her husband - this is woman's fate. Lohia strove for her cause. A woman is not considered equal to a man, such is the blind belief sustained through the ages. The law has guaranteed equality to women, but that is only on paper. Equality has not been practiced. According to him the emancipation of women was the foundation of social revolution; without this there can be no prosperity. Hence jobs must be reserved for women in all walks of life. They must be freed from the tyranny of homework. The latent talent of women should be brought to the limelight. Society does not progress as long as women remain oppressed. Society must be rid of deep-rooted beliefs and old practices. Justice for women should begin from villages.

Men should not hate one another because of the color of the skin. Racial hatred is treachery to mankind. All men are equal. Lohia was a firm adherent of this ideology. This was why Lohia staged 'Satyagraha' in an episode involving racialist prejudice in a restaurant in Jackson, a town in America. He was arrested at that time. In his life span of 57 years Rammanohar Lohia suffered imprisonment more than twenty times. The government of free India imprisoned him more than fifteen times. As a staunch believer in 'Satyagraha' he felt it was his duty to fight injustice, whether it was on a small scale or a big scale.

Lohia never had faith in violence. By nature as well as training, he was nonviolent. He abhorred destructive tendencies. He never lost patience. Time and again he made it clear that nonviolence was not

a facade for cowardice. It is our tradition as Indians to remain gentle for a century and then to pounce like a tiger in a matter of seconds. He advised people to hold their heads always high like human beings. He practiced what he preached. He never bowed to any force on earth. His main contribution to the Indian polity was the incorporation of the Gandhian ideas in the socialist thought. A firm believer in 'Chaukhamba Raj' (decentralized governance) Lohia stressed the need of setting up of cottage industries and the small machines with minimum capital investments where maximum manpower may be used.

"I prefer the spade to the throne" said Lohia. We should build up our nation. Our country has a huge population. "We do not have big machinery. But we have plenty of manpower. Hence we must utilize it to the fullest extent. That will be possible only if every one wields the spade. If every healthy person donates an hour's labor a day to the cause of the nation, our country will soon be rich". In his life the spade and the prison were like the two sides of a coin.

Lohia was well aware of the fact that people of the country live in villages. He therefore, became the symbol of the aspirations of the poor peasants, the landless and agricultural labourers. He initiated many Kisan marches and struggles right from 1947 and established Hind Kisan Panchayat in 1950.

### **As Parliamentarian**

Lohia contested the 1962 General Elections to the Lok Sabha from Phulpur constituency in Uttar Pradesh. His rival was the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Lohia lost the election. But such was his courage that he would challenge even the mightiest men of the land.

In May 1963 there was a bye-election from Farrukhabad constituency in Uttar Pradesh. Lohia contested and won, and entered the Lok Sabha. It was his desire that the Lok Sabha should mirror public opinion. His maiden speech was historic. The daily income of twenty-seven crore people of this country is a meager twenty-one paise, declared Lohia in the Lok Sabha, to the utter astonishment of government spokesmen. His arguments in what has come to be known as the 'Three annas versus fifteen annas'

debate were an eye opener for the people of this country. Lohia asserted that the then Government's view that average income of a person in the country was fifteen annas was misleading and false. He proved with facts and figures that between 16 to 18 crore people were surviving on a daily earning of three and a half annas. He argued that top priority should be given to the improvement of the condition of such poor people. Every one was astonished when Lohia disclosed that this poor country spent as much as twenty-five thousand rupees a day on the security of the Prime Minister. Lohia wrote a book elaborating his statements. He was of the opinion that popular leaders should not alienate themselves from the common man.

A dedicated parliamentarian, Lohia took keen interest in the business of the Lok Sabha. He used to come fully prepared for parliamentary debates and discussions. His speeches gave new turns to the Indian polity and provided fresh food for thought. Whether it was the policy of non-alignment or the issue of corruption in the country, he always took the government of the day to task. He pointed out the weaknesses of the Government policies through his speeches in the House. Whether it was the Prime Minister or any other Minister, he spared none. Whenever he found any irregularity or any injustice being done, ever vigilant that he was he would promptly raise the issue. The first time that Indian Parliament discussed a resolution of no confidence against any government was only after Lohia's entry into Parliament.

### **Experiment of Non-Congressism**

In 1963 he propounded the strategy of Non-Congressism. He was of the opinion that in past three general elections the Congress won with thumping majority and there was a feeling among the masses that Congress can not be defeated and has come to stay in power for ever. Lohia invited all the opposition parties to field a single candidate against the Congress nominees so that that illusion could be removed from the thinking of the masses. This formula of Dr Lohia proved hugely successful in 1967 General elections and in nine states Congress party was defeated and Coalition Governments were formed by the opposition parties.



## Versatile Genius of Rare Courage

Lohia was a versatile genius. He had a sharp intellect. He wielded a sharp pen and he was a very effective and persuasive speaker. While addressing public gatherings he always spoke in Hindi. His speech used to be translated into the language of the region. He knew English, German and French very well. He was also proficient in Bengali. He was a man of incisive logic. Once he chose a subject he would make a thorough study of it. He had special love for economics. And no one could deceive him with mere statistics.

Such was his life that Lohia became another name for fearlessness. Both during the British rule and in free India he expressed his opinions fearlessly. His yardstick to judge any idea or plan was always the same - does it help the down-trodden and the poor? His scholarship was amazing. He was a man of independent worldview. From time immemorial there has been a gulf between profession and practice in India. Lohia stressed the need to bridge this gap between word and deed.

## As a Writer

Lohia was a prolific writer. His ideas were original and always created awareness among the masses. During the freedom struggle he showed the way of freedom to the people through his writings and left an ever-lasting impression of his thoughts on their minds. He wrote quite a number of books:

**India on China, The Struggle for Civil Liberties, Indian outside India, Congress and War, Rebel must advance, Mystery of Sir Stafford Cripps, Third camp in World Affairs, On the Move, Our Choice: Two Speeches, Programme to End Poverty, Twentieth Russian Congress, Himalyan Policy For India, Aspects of Socialist Party, Fragments of a World Mind, Fundamentals of a World Mind, Indian Foreign Policy, Guilty Men of India's Partition, Will to Power, Wheel of History, Marx, Gandhi and Socialism, Interval during Politics, The Caste System, A Policy for the War and Peace in the Himalayas, Aspects of Socialist Policy, Goa Pamphlets, Action in Goa, Language, The Indian Agriculture, Socialism, Hinduism, India and Pakistan, Indian Communist, Presidential Address to**

**the Special Convention of the Socialist Party, Pachmarhi (MP) 1952, Presidential Address to the Foundation Conference of the Socialist Party, Hyderabad, 1955.**

He edited *Congress Socialist* a journal of Congress Socialist Party, 1936-38 and started *Mankind*, English monthly from Hyderabad in 1956, which voiced his views. He also started *Jana* a Hindi monthly.

## Champion of Civil Liberties

Dr Lohia, participated in a number of movements, such as Goa (1946), Nepal (1949), Against hike in irrigation rates in UP (1954), Restoration of Assembly in Manipur (1955), Entry in NEFA without permit (1958, 1959, 1963). In protest against racial discrimination in the USA (1964) and Runn of Kutch 'Satyagraha' (1965). In these movements, he was arrested and in some of the cases he filed habeas corpus against his arrest. During peasant movement against hike in irrigation rates in 1954 in UP, he argued against his arrest, on 4th July 1954 at Farrukhabad, under the special powers act and won the case in Allahabad High Court. Similarly, in 1966 he filed habeas corpus in the Supreme Court against his detention in Patna on 9th August 1965 - it was also declared illegal.

Dr Lohia led the peasant's movement in Kagodu, district Shimoga in Karnataka also. Lohia sat through the whole night along with his jail mates in the police lockup in Sagar. The next morning he was brought to the Shimoga jail along with other leaders. There were already quite a few satyagrahis in the jail. That evening Lohia was taken to Bangalore and kept in confinement in the Government House. When an appeal was made to the High Court, Lohia was released. While in the Shimoga jail, the inmates were not being given enough food. The food given to them sufficed only for one meal a day. The satyagrahis had to depend on the food sent from outside by supporters. Lohia was deeply moved at this state of affairs. But he had little money with him. He had hardly thirty-two rupees in his purse. When the police officials came to take him to Bangalore, Lohia handed over to his jail mates all the money he had. "Please get some food with this money and distribute it among the satyagrahis" he said. His friends tried hard to dissuade him, but in vain.

He participated in all the agitations of the downtrodden throughout the country. He was in the vanguard in every fight for the working class against all forms of injustice. He had not only pity for the common man but respect as well. For five thousand years no one had known whether the common man was alive or dead in this land. His personality should blossom and he must grow into a new man. Lohia toiled and died for the cause of the common man.

Lohia always stood for the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial revolutions. He had deep sympathy for the equal rights movement launched by American Blacks and also participated in it in 1964. In America he was refused entry into a restaurant and was arrested when he insisted on entering it. But he was set free immediately with a gracious apology from the American Government.

As an untiring champion of social equality, he deplored the caste system and the hierarchical order based on birth and considered it the single most important factor for decline of the nation and its repeated subjection to external aggression and foreign rule. He launched "destroy caste" movement and declared that in a traditionally unequal society, equality could not be established by merely providing equal opportunities to all. He argued that the backward classes, women, Dalits, Adivasis and the backward among the Minorities should be given special opportunities to bring them up to the level of the advanced sections of the society.

Dr Lohia possessed a universal outlook. He subscribed to the concept of the citizenship of the mind, citizenship of ideals without the restrictiveness of nationality or race. A widely traveled man, Dr Lohia dreamt of an international order where one could travel around the world without passport and visas and without any restrictions. He was of the view that a World Parliament and a World Government should be established to which the sovereign national states would voluntarily transfer a part of their sovereignty. He was also elected India's representative to the conference for World Government in 1949.

Lohia had his own ideas about revolution. He propagated ideas of sevenfold revolution (Sapt Kranti) and justified revolution in any of the following

conditions: (i) A revolt to establish complete equality between man and woman, (ii) A revolt against the economic, political and social inequalities based on the colour of skin. (iii) A revolt against the traditional concept of caste based on birth, and in favour of special opportunities for the backwards. (iv) A revolt for overthrow of foreign rule, for freedom and for the establishment of a democratic government. (v) A revolt against inequalities in accumulation of capital, for economic equality and planned increase in production. (vi) A revolt against interference in the private life of citizens and in favour of a democratic system of government: and (vii) A revolt against conventional and nuclear weapons and for recognition of Satyagrah as a legitimate weapon.

Rammanohar Lohia was a relentless revolutionary and an exponent of dynamic political and economic thoughts. He was a leader of the masses and always talked in their language. He was a stormy petrel not only in the Lok Sabha where he fulminated on the floor of the House against the policies of the then Government but also in the larger and more extensive field of national life for over thirty years.

He was a true nationalist and adhered to the values of the national movement. Personally he was against the partition of the country on religious lines in 1947 and opposed it. He was whole-heartedly devoted to secularism and Hindu-Muslim unity and worked tirelessly to maintain communal harmony in the country.

He never owned any property. Until he became a member of the Lok Sabha he never had any income. His friends and well wishers looked after him. His house in Delhi was always open to the party workers. Lohia was returned to Lok Sabha from Kannauj constituency in 1967. In September 1967, he underwent an operation. But he never recovered from it. On the 12th of October 1967 Lohia breathed his last. It was indeed very sad that Lohia had a very short span of life - an original thinker, an eminent Parliamentarian and a rebel committed to the cause of social justice. He was unmarried and left behind no family, no property or bank balance but prudent contemplations. His great ideas were not only to the benefit of the people of India but to the benefit of whole mankind.

## *Basic Ideas of Lohia : Selected Writings*

### **I Lost the A.I.C.C.**

I have sometimes tried to imagine myself assisting at my own funeral. The first feeling is one of regrets at losing what life had still in store for me, soon followed by the second feeling of a chuckle at the grief and praise I imagine over my dead body. There is an uncertainty about this chuckle though, and it does not last long. It is replaced by the more certain sense of sadness that I, as a corpse, do not after all matter so much to anyone. Finally comes the taste of relief that this confounded mess of living is at any rate over. I readily admit that this relief is of a different shade from the joyous release which comes after a well-spent life and I sometimes hold that the primary function of man is to prepare for an emancipated death.

#### **Dead**

I was appointed a teller to the All-India Congress Committee election and was a candidate myself. We started by sorting the votes. This process lasted over two hours. I found the votes for candidates who were to be successful slowly increasing. Quite a few reached the required number of votes soon enough and others were advancing, but over my name there was a dead stop. I knew that I was dead. But what mattered it to the living who went on playing the game of success and a little more of it or a little less of it. I was denied my chuckle for nobody grieved. Relief did not come. I know that someone will say, "Cheer up, old fellow, you are not dead, you have surely lost your mental balance". I can only say that he does not know. A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee is admittedly a rare occurrence and it takes place hardly four times in the year. The pleasure of attending these meetings is thus confined to a bare forty hours each year and even a persistent, speaker, unless he is a Jawaharlal Nehru or a member of the Working Committee or meddlesome, has to content himself with the mere matter of three-quarters of an hour in the whole year. But what delightful forty hours and what glorious forty-five minutes. The All India Congress Committee is certainly the nation's supreme forum.

#### **Implications**

Even at the time of voting, I vaguely knew that I had lost the election. Of the five who had voted for

me last year, the larger number could not get elected [one line not readable] obligations and with a fondness for me and for what I do. And I am averse to personal canvassing. Among the electors was one whom I had taught at a month's political school and another a father who came to remind me of his son I had similarly taught, but some proud impulse deterred me from asking them for their votes. And I am not a full-grown group-man. I have not always acted in concert with my group and, if I have not permitted them my entire cooperation, what right had I to expect them to do the canvassing for me. The vague foreboding was confirmed when votes were sorted. The implication of my defeat came on me in a confused rush and the uppermost feeling was that I was unwanted. Not even five out of the nearly five hundred delegates from the province were prepared to put their trust in me to represent them on the All-India Congress Committee. The fact that they have generally to be coaxed and I had not done the coaxing is irrelevant. What matters is that the free and untutored choice of even five men did not fall on me. My mind was a jig of changing plans. Nomad, that I am, even the wide frontiers of a whole province were becoming oppressive. What shall I do? Where shall I go? I was at a loose end.

#### **Escapes**

It is nice to have a home when one is at a loose end. I imagine that it must be very comforting. One can live in one's home as long as one wishes, lock himself up, think what one likes and do what one wills. I am naturally imagining a home not easily accessible to visitors, preferably somewhere in the mountains or near the forests. Foreign travel also soothes. One sees new things, adds to one's knowledge and comes back with a refreshed imagination and vigour of heart. But a home and foreign travel need money. The mind, moreover, cannot toy with these ideas for long. These ideas are only escapes. The mind wanders along. Essentially it seeks not escapes but achievement. It tries to discover the cause of the failure which has made it yearn for futile escapes but which it wishes to use as a stepping-stone to success and achievement. Where have I failed? Regret that I should have been a full-grown groupman or that I should have done

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personal canvassing is only momentary. No good comes out of such regret. It soils and debases.

### **Field Work**

Where have I failed? I have indeed written and spoken though not as much as I could, but enormously as compared to many others. These writings and speeches have surely not been useless. They have established contact between me and a section of the people, including Congressmen, and this has been of some mutual benefit. I am conceited enough to think that I am doing my bit towards the attainment of freedom. I am, however, democratic enough to believe in the verdict of delegates of the province. Something has been lacking. [Manuscript unreadable] I am homeless and placeless. There is no single area, village or town and district, where I have concentrated. I do not mean the usual power-politics concentration for that is comparatively easy. One has only to secure the adherence of a district through means other than useful work. Concentration ought to mean the field-work attempt to transform a small and selected area in the light of one's ideas. I have held ideas and popularized them but have not tried to transform them into local action and that is where I have failed. I thought of settling down in a village. The idea of it is enchanting. It is worthwhile finding out in action whether a combination of the constructive programme and socialist agitation is possible. Is it possible to work for the removal of the present social and economic order through non-violent action? Then there is the conscious body labour which is easier of attainment in a settled existence. One produces tangible results, a cleaner village, with less feuds, more solidarity, less gossip, more spinning and a preparedness to refuse to sell each other out to the landlord and the moneylender in times of lawbreaking action. Writing and speeches float in the air; they are a source sometimes of vast satisfaction but quite as often of great dejection. One cleaner village is a certain achievement, there is no deception in it. But the prospect of living in a village is dreary. I have acquired a hundred and one city habits.

It is so difficult to shed them, without them living appears to be an impossible proposition. Then there are the personal problems about which the Chinese sage has something to say. From knowledge to the good individual and through various stages of improved community to the good state. Quite a few of us skip the intervening stages between knowledge and the State and attempt to solve social questions without solving personal problems. This dilettantish skipping may be permissible elsewhere but not in a settled existence which seeks to transform a selected area.

### **Fleeting Phase**

To live and work in a village, one has to control the nameless flights of one's mind and to train one's body to some conscious labour. How I wish I had the control and the training. It is not yet too late. But when to begin and where? A lazy thought crept on the mind. Why pester yourselves with these annual elections, why not become an ex-officio member of the All-India Congress Committee. It is so much less bothersome, one has to be only once the President of the Congress. This may be amazing fun but I guarantee its indolence. A day later came my nomination to the Council of the United Provinces Congress. I do not want to be ungrateful to our provincial chief. But I wish it to be realised, as I realise it, that my only sanction in the politics of the province is Acharya Narendradeo any body to cherish. But for the rest, I belong to my group only as a follower. The Council of the province is surely not the place for me. That takes me back to the theme of settled existence, transformation of a locality, body labour, somewhere, anywhere. That is the place for me and for others like me. The All-India Congress Committee election was but a fleeting phase of an hour or so, but the mind of man is curious. It makes flights in a few moments which require hours to disentangle and describe. I suppose I will continue to write and speak and romp about as before. Perhaps someday I will settle in a village with a view to change it.

*[Congress Socialist, 23rd February 1940]*

## **Opposition to Gandhiji**

The main streams of opposition to Gandhiji are communalists, communists and constitutionalists.

Strange though it may seem, they are like a system of inter-linked canals. Their waters frequently mix



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one with another. A spirit of unconscious mutual help prevails among them so that one does not let the other dry up. Opposition to Gandhiji is not the only common point that makes for sharp bends and links among these contrary streams. They share together some other attributes. Communalists oppose Gandhiji on the ground that their communities are let down by him. With some this is an honest feeling. It has its origins in obscurantism. Men of faith who treasure every shred of continued practice as holy, detest reformers. To the honest but obscurantist Hindu, Gandhiji appears as the arch-devil who is born to destroy his faith. What have appeared to be the basic tenets of Hinduism have been kicked and trampled. Everything else might perhaps have been charitably excused but when Gandhiji took up as his first plank the removal of untouchability, the Sanatani was beside himself. Nothing much could, however, be done about it. And the Sanatani lives to this day in a state of ineffective rage which has entered his soul like iron, which expresses itself in hostile outlets besides those of religion and which will yet take many years to die out.

*Collected Papers (1939-1963)*

### **Sanatanism**

Where the Sanatani looks upon Gandhiji as the grave-digger of the Hindu religion, the Muslim obscurantist sees in every one of his acts a plot to destroy Islam and establish an unquestioned Hindu domination in India. Although expressing itself in contrary ways, the basic emotion of Hindu as also Muslim obscurantists consists of the common vague fear that the continued practices of their faith are being destroyed. The Muslim Sanatani cannot understand the changes going on around him, particularly those which Gandhiji is introducing in the Hindu religion. He takes them for an attack on his own religion. Embittered rage against Gandhiji is again the result and it expresses itself in channels besides those of religion. Besides the honest but misguided religious man, there is another type of communalist. This type is not genuinely interested in problems of religion. The obscurantist at any rate mistakes the rites of his tribe for the religion of man and when he finds Gandhiji opposing these rites, he turns against him. For the political communalist, however, religion is only a cover. By raising communal cries, a man lacking in

talent and capacity for sacrifice can also hope to secure a following. The political communalist has been very much in evidence in recent years. He has taken up the cry of the political rites of his tribe, such as, a due share in public services or in legislative representation and ministerial appointments. He manages to take in his tribe, although the tribe itself does not benefit from his campaign and would do better to concern itself with broader questions like the freedom of India and reform of land laws.

### **Ease-Lovers**

Concern with broader questions would mean great hardships and suffering and demand ability and patience from anyone who aspires to a position of leadership in the country. The mediocres and ease-lovers and yet aspirants to leadership are, therefore, unable to find a suitable place for themselves in the Congress. They take the short-cut to leadership. They espouse the political rites of their tribe and unfold an opposition to the Congress and Gandhiji who fight for the rights and duties of man. Not all political communalists are conscious devils; with some their devilry may be a misguided venture. Constitutionalists form another group among Gandhiji's opponent. Their opposition has historical element. Before Gandhiji's arrival, they were the leaders of the country. They were havildars and captains to their British generals but, among their own countrymen, they enjoyed a superior position. Unable to aspire for generalship themselves and suffer the consequences that this aspiration entails, they could not march with the pace of events. The country ceased to have any use for them. They started venting their wrath on Gandhiji. The wrath of the constitutionalists has expressed itself in a series of ideas and arguments, sometimes mutually conflicting. The earliest and still their strongest argument bases itself on the supposed anarchy and futility of all direct action. Civil disobedience, they say, rouses the masses to action and lawlessness. This hinders the progress of the country. All progress according to them must proceed on lines of constitutional development. They refuse to see that, sometimes, the only way to change a law is to break it. They do not realise the need ever to summon millions to action in order to throw a bad law-giver out of an office resting on the bayonet and a misleading system of public instruction. The charge of anarchy and lawlessness is not always a happy

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one for the person who makes it, because the person against whom it is made sometimes rises, as a result, in his popularity with the masses. Particularly so is the case with Gandhiji who eschews all violence. Constitutionalists had, therefore, to furnish themselves with additional arguments.

### **Charges**

Constitutionalists are sometimes found proclaiming that Gandhiji is no better than they that he is like them a gradualist and an evolutionary. History has given them their much-needed voice of loud declamations. They assert and truly enough that nowhere and at no time has a government been overthrown without violence. Gandhiji with his belief and practice of non-violence cannot, therefore, be regarded as a revolutionary. He is a moderate. Constitutionalists hope with this argument to put themselves on a level with Gandhiji and to have a fair chance in equaling him in the respect of at least the educated men in the country. It is perhaps useless to point out to the constitutionalist that Gandhiji cannot be both an anarchist and a moderate. A third argument often used by constitutionalists is that Gandhiji is a mystic and a uninformed idealist. They take up such items as the charkha and the Wardha scheme of education and pick holes in them. They support themselves with illdigested and inadequate principles of economy and education. Economics as a body of doctrine is for them an unchanging set of rules developed in the industrial and imperialist countries. They apply these rules to the conditions and needs of progress of their own country and pride themselves on being nationalists and advanced and call Gandhiji a mystic.

### **Communists**

The communist who opposes Gandhiji is here an omnibus term covering Muscovites, Royists and Bosites. I am not unaware of their differences with each other. In fact, their blood-feuds and utter inability to come together. But, although they stand in different formations and often snipe at each other, the shrapnel that these three varieties of Indian communists use against Gandhiji is of the same make. To the communist of all the three varieties, Gandhiji is moderate, a compromiser who whittles down India's demands and a shirker who is always unwilling to fight

back an imperialist challenge. The communist regards these attributes of compromise and shirking as the basic quality of Gandhiji's mind. To the mild objection that Gandhiji has fought in the past and shows his willingness even now to fight, the communist has a ready rejoinder. Mahatma Gandhi has fought in the past, because he was then a revolutionary but he has now exhausted all his revolutionary possibilities. That he says he is once again willing to fight is mere an eyewash but, should Gandhiji wage another struggle, the communist will not at all be discomfited and will assert that his pressure forced Satyagraha.

### **Satyagraha**

With Satyagraha receding into the background and when it becomes a near-event, the communist criticism of Gandhiji puts on the appropriate apparel suiting the one or the other contingency. When Satyagraha does not seem to be arriving, Gandhiji is a constitutionalist and a compromiser and, on inference, Satyagraha is then to the communist a form of bold revolutionary action. As soon as it begins looking that satyagraha may soon take place the communist manoeuvres himself into a new position and decries satyagraha as a form of bloodless and ineffective jail-going. In fairness to Mr. M.N. Roy, it may be said that he does not on the whole practise this particular type of gymnastics. To the Royist variety of the Indian communist, Gandhiji is a reactionary in his very conception of satyagraha, whether he resorts to it or not. In the final analysis, non-violence is the only characteristic which distinguishes satyagraha from other forms of revolution. Mass action and non-payment of tax have already formed features of the satyagraha movements of the past and there is hardly any item in the extremist programme except that of armed insurrection which cannot at some stage or the other be taken up in the Satyagraha movement. There may exist difference of opinion as to the wisdom of taking up this item or that at any particular stage of the movement. Such differences exist even among the different schools of communists themselves; for instance, between the Muscovites who have already adopted the items of general strike and armed insurrection in their immediate programme and the Royists who do not believe the present stage ripe enough for any form of revolutionary struggle.

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### **Belief in Violence**

The communist belief that Gandhiji is moderate essentially hinges on the issue of non-violence. The communist and the constitutionalist agree between themselves in their reading of past human history and the one lesson to be drawn from it. They believe and propagate that no revolution is possible without violence, although they differ in what is therefore, to be done. This shows that the propaganda of the communist proceeds up to an extent along the same lines as that of the constitutionalist; in their attack on Satyagraha, both of them feel the need to stress on violence as the mid-wife of all revolutions. The communist belief in violence is not something that relates to a future date. It is also immediate. Communists not only believe, as some socialists also do, that violence may be necessary at some future time; they believe in its immediate and continuing need. It is, of course, obvious that they cannot all the time be resorting to armed insurrections but they are almost always practising some form of violence or the other and making an ideal of this practice. Whenever minor violence can be done with comparative safety and chance of success, communists seize upon the opportunity. So, for instance, beating of blacklegs and pelting of stones at the police during workers' strikes is not rare and it can be proved from Muscovite literature that such practices are praised.

### **Continuing Conflict**

This naturally brings the communist in straight and continuing conflict with Gandhiji. Even the British law may sometimes be on the communist side in so far as defensive violence is permitted. Gandhiji, however, is out to make a new law in which no violence not even defensive violence, and only peaceful resistance is permitted. This fundamental difference between Gandhiji and the communist on the issue of violence expresses itself in various external guises. One of these is the communist accusation that Gandhiji as representative of the bourgeois class interest and, as such, adheres to his creed of non-violence and is not a revolutionary. Gandhiji's non-violence is traced to the bourgeois class which he represents and it is conveniently forgotten that the bourgeoisie has almost everywhere been grossly violent. All three types of the Indian communists agree in their analysis of Gandhiji's class character. The forms of expression,

of course, vary. Subhas Babu, for instance, stresses as much on age as on class; Gandhiji and his lieutenants are reactionaries sometimes because they are old and sometimes because they are bourgeois. In fairness to Subhas Babu, it must be said, that he himself accepts the non-violent principle in Satyagraha, although this cannot be said of his following which for purposes of opposition to Gandhiji is like other communist varieties.

Certain items of Gandhiji's constructive programme such as the charkha have aroused intense opposition of the communist and his principles of criticism in this respect are shared by the constitutionalists. Scientific economics in our country has unhappily been the trade of professors who have not been able to see beyond the noses of the Adam Smith-Marshall lineage. Our communists differ from this lineage only in one matter, revolutionary enough no doubt, the matter of abolition of private property. But other more recent controversies such as those evolving around the principle of decentralisation have not at all touched the communist or the constitutionalist. These are not even good imitators of the West; the West they imitate is at least of 50 years ago. This principle of decentralisation, worked out in the particular conditions of India, makes of the charkha at least an object of serious debate. But to the communist, the charkha is merely the vision of a mystic reactionary.

### **Joint Front**

Opposition to Gandhiji has been described in its various sources and forms. These are naturally separate and distinct, but the conduits joining them should have by now become apparent. This similarity between some arguments advanced by the communist and the constitutionalist has been shown; the total volume of these arguments cannot but be of mutual help to each other. If these arguments had been true and correct, we could perhaps have looked upon this joint-front in debate as an unavoidable but necessary drawback. This joint-front is not infrequently restricted to debate. There is sometimes a sort of fancy-dress ball among the communalists, constitutionalists and communists where one puts on the disguise of the other and it is difficult to discover who is who. Many constitutionalists have, for instance taken up the disguise of communalists. This disguise is now

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wearing thin through much usage and the more discerning have begun to see behind the mask. In like manner, a fairly large number of communalists have taken up the disguise of communism of one variety

or the other. I do not wish to disclose instances of this disguise; we are too near events. Perhaps some day this disguise will also wear thin.

*[National Herald, 22nd May 1940]*

## **Fifteen-Point Note on Congress and The Socialist Party**

01. The choice before us today is (A) between a State and no State at all (disintegration), (B) between a capitalist and a socialist state. In fighting for either of the two choices, danger of forgetting the other exists. The Congress should therefore be judged not only by the test whether it is taking the country towards socialism but also whether it secures the State and a strong authority.

02. The Congress alone can help our people in choice (A) and, up to June 1948, the prospects of any other organisation doing it are minimal. It must therefore be agreed on all sides that the Congress alone can receive power. Strengthen the Congress so that it can meet the threat of civil war, prevent the break-up of the country before June or reunite it soon afterwards, establish security (against rioting, stabbing, etc.) now and afterwards.

03. Congress leaders are seeking top solutions for choice A, nationalising the Indian army and securing its loyalty to the State, negotiating with the princes, securing awards regarding division of Bengal and Punjab etc. These top solutions are inadequate and need to be reinforced by people's solutions. A total effort of the people must be roused to combat the national emergency.

04. It is useless to deny the clash that exists between top solutions and people's solutions, for instance, between States people's struggles and negotiation with the princes. And yet an adjustment of the two processes is not impossible, simultaneous pursuit of both in various degrees, temporary suspension of one in favour of the other, pursuit of one process in certain areas and the other in the rest. An essential for such adjustment is the recognition on all sides of the need for both processes.

05. A one-year political plan is indicated. This plan would mobilise total effort of the people, adjust top solutions with people's effort, strengthen Congress as instrument of the State. Such a plan will naturally enough deal separately with our major issues, make classifications of different areas and groups in the country, prescribe policies and programmes to suit the classification, fix a time-table.

Illustrative Items: (a) Plan against Pakistan: In the fight against Pakistan, the country has to be divided into danger zones, middle zones, safe zones and policies are to be prescribed to suit their varying requirements. Likewise, problems of safety in or evacuation from danger zones, strength and order in safe zones or security against rioting or stabbing have to be resolved from the adjusted angles of top solutions and people's efforts. (b) Plan for States: The States have to be divided into the three types of such as come into the union and are responsibly governed, as merely come into the union and as refuse to join the union. Policies to suit the three types and time-table for individual states to be laid down and the All India States People's Conference enabled to execute these. (c) Plan for Labour: As overall policy for labour from the angles of living wage, housing, etc. as also of organisation to be framed so as to awaken labour to the need for a strong state. Methods and timetable for categories of labour such as railways, shipping, oil, textiles, etc. to be devised. (d) Plan for groups such as Adibasis and tribal people, Christians, Nepalis, etc. to be worked out so as to suit specific areas and requirements. (e) Plan for security to be framed not only from the angle of armed forces including home guards but also of people's effort such as volunteers or any other forms of security efforts.

06. The idea of a single Indian citizenship with provincial status for all such as reside in the province



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must be passionately propagated. Propaganda in the South for provincial readjustments must be subordinated to this basic idea. To be casteless is an integral part of this idea.

07. The one-year political plan needs to be reinforced by a one-year economic plan. The main cause of such Congress unpopularity as exists is, aside from the prevailing disorder and uncertainty as to the end of British rule, the bad situation with regard to food, clothing and housing. Although this situation can be finally improved only on long-term, a part of it can be improved in the short-term, as it is the result of inefficiency, corruption and the disastrous idea that, without mastering the political situation, nothing much is possible in the economic sphere. First, equal importance must be given to satisfying the urge for freedom and security and that for better living. Secondly, the Congress should set up an anti-corruption department of its own which will work continuously and root out corruption particularly among congressman.

08. Increased production is essential. With a view to making this possible in the industrial sphere, government should declare a ceiling, say of 6 per cent, on profits and order the rest to be distributed for workers' bonus or as consumers' benefit through lower prices. Likewise, in the agricultural sphere the government must intervene with better living to landless labour. These expedients to increase production are necessarily short-term and must be worked out here and now.

09. This brings us to the long term economic objectives of the Congress. The right to a living wage and to decent housing must be guaranteed as the fundamental right of every citizen. These rights may not be fully achievable immediately but these must be declared to be our objective and, what is more important, steps are to be taken immediately in that direction. For instance, definite targets for the production of food, clothing and the building of houses must be laid down for every year of a five year plan to operate at once.

10. Much of this new economic activity will be socially owned and directed whether by the state

or municipalities or other forms of cooperative enterprises. In addition, the time is now come when the Congress should prepare to make a change in its creed. The objective to achieve complete independence will soon have been realised and the Congress must therefore prepare to declare as its creed the achievement of the socialist state. In furtherance of this creed the Congress must also make certain structural alterations in its constitution. In addition to its regional structure of village and other Congress Committees it should now annex to itself the functional structure of workers' organisations and so forth.

11. The Socialist Party is today faced with certain clear alternatives. In the belief that the defects of the Congress are irredeemable and will multiply, it may complete its breakaway from the Congress; in the belief that the destruction of the Congress will be a prolonged affair and that the Congress has still a role to play, it may seek to remove the defects of the Congress to the best of its ability; or it may allow things to drift. The third choice is clearly not good. In making the choice we must be fully aware of our basic requirements. The Congress, it is said, was devised as an instrument of independence. It is impossible therefore to convert it into an instrument of socialism. That may or may not be and adequate arguments can be given for either view point. What tilts the balance in favour of the Congress is the two-fold nature of our work. We need an instrument or instruments both for state building and for socialism. The Socialist Party may take both the tasks on itself in opposition to the Congress but then it will be a serious gamble with our future and the outcome highly uncertain. A serious continuing split may render our people frustrated and ineffective for they may see in the Congress their instrument for state building and in the Socialist Party their instrument for Socialism. The very greatest effort must be made to avoid such a split.

12. Our political life is surcharged with negative attitudes. We must have our people up into a living faith for democracy, socialism and economic reconstruction. In a country like ours where fresh economic activity must necessarily be manifold of the existing one; our eyes must turn towards the positive activity of river training, electricity, more food crops, etc., and their production under some kind of social

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ownership and control. We would improve greatly as a nation by infusing such positive attitudes into our political life.

13. An all-India cooperative agricultural association should be set up on the lines of the Spinners' and the Village Industries Association. The essential difference between a cooperative and a collective is not, as is sometimes maintained, that the collective ends private property in land while the cooperative allows the peasant to retain his ownership. In fact it is the aim of the cooperative as much as it is of the collective to end property in land. The essential difference is in the element of coercion; the collective depends on coercion while the cooperative depends on the will of the farmers and as such has to put in a lot more of hard work and pass through certain stages of action and reasoning. It will perhaps be the greatest single achievement of the Congress and the Socialist Party if either could prove to the world that cooperative agriculture is capable of being achieved through a non-governmental agency. The time is now for making this effort and rousing our people to a new faith.

14. In case these formulations including No. 10 are acceptable to the Congress, Socialist Party will do well to dissolve itself. Such transformation of the Indian National Congress into the Indian Socialist Congress will help us vastly to face the problem of the coming year. Inevitably this would mean basic alterations in the organisation and personnel of the Congress. A weak arrangement would be, if the Congress resolved not to allow any undemocratic methods of membership or elections and members of the Socialist Party who are also Congressmen resolved to obey in good faith the discipline of the Congress. A medium course has also been here suggested. Should formulation No. 10 be unacceptable, this medium course would be that of planned politics particularly for the year of national emergency. Through such planned politics we may succeed in facing manfully and united the perils of the present crisis.

15. Secular democracy and socialism are our two great aims. A conflict between the two has emerged everywhere else. Our country will have lighted the path of Asians for many generations to come if it can avoid this conflict.

23 May '47

## **Lohia Outlines The Goal of Socialists** (*From Special Correspondent, National Herald*)

"The Congress is an instrument of state building and the Socialists want a socialist state. There need not inherently be any class conflict between the Congress and the Socialists. But somehow the friction is there and it is not easy to remove it," said Dr. Rammanohar Lohia explaining to me the differences between the Socialists and the Congress High Command. It may be mentioned that talks between the Congress Working Committee and the Socialist leaders have been going on for nearly two months with Mahatma Gandhi also participating with a view to bringing the two wings of the Congress into closer unity and understanding. No positive progress has been made and the gap remains as wide as ever. There are reports that a few Socialist leaders may be invited to join the Congress Working Committee so as to make it more broad-based. It is difficult to visualise the exact role, the Congress

Working Committee itself will be able to play in the next few weeks and months. With top-ranking leaders joining the dominion government, it is difficult to say what influence the Congress Working Committee will wield unless a person of the prestige and influence of Gandhiji takes up the leadership. Whether Congress will continue to be a national organisation or constitute itself into a political party are matters that have not escaped the consideration of the leaders. Dr. Lohia added, "We want a strong state, both democratic and socialist, and we offer our support towards the building up of such a state. We do not believe that this state can be created by men at the top alone. Undoubtedly, the viewpoints of the Central and provincial governments, deserve full consideration but at the same time there is also the people's angle and we want that the people should take an active share in the building up of the

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state instead of being mere lookers on. A kind of fascist outlook is rapidly developing all round and it is for the people to wake up betimes and combat it.”

### **“Surrenders”**

“In the past”, Dr. Lohia said, “there have been a series of surrenders on the part of the Congress: First, on the issue of admitting the Muslim League into the Interim Government, without ensuring that the League would also join the Constituent Assembly, then on the issue of joint responsibility, and then on the issue of states peoples. All these surrenders have brought us to the present position. Of course, the Socialists have failed to work out any positive policy to relieve the revolution and the energies of the people so as to sweep the jungle of compromises. There is the danger of surrender in the coming days and weeks, even on the present plan of partition and dominion status. Unless the people are vigilant and make the leaders take up a basic position and stick to it, I am afraid we may lose on many other fronts.” The Socialist Party, Dr. Lohia said, saw great danger, in the conferment

of dominion status to two parts of India. “There is scope for any amount of mischief by the quitting power in this arrangement and with the states given the right to declare their independence, the scope is almost boundless,” he said. “We must face this menace with determination. First, we must have a strong secular state with guaranteed equal treatment for all the communities eschewing all thought of retaliation against innocent people for the aims of their co-religionists in another zone. Secondly, opportunities must be created and exploited to persuade our brethren from Pakistan to rejoin the Indian Union. Also, if the rulers of states hesitated to join the Indian Constituent Assembly, then the President must invite the states people to send their representatives and the will of the people must prevail against the autocratic decisions of the rulers.” Dr. Lohia was confident that the Socialists would play an effective part in the coming days to combat the evil effects of the establishment of two dominion governments and independent Indian states.

[13th June 1947]

## **Lohia Draws Picture of Socialist Regime**

The bye-elections to the U.P. Legislature do not at all raise the issue of who shall run the Government, for the Congress has a solid vote of more than 160 in the Assembly. “They however, raise prominently the issue of democracy versus fascism, of cleaning the administration versus continuing it in its present condition, of putting a new effort into agriculture and industry versus strangling them” observed Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Socialist leader, in an interview with the United Press of India. Dr. Lohia said, “It is rather curious that so much play should be made about the Socialists’ desire for power. After all why are elections fought, except that the party in power may retain it or the party in opposition may capture it. The only point is whether this fight takes place for selfish ends or for programme and policies. A tremendous effort is needed to impress our people with these rather elementary political truths for otherwise a phase of lack of faith and inaction will set in and the common man will again step back into

oblivion and slavery. The Socialist Party is trying to rouse the people by programmes and policies and to tell the voter that when he casts his vote for a candidate he is actually casting his vote for himself, his needs and desire for general good and welfare. The Socialist leader then envisaged the line of action the party in power would take in a Socialist regime :

### **Administration**

The post of collector must be abolished. Law and order and general administration should become the sphere of district, city and village panchayats. Only this way can the alliance between the old tyranny of collectors and the new tyranny of MLAs can be broken and the corruption of bureaucracy destroyed.

### **Agriculture**

Twenty bighas of land and a cow are the minimum that a family should be enabled to possess. This is possible through a three year plan which would include

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setting up of a small industry in every village. A socialist government would alone energetically bring new lands under cooperative cultivation.

### **Industry**

The Socialist Party would bring under social ownership all industries with a capital of one crore more. And no one shall earn less than Rs. 100 a month.

### **Middle Classes**

In view of the increasing unemployment among the middle classes, the Socialist Party reaffirms its policy of alternative employment in the event of retrenchment.

### **Social Services**

The Socialist Party will seize the first opportunity for expansion of social services, such as adequate water supply, covered drainage, public health and sanitation.

### **Government Employees**

The present grade of the Government servants is irksome and must go and a juster classification take its place. Merit and not routine seniority and of course, not the caprice of the superiors, should be the test of promotion. No Government servant should demand a salary of more than Rs. 1,500 and none should get less than Rs. 100 a month. The Socialist Party will lay special emphasis on recruitment and training of staff to run state-owned industries and firms.

*[National Herald, 19th June 1948]*

## **Acharya Narendra Deva's Defeat [Dr. Lohia Says 'Odds Against US']**

A stupor fell over Banaras last evening when the news of Acharya Narendra Deva's losing the by-election reached here. Acharya Narendra Deva and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia received the news with surprise. Acharyaji was calm. He only said, "So the figures are almost the same as predicted by the Leader." He gave me a glance and smiled. 'We must take the facts as they come to us. There is not much to contest now', Dr. Lohia remarked. Hundreds of people, Congressmen, teachers, journalists and businessmen called on Acharya Narendra Deva in the evening at the Harish Chandra College where he had been staying. They did

not believe the news. Most of them had come to get it confirmed from him. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia issued the following statement late last night: "The Socialist Party has suffered a reverse by the electoral defeat of our leader, Acharya Narendra Deva. This is a moment of bitterness to many and a sense of weariness has come over them. I will not recount the odds against us, some of them such as imperial democracy. Yet the fight for social justice continues unabated and dark moments are recalled for renewed dedication to the flushing dawn soon to come." Acharya Narendra Deva left for Lucknow this morning.

*[Leader, 5th July 1948]*

## **Khoj Parishad A Socio-Economic Research Organization**

The Socialist Party has decided to set up an Institute to conduct research into the political, economic, social and allied problems that face India and the world. It has appointed its first Council of Governor consisting of Acharya Narendra Deo, Vice-Chancellor, Lucknow University, Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, Professor

Satyendra Nath Bose, F.N.I., Khaira Professor of Physics, University College of Science and Technology, Calcutta, Sri Balkrishna Gupta, B.Sc. (Econ.) (London), Professor Khagendra Nath Sen, M.A., Principal, Asutosh College (Commerce Department), Professor Samarendra Nath Roy, M.A.,



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Statistical Department, Calcutta University, Sri Surendra Mohan Dwivedi, Sri Styabrata Sen, M.Sc. and myself. The institute will be known as 'Khoj Parishad' with its centre in Calcutta. Its sphere of work shall be East India comprising Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Bihar and United Provinces, although it will enter into relations of alliance or affiliation with similar institutions elsewhere. Our country has been suffering very greatly for lack of such a research institute. The use of a foreign language in the study of social affairs while the natural sciences have been comparatively unhindered because of their use of symbols, or to the existence of foreign rule as such, we owe our poverty of social thought. The re-ordering of our political and economic arrangements has therefore been unable to proceed according to a system. General aspirations, vague plans and inchoate action have marred the country's achievements. The Khoj Parishad will set out to study social affairs. It will study the first principles of various social sciences just as much as the actual conditions prevailing in our country. Disregard of the interaction that goes on between discovery of first principles and understanding of actual conditions has led to the appalling state of social studies. The Khoj Parishad will repair this order. It will discover first principles. It will understand actual conditions. It will ever be aware of the organic relationship between the two. The Parishad will thus create the tools as well as the products of enquiry. The researches of the Khoj Parishad will help groups and persons to bridge the distance between aspirations and achievements. Aspirations will turn into intentions; intentions will become plans; plans will be clothed into flesh and blood detail. Researches of the Khoj Parishad will be diffused among the people through the written and the spoken word, but its services will also be open to use by progressive persons and groups as may want its trained assistance and information or analysis and the preparing of plans for removing poverty or injustice and increasing the nation's wealth. The Socialist Party has long been wanting to set up research institutes, not so much for the purpose of popularizing Socialism, but essentially with a view to obtaining skilled analyst and trained persons. Once the institute is set up, it will have complete academic freedom. The researchist will be welcome to go whither his subject leads him, in fact, he will be obliged to do so. Aside from initial socialist direction which will be further maintained,

the Socialist Party in no way seeks to suppress or distort enquiry. In fact, the Socialist Party will be ever anxious to obtain unbiased analysis on the subjects it wants the institute to study so that its decisions on the matters of policy may be as sound as they are inspired with an ideal. A number of research institutes are indeed already in existence. These, however, are either organizations of industry and Government or connected with Universities. Some of these institutes are narrow in aim, others are frankly propagandist.

Those with a narrow aim are sometimes capable of analyzing a small sector of evil and reform within the existing framework, also of suggesting ways to improve economy on the profit basis, but are wholly incapable of achieving the wider objectives that the Khoj Parishad has set before itself. Quite a few research institutes are so blatantly propaganda institutes that they do no research work, not even that which is necessary for successful propaganda. Institutes connected with Indian Universities tell a tale of waste in labour and money, for they have neither the wider objectives of the Khoj Parishad nor the narrower pursuits of business research. In case Khoj Parishad succeeds in achieving its objectives, it will be the first genuine institute of research in social affairs in our country. It will be the first sizeable effort to remove the poverty of India's social thought. It will help in the economic reconstruction of the country, for schemes of industry and agriculture can be worked out only after they are clothed with the flesh and blood detail of resources and objectives, human as well as material. Concrete intentions, definitive plans and purposive action are the great need of the country and the Socialist Party. The Khoj Parishad sets out to fulfil this need as well as to put fresh vigour into India's social thinking. For a venture of such proportions, support of a wide variety is essential. In the first place, men and women who are willing to make of their taste and ability in research, a zealous mission, are requested to enlist. Secondly, Indian and overseas gifts of research—magazines, books and periodicals—will be urgently needed. Thirdly, it would be impossible to build up this institute without substantial contributions of money. All contributions in money and books and other offers of help will be gratefully received at the office of the Parishad at 14, Bentinck Street, 2nd floor, Calcutta. The constitution

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of the Khoj Parishad which will be a registered body, is available to intending members and the inaugural meeting will soon be held. I appeal to friends of research in India and overseas to help in this effort

for removal of poverty and emergence of freedom and the building up of a society in which the Indian mind demolishes the walls of caste and class and thinks thoughts nurtured in free-wellbeing.

[Pamphlet of Khoj Parishad,

## **Programme to End Poverty**

### **1**

Indian poverty is largely due to dearth of capital and lack of tools. The Indian has to produce wealth with tools and capital worth Rs. 150 while the West European commands over Rs. 3,000 worth of production equipment. Foreign capital cannot bridge this gap. Not even a billion dollar loan can raise the per head capital in India by more than Rs. 10 so that it could at the most be raised to Rs. 160. Native capital is wholly incapable of this task. The last five years have conclusively shown that Indian capital does not invest in the industries that support life and give health. Its largest investments have been in the artificial ghee industry and the cinema and pharmaceuticals have probably followed. This is only natural. The industries and occupations of food, cloth and housing although highly necessary for the health and well-being of the people retain no scope for quick and high profits. A dairy means a long period of waiting and rather low and uncertain profits at the end of five years and more, while a plant of artificial ghee means quick and high profits. By its own showing, capitalism has condemned itself. The State alone can form capital and provide tools and organization for new and healthy occupations and to do that it must have a plan on the basis of social ownership of new capital and must plan for the nation as a whole. The 13-point programme to end poverty contains two main items of capital formation: (1) Food Army, and (2) Industrialization, particularly with the help of cottage industry machines. No industrialist or federation of industrialists can promote the invention of machines or their manufacture. Indian record in inventing machines is to date zero. The State must now step in. Capital is past earnings turned into tools. In the first place, Indian savings are very low and in the second

place even these cannot be turned into tools for lack of production goods industries. The State alone can step up both savings and tools. Among savings available to the State for capital formation would be the normal yearly balance and additions to it from profits out of nationalised industries and sterling balances and, of course, money can also be created in reasonable amounts if it is put to the use of capital formation under a national economic plan. India is living in a state of deferred death. She is eating her past earnings and the rest of the sterling balances will be spent up in another two or three years. Famine will stare in the face and then it will be too late. The key industries of the country must be nationalized during the current year if catastrophe is to be avoided. A plan of capital formation must be put into immediate operation. In addition to the food army and small machine industrialization, volunteer labour is a third item of capital formation. Even if one out of every ten in the adult population were to give an hour of free work to his village on some work of digging and building, the country would be able to finance capital works worth more than one billion rupees without spending anything at all. This will be possible only after the destruction of feudal and capitalist ownership and when the people are enthused into a feeling of mastery over their wealth. Meanwhile, volunteer bands of the more conscious elements in the population must set to work immediately. The destruction of feudalism and capitalism is not alone a dictate of justice or equality but a simple life and death issue for the Indian people. In another two or three years it will be too late and famine will stalk the land.

### **2**

Politics consist of four elements—State,

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Government, Party and Individual. In a democracy, each element has its place and a corresponding chart of duties and rights. In a dictatorship, all barriers are pulled down and distinctions and limitations erased so that all the four elements are mixed into a blur. The Indian State has become the Congress Government. The Congress Government has become the Congress Party and the Congress Party is fast becoming the Prime Minister. The process has gone on before our eyes. Events are heading towards a natural culmination where the Prime Minister would be able to say and act as if he were the Indian State. Pure dictatorship prevails in the ruling party in India. Luckily, India has also an opposition and that is why democracy has still a fighting chance of asserting itself. Some opposition elements want to fight a Congress dictatorship by building up a more efficient and ruthless dictatorship of their own. That way lies disaster and ruin. No dictatorship can knock the inertia out of the old and lazy bones of India. A Socialist dictatorship will be as inefficient, corrupt and policyless as the Congress dictatorship. To put activity into lazy bones, distinctions and limitations among the four elements of which politics is composed must be maintained. Some men must be willing to abdicate power. Even though able to have it they must refuse to possess it. But this is perhaps an unattainable ideal glimpsed only once in recent history. Partial abdication of power is, however, possible for everybody and should be so in a democracy. Recognition of limitations is partial abdication of power. From the national to the village politician, everyone in India must restrain himself in the accumulation and use of power. The four-pillar State is an inevitable consequence of such a recognition. Power of the State must be broken up into as many fragments as there are villages and reposed in the village community. Naturally the central limb of the State must have power enough to maintain the integrity and unity of the State and the rest of it must be fragmented. I do not know of any other way of introducing change and activity into Indian life. The 13-point programme to end poverty, therefore, makes the four-pillar State the framework into which the other twelve items must fit in. A great load of responsibility rests on the Socialist rank and file. In addition to being an agitator, the Socialist must now learn up all that he can about soil and water conditions, raw materials, processing possibilities, common lands, thinking

habits—in short, industrial and economic possibilities of his village or town community. He must at the same time be seized with the revolutionary passion of the four pillar State. Furthermore, his relations with his community must be responsible and he must be aware of his limitations. Socialists must now unfold a warm and live debate around the programme to end poverty in their communities. These centers of debate and agitation will in time and if necessary become the centers of revolutionary power for the destruction of feudalism and capitalism, for the setting up of the four pillar State and for the removal of poverty.

### 3

Adulteration is the keynote of Indian life. Food is adulterated and so is oil and ghee and all mutual dealings are adulterated. No one can be quite sure about anything except that falsity and bribery is almost a part of every transaction. In such a national situation many men are losing faith in political changes and insist on raising up character as a prerequisite for everything else. How is character to be built up? In the situation that exists today, the greatest danger to character comes from greed and big money, wasteful expenditure and the social prestige that is falsely associated with it. Men want money, those at the top want more of it and anyhow, in order to maintain themselves in luxury and prestige, and those at the bottom want a little bit more so as to fill their belly. The attack on greed must, therefore, take place at the top. This is the only way to rid the population of its present obsession with money. The programme to end poverty lays down a maximum expenditure of Rs. 1,000 per average family. It is futile to lay down such a maximum for the services alone because capitalists and landlords who have much higher incomes can easily corrupt them. Total loss of national character and austerity conditions prevailing in the country dictate such a ceiling on people's incomes and expenditures. That is the only way to make people think and feel along lines of general uplift in place of their present obsession with individual uplift. No amount of religion or education can achieve this diverting of people's attention from individual uplift to general uplift unless the law steps in and makes punishable all spending above Rs. 1,000 per family. Once this is done, prices will fall, habits will change, speculation will no longer be useful and education or

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religion can then step in to root out other remnants of falsity and bribery. Education is at present built up on the same premises as the general falsity of Indian character. It neither trains the person's mind nor equips him for a living. An increasing shift from barren education into the subjects known as poly-technical or technical education is required. Parents and sons and daughters will heave a sigh of relief at such a shift. A very large part of what is known as university education today will in the years to come be taken up by a network of people's universities and high schools. Such institutions are meant for young men and women who take to some occupation after the matriculation, work in it for some years and then take a six months' or a year's leave to attend them. Such men and women in Europe obtain an education superior to that of the Indian graduate. Education and culture must take roots in the soil and this can be done only if the national language is made compulsory in the universities straightaway. A master campaign of literacy can be easily undertaken in a four-pillar State which has been rid of landed and capitalist ownership.

Recreational education is as false and barren as any other aspect of Indian life. Often young students have no other diversion except to march up and down the main road of their town and look at the fashion and vanities of women. Of any adventure in the realm of ideas and human relationships there is but little. Strains of songs also produce a mental state of impotent complaint. All this must stop. The programme to end poverty makes it incumbent upon the State to start or help in the starting of cultural institutes, youth clubs and women's clubs. This will undoubtedly bring variety and joy into the songs and talk of the people. Finally, the Anti-Corruption Department of the State must be, like High Court Judges, independent of the Government. The four-pillar State, by making the village or the city community largely responsible to itself, by handing over a large part of the administration to it, will remove such corruption as inevitably comes in India with the system that rules from above. The philosophical elements in character formation are very decisive but they form a different story.

## **The Will to Power**

The greatest test for any political party lies in its will to power. A curious obscurity has been allowed to grow around this will in our country as if it were sinful or at least ugly to want power. The new party must end this state of enfeebling hypocrisy. It must be shot through and through with the will to power. After all, a political party exists because of policies and programmes which it believes essential for the nation and the world and which it must equip with the force of the government.

India is shivering with hunger and the world is cowering under the shadow of war and the Praja Socialist Party of India will miss its destiny, if it does not wish to become the government of the land as soon as possible. To want to become the opposition when the substance of the people and of all mankind is being eaten away is ugly if not sinful. When the merger of the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party is completed, the party will become the largest socialist party of the world. It will be able to

claim a total vote exceeding seventeen millions and will surpass the British Labour Party, which is now the largest, by a round four million votes. The new party will soon enough be confronted with national and international responsibilities that may overwhelm it, if it does not move forward to meet them. The people have indeed chosen their parliament and it has still four and a half years to go. But a democracy is always dynamic, unless it pales into a lifeless ceremony. When the temper of a people undergoes a radical change, the time-honored practice of genuine democracy is to dissolve the parliament and to register the people's will in a fresh election. To warm up the temper of the people so that they become the makers of their destiny rather than suffer to be its tools is a high duty of democratic action. Only when democrats confess to the misery of inaction is the field left open to the mumbo jumbo votaries of violence and insurrection. The will to power must indeed be a chaste and vigorous will, as far away from perversity as it should be from weakness.



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A healthy will does not make use of lies, deceit and violence. Only a frustrated will indulges in perverse conduct and is consumed by its own despair. At the same time, a will, whose vitality is at a low ebb, loses the power to move and stands still in the stream of events or is tossed about if it is not drowned. The will to power of the new party will be faced with the danger alike of perversity as of weakness. To strive cleanly to capture power on the morrow is a high trust but an equally sacred obligation is not to give up to weakness or give in to perversity, should power not come for a decade or more. The will to power of a person or a party is best measured by the will to react to situations, old and new. The world abounds in men with delayed reactions or none at all. Challenges come to them, often even unnoticed. India is full of such challenges, old and new, but where are the men and women to react to them and respond to them? The two parties that are coming together were not sufficiently alive in their will to power and in their sensitivity to situations and a primary test for the new party will lie in its ability of swift reaction to old and new challenges. A few illustrative situations may be indicated. Unemployment and underfeeding are dreadfully increasing particularly among artisans, landless labourers, middle-classes and educated youth out of schools and colleges. These are precisely the sections which have no voice nor organisation and no political party has yet tried to reach them or to bring them to the stage of day by day history. The village youth, partly also the city youth, has neither educative recreations nor healthful sports. The corrupting system of weddings through arrangements and dowries is permitted lest some awkward situation of a freer relationship may transitorily develop. Education neither builds the mind nor trains for a living and text books are annually and deterioratingly changed in order to earn profits for corrupt authors and publishers. Governments and Municipalities do not build houses for the poor, and District Boards allow landless labourers to be thrown out of their cottages, and the people and their political parties stand still. The vast manpower of the country wrings its hands at drought and flood and does not dig, for no political party is able to combine voluntary labour and land-redistribution in a mighty sweep.

The Government is permitted to break its

solemn vows and to beg for and import food, while unemployment increases and cultivable areas abound. New taxes are imposed on the poor while princes and millionaires are assured of their pensions and profits. Cities like Kanpur permit the sewage of tanneries and other factories to mix up in the stream of Ganga within furlongs of where lakhs of people bathe and even drink the polluted water. The people are dulled and no political party is alive enough to awaken them. Even to the challenge of starvation, the response is slender for, when a political party does not intervene at the stage of chronic underfeeding, it and the people are too dulled to revolt at the stage of famine and deaths. The Praja Socialist Party will have to react to all such situations, old and new. To react is primarily to be aware and then to think out solutions and finally to act in construction or combat. Parties which are alive react and kick in all directions. It is a false notion to imagine that one line or accustomed lines of work economise energy. A live party expands energy by expending it. The Praja Socialist Party will be called upon to construct, to put into national practice, what is today largely the ceremonial programme of digging for irrigation, ditches and the like. It will be called upon to assist in the community projects wherever they are undertaken.

It must discipline the village youth for voluntary labour as well as such sports as swimming. It must strive to change the people's habits of food, marriage and reproduction. It must take control over Municipalities, District Boards and Village Panchayats so as to make compost out of night soil, to build houses and to provide free machine. Let it not be forgotten that the will to construct and to cooperate is the other side of the will to agitate and combat and the two together make the will to power. Those who do not know how to construct can never know how to combat cleanly. Half-truths and half-measures are a special disease of Indian politics. A half-measure of the phase of agitation is followed by a similar half-measure of the phase of construction and politics oscillates between the two extremes without achieving anything worthwhile. No political party can ever do without agitation and combat. If it stands still in the midst of growing unemployment and underfeeding, of increasing taxes on the poor, it has already succumbed to paralysis in the event

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of famine. Even an adolescent ought to know that a famine may overtake the people in two or three years. To prevent that famine and to compel the government to register a fresh verdict of the people's will it is necessary to combat the government now whenever evils of unemployment and underfeeding are manifest. The joint conference of the Socialist and the K.M.P. Parties may or may not deal with these problems in detail, but it must be aware of them as the background of its talks. On 20th September, five days before this conference, there will be an opportunity to mobilize the people on the simple issues of unemployment and underfeeding. The success of this day will depend on the preparation that precedes it, on the extent to which the socialists frequent the areas where artisans, middle classes and the educated youths live and those of employment exchanges, ultimately on the will to power and the sensibility to situations. The agitation may centre on such simple demands as the recruitment of a half million food army for the purpose of cultivating new lands, the institution of township projects and the appointment of government ministers or special officers to secure raw materials, marketing and standard quality for artisans. The underfed must march and demonstrate so that the government is never permitted to transfer or deny its responsibility to feed the people, nor do the people resign themselves to the inevitability of famine. No more propitious beginning could have been expected for the launching of a new party. It will be for the Praja Socialist Party to continue and deepen the mobilization of the people and to warm up their temper. A perverse exercise of the will to power must however be prohibited. The stage now is set for national agitations and local satyagrahas and let no one try to dissipate energy by prematurely pushing on to national civil disobedience. Ideological issues, which have the power to make or mar, will also face the new party. One's view of life and the meaning one attaches to the purpose of living is ultimately the mainspring of the will to power and the ability to be aware. Such debates on ultimates will undoubtedly take place or will at least be in the background of one's talk. In this connection, the testimony of a brother socialist who spent many years in Hitler's concentration camps and was ultimately executed by him is invaluable. Such testimonies, literally written in blood, deepen the insight, even

when agreement with individual findings may not be general. Julius Leber has laid bare the reasons for the failure of social democracy in Germany. Already sapped in its will to power by continued existence as the opposition for two generations, the Social Democratic Party of Germany could never rise above formalistic levels of debate. Basing itself on Marxism, it appealed continuously to that philosophy for all its mistakes and misinterpretations and its thinking lost all freshness and degenerated into quotations. Social democracy in Germany was oppositional and Marxist and it ended up with a divided soul and half-measures. One cannot part with this moving document of our times, the testimony of Leber, no matter how deep the night and one lays it aside with the approaching dawn, wheeled with a great pain but an equally great determination never to let it happen again. A section of the Praja Socialist Party will seek to deaden its thinking by its unintelligent appeals to Marxism. Another section may make equally unintelligent appeals to Gandhism. Marx and Gandhi will have thus lived in vain, for their mistakes and distortions will live while the truth in them will perish. All human thinking is to day markedly beset by the dangers of choruses of accusation and defence and there is very little attempt to understand. In the debris of accusation and defense are littered about various meanings of life and interpretations of history, relationships between spiritualism and materialism, economic analysis of capitalism and the forms of class-struggle and hypotheses raised into laws of human civilization.

The Praja Socialist Party must seek to make a new house for the human mind, for all existing structures are broken. It must want to build the theory of socialism as much as it should express the will to power. The task no longer is one of repairing or reforming the existing civilisation. Humanity is yearning for a new civilisation and a new meaning to life. To the extent that the new party will express this inchoate yearning in the theories of principles will it be able to discharge its international obligations. To the extent that it expresses and fortifies the will to power will it execute national responsibilities. The evolution of theory and the will to power are interdependent exercises and thrive on one another.

*[September 1952]*

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### **Preferential Rights for Women**

With this issue Dr. Ehrenfels completes his plea for preferential rights for women. Some women may not themselves have liked such a plea because of its assumption that woman is inferior to man in certain spheres. A large number of men must have felt awkward, if for no other reason than that they would, in the new situation, inherit their names from their mother rather than from their father. But this problem of woman must not be treated on the level of temporary annoyances; it must be tackled as its root. Woman is undoubtedly among the most exploited sections of humanity, together with the poorest and lowliest of men. She may try to forget her condition with love or trinkets and her charitable generosity. But ugly practices of society and certain dark recesses of the soul have both combined to turn woman into a sphere where socialism is most needed. If socialism and democracy are a battle for equality, they are cut out specially as creeds of women. Furthermore, the new mode of this battle for equality comprises of civil disobedience, which alone promises a new civilization, and man without woman is totally unsuited for this new type of fight. If groups of women in considerable numbers are ever present in the ranks of civil resisters, the possibility of degeneration into street fighting or violence is greatly minimized. Woman is a truer agent of civil resistance than man. She is undoubtedly superior to man in this as in other spheres of generosity. When a scheme of preferential rights is demanded for her, that is in no way a stigma or a traducing. Rights more than duties belong to the sphere of politics and political action belongs to the sphere of organization. In the sphere of organization, man is the superior of woman. An attempt must be made to reduce this superiority in such measure as is possible through a scheme of preferential rights for women. Human ingenuity may be able to propound a scheme other than that outlined by Dr. Ehrenfels. Dr. Ehrenfels had once given an exceedingly interesting slant on the overwhelming presence of Malayalis in Delhi and its central government. Delhi itself has lots of fun about its disease which it rollickingly calls Menongitis, and Dr. Ehrenfels thinks that Menons, Nairs and Pillais make such wonderful secretaries to government ministers precisely because they have been brought

up in a matrilineal tradition. Men brought up in the matrilineal tradition learn the art of life and adjustment with their mother's milk, for they have to adjust their way through the triple authority of the mother, the father and the maternal uncle. This gives them an unexampled capacity for adjustment. Adjustment and creativity are undoubtedly two different capacities and neither should be sacrificed to the other. It is therefore of deciding consequence that the problems of man and woman, of matrilineal and patrilineal society, of adjustment and creativity, of the demand for preferential rights for woman should be deeply studied in order that woman's inequality may be reduced to the minimum and that she may help banish the methods of violence from human pursuits. The more enduring problems of mankind tend to suffer neglect against the cacophony roused by passing economic or international problems of the day. But the problem, for instance, of the single woman of today or of the step-child is certainly more enduring and consequential to mankind than many others which are constantly causing controversy. Cruelty is a state of the human mind, as much as it is an expression of certain economic and political relationships. As long as man lives and there is family and marriage, the step-child would be there, perhaps in diminishing numbers, and its soul must be protected against any kind of cruelty. How often is the soul of a stepchild of tender years singed by a callous word or a discriminating deed from its parents, one of whom is a substitute and has received later admittance into the family. Similarly, the single woman of today is an extraordinary person and deserves deeper study and more sympathetic treatment than she has so far received. She is probably no more unhappy than many married women and, if there are some exceedingly happy ones in her ranks, they can be matched by the ranks of the married. The single woman of today differs from the married woman not in the extent of this or that emotion or quality but in that she has an entirely different status. Her numbers keep on steadily increasing. The single woman need not necessarily be a lonely woman, but her status does deserve to be studied with greatest sympathy and objectivity. The thought of her makes one tender. She may be like a sunless day which is

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always on the verge of rain or like the moonlight filtering through casuarina leaves or she may alternate between the two states. In either case, her status requires deep study. As long as it is not possible for woman to bathe herself into purity after wading through a mire of dirt, in the style of Flaubert, at will and through payment of a few pieces of silver, the overwhelming loneliness that occasionally overtakes the single woman of today and the cruelty that an unthinking society metes out to her deserve the attention of sociologists as well as poets. So also the widow is the recipient of much cruelty in all the world, but she is overwhelmingly so in India. The 1951 census counted a total of 1,34,000 widows out of 61,18,000 females between the ages of five and fourteen. With widowhood goes the stigma, to say the least, of bad luck in all the world, and definitely so in India, where nearly 13 per cent of all married females are widows. The child widow is like a single woman with the possible difference that she is more of a rainless but cloudy day and less of casuarina moonlight. Widows, not yet old and particularly those who have no male children, become the recipients of special cruelty and, if the single woman is sometimes resignedly disconsolate about life, the widow is disconsolately resigned. The condition of the widow had, in the past, excited sympathetic attention in the country. In the beginning, there was a furore against widow remarriage. The controversy died out. Social reformers were happy that they had won yet another encounter. But India is a great big bog into which everything sinks beyond recognition after having caused a few ripples and eddies. A recent disclosure made by Mr. Gatubhai Dhruv, of a Gujarat social

reform organization, showed that over 1,200 widows of Gujarat had defied social barriers and remarried since the widow remarriage legislation was enacted a hundred years ago. That gives an average of ten widows remarried each year. The story is indeed not so bleak, for the backward castes are not so cruel with their widows, as are the high castes, and much happens in the country without any social organisation being involved in it. Nevertheless, a problem of very serious import exists. It goes much beyond widow remarriage and other specified sources of cruelty. Will the Indian bog ever dry up sufficiently or will persons and parties be able to drive such firm stakes into it as to recover from it some firm ground? Social reformers and revolutionaries who are content with scoring a debating point over conservatives and reactionaries must learn their lesson properly. An endless round of profitless controversy would otherwise go on in relation to every subject of renewal. Every reform occasions a heated controversy in the early stages and then that massive society which is conservative accepts intellectual defeat by allowing a few venturesome persons to go their own way, on the fringes, in respect of widow remarriage or the single woman and similar phenomena, while it is overwhelmingly victorious in that it keeps unaltered the main arena of life. Cruelty is the greatest source of life's ugliness. Its forms are manifold. It has burrowed itself into the darkest and the innermost recesses of the human mind through hundreds of centuries. It must be patiently ferreted out so as impatiently to be destroyed. Mankind hopes to have documents and other contributions on this and similar topics of enduring cruelty.

*[September 1956]*

## **Caste**

Caste is most overwhelming factor in Indian life. Those who deny it in principle also accept it in practice. Life moves within the frontiers of caste and cultured men speak in soft tones against the system of caste, while its rejection in action just does not occur to them. If they are reminded of their acts, which are in such unbelievable conformity with caste, they point out with indignation their thought and speech. In

fact, they hurl the charge of caste-mindedness against those who remind them of their caste behaviour on the plea that while they engage in a healthy debate on principles and great outlines, their critics vitiate the discussion by bringing into it the polluted sphere of action. It is the critics, so they say, who create the atmosphere of caste. Who knows if the strange split between thought and action, characteristic of



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Indian culture more than of any other, is not the result predominantly of caste. An unalterable frame is what caste is. To live within it must necessarily demand a great deal of ingenuity, of thinking and acting in double, treble or more numerous sets.

The great facts of life such as birth, death, marriage, feasts and other rituals move within the frame of caste. Men belonging to the same caste assist one another at these decisive acts. Men of the other castes are there at the periphery, more or less bystanders and onlookers. A common mistake must be rid of at the start. A certain amount of inter-caste activity appears to have taken place in recent decades in large areas of the country. In the first place, such activity is confined to the lesser rituals of feasting and does not extend to the major ones of wedding and child-bearing. Secondly, this activity is only superficially and deceptively inter-caste. Various groups of the high caste are sometimes known to feast or wed one another. But the great schism between the high-caste and the low-caste is as great as ever, if not greater, in the sphere of real collective action. When people talk of inter-caste marriages and the like, they merely mean weddings between groups within the high-caste.

Caste is presumably the world's largest insurance for which one does not pay a formal or regular premium. The solidarity is always there, when everything else fails. In fact, there are few occasions for other things being tried out. Men just tend to make friends within the caste, their family most certainly. Such a close solidarity at child-bearing, funeral obsequies, weddings and other rituals must necessarily have its consequences on other aspects of life including the political. It must, in fact, influence and almost determine the mind and its basic thought. The political aspects are easily influenced. When a continual get-together takes place on all major and personal events of life, it would be somewhat bizarre if political events took place outside that framework. When men are puzzled at a caste voting more or less alike, they behave as though they had come from another planet. What would one expect a group to do that lives, child-bears, weds, dies and feasts together? To this most formidable list of common activity must be added the still more decisive activity of bread-earning, the common profession. Even where

the common profession is in some ways no longer a mark of certain castes, the informal, often lame and halting, but almost unfailing scheme of insurance against unemployment provided by one's own caste continues to operate. If the caste did not vote together, that would be a puzzle. Even such breakaway from caste voting which hardly, if ever, goes upwards of 20 percent is ascribable to some substitute security that has been found in place of caste.

This division of Indian society into hundreds if not thousands of castes, which have a political as much as social significance, explains why India wilts before foreign armies. When she has not so wilted in her history, it has almost always been those periods when the bonds of caste were loose. A great misreading of Indian history is current. The tragic succession of foreign conquests, to which the Indian people have succumbed, is ascribed to internal quarrels and intrigues. That is nonsense. The largest single cause is caste. It renders nineteenthths of the population into onlookers, in fact, listless and nearly completely disinterested spectators of grim national tragedies.

Castes have endured over thousands of years. They have bred certain traits and aptitudes. Some kind of a selection has taken place that is socially as significant as a natural selection. Certain skills of trade, craft, husbandry or administration or handling of principles have become hereditary. A real breakthrough is almost always the work of a genius. With such castewise determination of skills, one might expect great advantages to flow out of such age-long selections. That would have been so if all skills fetched an equal social status or monetary reward. They obviously do not. Some skills are believed to be unbelievably superior to others and there is an interminable series of steps in the ladder. Castes of inferior skills are downgraded. They congeal into an almost lifeless mass. They cease to be the reservoir from which the nation may refresh and renew itself. Numerically small castes of the most superior skills are the habitual providers of the nation's leadership. In order to maintain their most unnatural dominance, they become a seething mass of chicanery but superficially most smooth and cultured. The masses are lifeless, the elite are Caste has done that.

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A study of castes in all its periods is not being attempted here. We are only concerned with the system of caste as it is today and as it probably has been in all periods of national decline and caste rigidity. In a sense, caste is a universal phenomenon. The tiny beginnings of its roots were laid bare by Mr. Khrushchev when he bemoaned in present-day Russia, the unwillingness of persons with a higher education to do manual work. This rift between manual and brain work and evaluation of one as the lower and the other as the higher and the increasing complexity and permanency of this rift are behind the formation of caste. The Indian experience of caste goes farther than that of any other nation and all the world may have lesson to learn from it. At the moment, we are concerned with the terrifying damage castes have done India and how she may rid herself of it. The entire scale of values has been upset. The high-castes are cultured and chicane, the low-castes are stagnant and lifeless. What goes as scholarship in the country is but the name of a speech and grammar rather than substance of knowledge. Generosity is abridged to mean selfish appropriation through restricting its route to caste and relations. To beg is believed to be less shameful than to do manual work, for through beggary of certain higher types, the giver is favoured with inestimable benefits in the other world. Craftiness, open submission and secret insubordination become the marks of successful men of state rather than the virtues of straight dealing and bravery. Lie is enthroned as the supreme virtue of public life. A general atmosphere of fraud prevails, for to protect caste men and relations becomes an aim rather than to protect justice and national well being. In essence the needs of caste are at war with those of the nation. Caste prevails, because it is the only reliable re-insurance of the individual against calamity or routine ill-being.

The utter imbecility to which caste has brought the nation was typified by the recent and total disrespect that the Prime Minister showed towards his own tongue. In the course of a fortnight, he made three solemn declarations, once, never to retire, then, to retire and, again, not to retire. That he does not hold much by man's gift of speech and thought is patent. That the nation does likewise is equally and more terrifying patent. How can the nation tolerate such imbecility? Partly because of caste, which blurs the

vision, and of the great schism between the high and low caste, which makes the high-castes stick together through lie and deceit and even murder in certain situations. A word of unconscious insight, however, fell from the Prime Minister's lips. He bewailed that he was so popular and yet the people did not act as he wanted them to. This was one of those rare occasions, when Mr. Nehru tells the truth.

Wherein lies the mystery of this chasm between great popularity and equally great importance. The man is just not prepared to risk his popularity for the sake of any big change. Mahatma Gandhi knew how to risk his popularity. He had a calf, the child of the sacred cow, injected to death in a certain situation, he had a monkey shot, he took Harijans into temples, he refused to attend weddings unless they were inter-caste, he sanctioned divorce, he had the large sum of 55 crores and more given to Pakistan at a time when Hindus held that treasonable, he acted and not alone spoke against property, in brief, he hardly ever missed doing anything that brought new life to the nation even if it brought calumny and danger to him. Nothing great ever got done without enraging some people. The great changes of society are always accomplished after some sections of opinion, sometimes large, are thoroughly angered. The old can always command votaries; only their number differs in varying situations. The skill of a great leader lies in narrowing the numbers of those whom he angers and the duration of their anger. But anger them, he must. He must risk his popularity with them, although that may eventually bring him an increased reputation. The Prime Minister, like any other typical product of the caste system in the country, is congenitally incapable of risking his popularity for the sake of any change.

The system of castes is a terrifying force of stability and against change, a force that stabilizes all current meanness, dishonour and lie. An unholy fear prevails, lest, if some meanness or lie were to tumble the whole structure might topple. Post-freedom India is but a strict continuance of British India in most essential ways. The Indian people continue to be disinherited. They are foreigners in their own land. Their languages are suppressed and their bread is snatched away from them. All this is done for the alleged sake of certain high principles. And these principles tie up with the

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system of caste, the great chasm between the few high castes and the four hundred million of the lower castes. These high castes must maintain their rule, both political and economic and, of course, religious. They cannot do it alone through the gun. They must instil a sense of inferiority into those whom they seek to govern and exploit. This they can best do by turning themselves into a select caste with speech, dress, manners and living of which the lower castes are incapable. The attitude of India's political parties is governed by this supreme consideration of having to instil a complex of inferiority among the mass of the people. Peoples' languages are undeveloped, their housing and general styles of living incapacitate them from good or great action and their mind is not worth considering. So must the high castes weave the net of illusion. Current political opinions in India, because they reflect the false and unnatural interests of the high castes, are not worthy of consideration.

The political behaviour of the lower caste is amazing. Why they should become a willing part of this conspiracy is beyond understanding. One reason is clear enough. Caste gives them insurance, indeed, on less than an animal level, more than it does to the high-castes. They would feel helpless without it. Oft-times, one gets the impression about these lower castes as though their strenuous labour of the day were but a preparation for the caste feasts and rituals that are to follow. They are the real thing and all else is but a shadow. Anything that interferes with them must appear to them as highly undesirable. They have in fact legends and myths that justify their lowly situation and transform it into a symbol of sacrifice and lustre. The Kahars, variously known as Mallahs, Kaivarts, Naviks, who probably number more than a crore, tell stories about their mythical ancestors, who were simple, ungreedy, brave and generous and who lost to other ancestors of Kshatriyas and other high castes because of their greater greed, wiliness and deceit. Taken so, their current life of misery must appear to the lower castes as an unending succession of sacrificial acts for the sake of high principles. This sacrifice is for mythical symbols. It is undertaken not as an active principle that seeks change but as a passive submission to the existing. Such sacrifice has no meaning in history. But sacrifice is always consoling. Talking of these Mallahs and Kahars who are boatmen and

fishermen when there is water, and domestic servants when further inland, one must mention their inordinate capacity to hold their breath while diving under water in search of the edible Makhana. Mallah boys of ten and under become active practicers of deep breathing yoga, and that under water, which can hold in a single breath for fifteen minutes and more. Similar yogis among the high caste, of seemingly literate speech or refined dress, would probably hold that their mind is striving to be a vacuity during their yoga, while the Mallah boy's is not. As it is not possible for any one person to go into the minds of both these types, it is difficult to hazard an opinion. May not the minds be alike in either situation? If they are so utterly different as they are claimed to be, that is condemnation enough of the caste system.

The political behaviour of the lower castes would appear to be a little less inexplicable on the assumption that a long tradition of ideological subjection has made them stagnate. This assumption is wholly founded. Centuries have instilled into them a meek acceptance of the existing, aversion to change, sticking with the caste in times of adversity as of good luck, and the search for high life through worship, rituals and general politeness. This can change. In fact, this must change. The revolt against caste is the resurrection of India or shall we say, the bringing into being of a unique and a hitherto unrealized occasion, when India shall be truly and fully alive. Is such a revolt possible? Scholars may with right deny it. Men of action will continue to affirm it. Some hope of success arises at the present time. The attack on caste is not single-barrelled. It does not climax into a shrill cry devoid of action. It is in fact as political as it is social. From the political attack on caste, in the sense of drawing the nation's leadership from all the castes in the country, may come that revolution which gives to all Indian society the solidarity and re-insurance now given to smaller groups by caste.

Elsewhere may be found extracts from the constitution and the annual report of the Calcutta Club. This club is the top meeting ground of the Calcutta bourgeoisie, which is the largest segment of the Indian bourgeoisie. Its main activity centers around wine imbibing, while its patron is the President of the Republic. India's Republic is pledged to the policy of

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prohibition with very considerable police repression as a consequence in certain areas. That the President of an alcohol repressing republic should be the patron of an alcohol drinking club, is a measure of fraud and perfidy which India's higher castes are practicing upon the country and themselves. The President, but more so, the government which advises him are guilty of treason against the republic in a yet more major way. Europeans in India are one in three thousand and more of the population. Of Calcutta's population, they are surely no more than one in four hundred. They enjoy far greater comfort and security than any section of India's population. And yet they are accorded equal representation on the committee of this club. This equality of representation is guaranteed by the club's statutes.

The club continues to think that England's monarch still rules India through her viceroy, although the President of the Republic is its patron. Some may be inclined to pass this over as a relic of the past which has escaped notice. These acts are in reality the result of deliberate design. India's bourgeoisie is ever imperiled. A vast sea of miserable humanity surges around it. It clutches at all kinds of symbols old and new and all kinds of authority both substantial and empty in order to keep itself afloat. India's higher castes and their government have therefore to practice continually treason against their Republic.

A farce symptomatic of the present set up of the higher caste in the country was recently staged in this club. India's business classes are largely Bania, while her professional classes consist of Brahmin and Kayastha with the Baddis of Bengal thrown in and the Europeans enjoy their place of honour in either rank. A Bania recently asked for admission into this club. In pre- Freedom India, he would probably not have made this request, for the business classes were largely nationalist while the top of the professional classes was largely pro-British. The Banias are now trying to make up for lost time. This applicant claimed to belong to the House of Tantias and was promptly blackballed presumably also by the British president of the club, Mr. Blease, who said he had heard of the Birlas and Tatas but not of the Tantias. An older brother of this gentleman is the newly

elected Treasurer of the Congress Parliamentary Party. All estimable Banias of somewhat nationalistic record are now trying to acquire culture which they had not so far done either because of their hurry to make money or because of Gandhiji. Mr. Biral and his family have also changed. From the closed collar Jodhpurs of the Gandhi era they have now travelled to the coat and tie of the European. They run schools where little children are charged the most fantastic fees. One such school is ironically enough named the Hindi School, while its most privileged section of children from the age of five onwards is taught alone through the medium of English, and is not permitted to talk any other language. We are definitely living in a climate of nightmares, somewhat subdued and not sharp enough. To these men of money, now in hurry for culture, the Calcutta Club must be appearing as a paradise of romance and enlightenment. It must appear so to the mass of people. There gather top lawyers, the top executives, the top captains of trade and industry, occasionally with their fair ladies of perfumed breath and sparking jewels. If only the people knew the Calcutta Club as any other club of the Indian bourgeoisie for what it actually is, a joint of wine bibbers, bribe takers and bribe givers, and pimps and of purveyors of state jokes and monkey English, they would repose their dream of enlightenment and for romance in worthier places.

Foreign rule set the Hindu against the Muslim, but that does not rub out the discord which native religions had created in the country. The policy of divide and rule, which governments pursue, must fasten on already existing elements of decision. British rule in India had made use of the element of caste in the same manner that it made use of the element of religion. As the divisive force of caste was not nearly as strong as that of religion, the effort met limited success.

The Maratha Party in Western India and also that of the Scheduled Castes, the Justice Party in the South and the mission-led block of Adivasis in Eastern India were fruits of this effort. To them must also be added the block of native princes and big landlords in Eastern India, which followed the lead of foreign rule and, during its last days, appeared discredited beyond recovery.



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At the time the British made this effort, they were justifiably condemned. Foreign rule habitually accentuates and widens differences; it does not compose them. It must be condemned. But such condemnation does not remove the ground on which differences originate and thrive. British rule has ended but the caste parties that it gave birth to have continued into free India and are enjoying fresh access of strength. The Workers and Peasants Party and the Republican Party of Western India, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam of South India and the Jharkhand Party of Eastern India alongside of the Ganatantra and Janata parties are not only regional parties but also caste parties. In fact, they represent and embody regional castes. These regional castes are decisively numerous in their area. The Adivasis of Chota Nagpur are the life-blood of the Jharkhand, the Mahars of the Republicans, the Marathas of the Workers and Peasants, the Mudaliars but also other non-Brahmins of the Dravida Munnetra, and the Kshatriyas, not nearly as much of the Ganatantra and the Janata.

A patriot and a progressive would look askance at the growth of parties of regional caste, even when they don a radical garb. Their capacity to disintegrate dare not be overlooked. They disintegrate the people. They disintegrate the mind. What, however, is the use of recognition by other castes of this capacity to disintegrate? The caste that becomes the instrument of such disintegration must recognize it. When can it do so? That raises the question of injury that castes have done to society or, in other words, the injury that society has done to the caste, which is in a position to hit back and does so.

The castes that went to form the Maratha, Justice or Scheduled Caste parties suffered ill-treatment from society. The British rulers made use of this sense of grievance and injury, a very bad use indeed, but they did not and could not have created it. That is why the problem has persisted. In some cases, the caste that has suffered the injury and that which has caused it have changed places. But that does not solve the problem of injury. Furthermore, numberless castes have yet to make themselves vocal and effective and are today content to play a passive or a subsidiary role to the contending giants. This is the chief source of injury and injustice.

The political inter-play of castes has unfolded itself fascinatingly in Maharashtra and the drama is not yet over. Until 1930 and a little after, the Maharashtra scene was bafflingly simple, and its backdrop was Brahmin versus the rest. The succeeding period of around twenty-five years has done nothing to diminish the amazing simplicity of the scene. Only the dominating caste has changed. The backdrop is today represented by Maratha versus the rest.

The Marathas are a peculiar caste of Maharashtra, who claim to be Kshatriyas but are more like the cultivator-Sudras of North India. They have been the largest single downgraded caste of that area. Additionally, West India has new Vaishyas and Kshatriyas and the Kayasthas too are negligible, so that the Dwija or the high caste are largely represented by the Brahmin. The Maratha was the spearhead of the revolt against the Brahmin in Maharashtra although other down-graded castes assisted him in varying degrees. The revolt was pro-British in the beginning, because the Brahmins were on the whole anti-British, but the nationalist movement proved strong enough to absorb it. The Maratha entered the party of nationalism, the Congress Party, and almost took it over. The phenomenon of caste exclusion was witnessed again, with the roles changed. On the one hand, the Brahmin began gradually to lose his monopoly of political power and, on the other, the Maratha did not share his new found authority with the other downgrade castes. The change of the earlier situation, Brahmin versus the rest, was natural enough. When the dust of topical controversy has settled down and men are able to go behind the dispute between a bilingual state for Maharashtra and Gujarat and a unilingual state for Maharashtra alone, the equally strong driving force of caste will be laid bare. There is no need to deny the force of language. With it is also mixed the equally potent force of caste. Bilingualism and the government party, which was earlier the revolting nationalist party, is represented by the Maratha. Unilingualism and the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, which is now the party of dissent against the government, is represented by the rest. The subterranean forces of caste have been all too powerful in this drama superficially around language. The Brahmin, who has increasingly been losing political power, and the down-graded castes other than

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Maratha, which have felt left out, have been yearning for an opportunity to hit out. Their earlier effort to hit out on the Goa issue, when the Brahmin Shanwarpet of Poona had for a while again become the cultural capital of Maharashtra, proved a curtain-raiser to the present language effort.

The Marathas have themselves to thank for this development. They proved to be a greedy for power and monopolistic as any. They used the revolt of the down-graded castes for the assertion of their own supremacy and not for the destruction of castes as such and the injustice that goes with them. Ever and ever again, the revolt of the down-graded castes has been misused to upgrade one or another caste rather than to destroy the entire edifice of caste. The Maratha could perhaps not have acted differently. The Brahmin is perhaps again repeating his earlier mentality. Though the Samiti is composed of the rest versus the Maratha of the Congress Party, the leadership of the Samiti is preponderantly Brahmin. Should the Samiti come to power, the wheel may perhaps again revolve to its earlier point of Brahmin versus the rest. In an economy where there is very little in authority and even less in money, the scramble is hard, far-sight almost impossible and group cohesiveness an inescapable need. Is there then no way out? Is the wheel exactly identical?

When disputes repeat themselves without a movement and with continuing stagnation, lethargy of the spirit is inevitable. A likelier outcome, however, is an increasingly improving regrouping. Even while the present conflict is on and before it has been resolved, the Maratha of the Congress Party may be able to make political friends with some of the rest and the Brahmin of the Samiti may likewise acquire a genuine though limited kinship with the rest. Such a development will not, however, be as probable as the emergence of a new nucleus around which men of all castes may gather with the determination to end caste. The nucleus is perhaps already there. Its capacity to attract the people may take time to manifest itself. In fact, it may truly express itself only at the end of the present and the succeeding conflicts.

The exclusion of the high caste from political power does not necessarily imply their exclusion

from economic and other types of power. In the first place, such political exclusion has nowhere been total, not even in the South. The Brahmins have in recent years, as the sole representative of the high caste, been increasingly eliminated from legislative and administrative power in Tamilnad. Even so, they still occupy a fantastically privileged position. Although only 4 per cent of the population, their share in the gazetted services of the administration must be around forty per cent. At one time, it was nearly seventy per cent. A second more remarkable development is the acquisition of economic power by the Tamil Brahmin. He has increasingly been buying up Mount Road from the retiring British. It would therefore be not correct to describe the high castes in terms of any general decline or to bemoan their fate in any part of the country.

The Tamil situation is very intriguing. Elements of the non-Brahmin and the Dravida movement have influenced alike the Congress and the anti-Congress parties. Both the Dravida Kazhagams are openly Dravidian. So is the Congress Party in a concealed and somewhat milder way. All four elements of the Dravida movement, Brahmin Versus non-Brahmin, Aryan Versus Dravidian, North Versus South and Hindi Versus Tamil are present in varying degree alike in the Congress and the anti- Congress movements. Not being obstructed by all-India considerations unlike the Congress Party, the antiCongress Dravidian movements are fiercer in their opposition to the North, Hindi or the Brahmins as the situation demands.

But that is only the difference of degree. And, being the government party, the Congress Party is somewhat more effective, although its absorption of the Dravidian spirit is indeed more discriminating.

A confident forecast of the future is made somewhat difficult by the absence of clearly stated economic programmes. The anti-Congress Dravidian parties are even more fuzzy than the Congress Party in respect of economic programmes. Some of them have even allowed the more illusory North-South and similar prejudices to obscure and weaken the substantial caste issue. A happy outcome would have been if both the Dravidian streams, freed as they already have been of high caste influence, had increasingly rid themselves of geographical and linguistic prejudices and aimed

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single-mindedly at the destruction of caste and if one had tended to adopt conservative and capitalist and the other radical and socialist economic policies.

A likelier and harmful development would be the further accumulation of prejudices. If it accepted that India's economic condition including that of the South and Tamilnad is not likely to improve in the next decade and more, the stage is set for explosively irrational politics. The people may lend their ear more and more to cries of geographical and linguistic oppositions. Political parties would not be human if they did not exploit such opportunities to rise to power. The likeliest development is somewhat more hopeful. It may take time to unfold itself fully. While the empty game of the prejudice is played out between the Congress and the anti-Congress parties, increasing sections of the people may begin to yearn for wholesome positive and concrete programmes. Such a programme would have to base itself on socialist principles in the economic sphere and, in the social sphere, on the total destruction of caste. It would therefore make use of the healthier aspect of the Dravidian spirit while it would try to absorb the individual Brahmin, equally with the non-Brahmin into the coming social order. It would for some time to come have to aim at the destruction of high caste privileges even through the award of preferential treatment to the backward castes. Developments somewhat further north in the Andhra Pradesh have been, in a sense, of greater interest. The Reddys of Andhra are a cross between the Kshatriyas and the Ahirs of north India, either of whom are almost absent from the Andhra scene, and have definitely become the most influential single caste of their state. They are, the ruling caste of Andhra par excellence but they have been elastic enough not wholly to displease the Brahmins whom they ousted from political power and have been wise enough to share their power with smaller castes like the Velmas. They have, however, been unable to make friends with the Kammas, a caste almost wholly similar to the Kurmis of north India both in respect of their appellation and their sound cultivator status. Economically somewhat enabled and politically disabled, the Kammas of Andhra have been somewhat restless in the past decade. They have almost as an entire caste sought to revenge themselves on the Reddys through the instrument of

the Communist Party. Having failed in that effort at least for the time being, they might make one more bid through the instrumentality of Prof. Ranga before they make their second bid through the Communist Party.

When would the Andhra political scene shift to the most numerous but the least influential castes? These are the Kapus, the Padmashalis, the Malas and Madigas, in fact, the combination which has from time to time been known as the Chetty Sangham. The Kapus are the most numerous cultivating caste, they are very poor occupancy tenants, and even poorer sharecroppers when they are not actually agricultural labourers. In order to put energy and activity into this mass of Kapus a political party would have to arise that frees itself almost wholly from the stranglehold of the landowning Reddy and the Kamma castes. Such a party would have to aim at the abolition of sharecropping and, as a first step, perhaps at the award of one-third or even less to the landowner and the rest to the cultivator. The Communist Party has not been such a party and perhaps can never become such. It is far too much of a landowning party, not so much the big landowners as the smaller ones. It has indeed achieved remarkable success in acquiring for itself the loyalty of the agricultural labourers, who are by and large the Harijan castes. This phenomenon of Harijan loyalty to the Communist Party prevails over all of south India. Not unless a new nucleus emerges, which wages Kapu share-croppers' struggles as much as the Harijan wage-earners' struggles, would there be any chance of enlivening the large mass of Andhra population or of causing a shift in Harijan loyalty.

The rise of regional and caste parties like the Jharkhand and Ganatantra embodies exceptionally singular phenomena. The Jharkhand has almost never fought for the rights of Adivasis or forest-dwellers nor against the vicious laws or practices that oppress them. In fact, the Socialists and similar persons have fought for them in certain areas. And yet they vote for the Jharkhand, because it lives with them, eats and dances with them, sorrows and makes merry with them and is generally a part of them. Caste in this as in certain other cases, has driven a wedge between political and social kinship. Not unless the political and economic parties of national reach learn to live socially, in their births and wedding feasts and deaths,

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with different castes and tribes, will they be able to wrest from parties like the Jharkhand their undoubted dominion over select areas.

The Ganatantra tells a somewhat different story. It is not the story of a continuing darkness. It is the story of a light that has been blown out, of a relapse. The new tyrants of the Congress Party have proved so irksome and, in areas, so foul to the people that they are willing to opt for their old tyrants, the rajas and the landlords. The Congress Party has truly broken its word to the people. The Orissa evidence is incontestable. It is difficult to predict the future. The people may well risk their fate with their former tyrants once again in sheer disgust. This and the ensuing disillusionment may well take another ten years to run out its course. Or some miracle of rapid development throughout the country may well compress the events of a decade into the compass of a year or two. In any event, the new nucleus of casteless loyalty, true to its pledged word and unsullied with the alliance of the old or new tyrants, must be there to bind the people, when they are ready.

How does this new nucleus differ from the Congress and Communist parties in respect of its attitude towards caste? Everybody is against caste these days. And yet caste flourishes, in some ways, as never before. Eminent sociologists like Max Weber have proved thoroughly wrong in their prognostications about this virus. They had thought that Europe-educated Indians bred to rational concepts and ways of life, would destroy caste on their return home. Little did they realise that these Europe-returned Indians would be drawn overwhelmingly from the ranks of the high-caste and would further reinforce the caste system with its exclusive marriages because of their education and high status. Speech against caste may well go with acts in furtherance of it.

Three distinct types of opposition to caste may be noted, one wordy, the second low level and mixed, and the third real. The wordy opposition is the loudest in respect of such generalised condemnation of caste as leaves the existing structure almost intact. It condemns the caste system as wholly evil, but would equally condemn those who resort to active steps to destroy the system. It sanctifies the principles of

rising standards of living and of merit and equality of opportunity as solvents of caste. Raise everybody economically; give everybody an equal opportunity! So say these false advocates of destruction of caste, as though rising standards and opportunities would be restricted to the low caste. When everybody has an equal opportunity, castes with the five thousand year old traditions of liberal education would be on top. Only the exceptionally gifted from the lower castes would be able to break through this tradition. This is what India's political parties, Congress, Communist and Praja Socialist, under Mr. Nehru's leadership have in mind. They would want men and women of exceptional ability from the lower castes to join their ranks. But they would want the structure as a whole to be kept intact. They are themselves drawn overwhelmingly from the higher castes. They have no hesitation in denouncing their caste or the distinction of high and low castes, so long as their social group based on traditions, ability and manners is left unaffected. If anybody qualifies in ability and manners from among the lower castes, he is welcome. But how many would qualify! Very few. It would be the battle of five thousand years of oppressive training and tradition against an individual talent. Only the genius or the exceptionally able would win in this battle. To make this battle a somewhat equal encounter, unequal opportunities would have to be extended, to those who have so far been suppressed. But India's political parties of a superficially European orientation under the leadership of that pseudo-European, Mr. Nehru, raise a gruesome shout against this doctrine of unequal opportunities as a blasphemy on their own doctrine of imported and vested interest socialism.

A vested interest socialism talks of political and economic revolution alone, meaning thereby the award of increased wages or bonus on the lowest level and the destruction of private property in factories and the like on the highest level. Even in the Europe of changing classes, such a revolution would keep intact the distinction between manual workers and those with the brain. In India of fixed castes, this distinction would spell ruin to the health of society. Workers with the brain are a fixed caste in Indian society; together with the soldier caste, they are the high-caste. Even after the completed economic and political revolution they would continue to supply the managers of the



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state and of industry. The mass of the people would be kept in a state of perpetual physical and mental lowliness, at least comparatively. But the position of the high-caste would then be justified on grounds of ability and in economic terms as it is now on grounds of birth or talent. That is why the intelligentsia of India which is overwhelmingly the high-caste, abhors all talk of a mental and social revolution of a radical change in respect of language or caste or the bases of thought. It talks generally and in principle against caste. In fact, it can be most vociferous in its theoretical condemnation of caste, so long as it can be allowed to be equally vociferous in raising the banner of merit and equal opportunity. What it loses in respect of caste by birth, it gains in respect of caste by merit. Its merit concerning speech, grammar, manners, capacity to adjust, routine efficiency is undisputed. Five thousand years have gone into the building of this undisputed merit. A true doctrine of equal opportunity would have to undo the work of five thousand years by giving preferential treatment to the lower castes over a period of at least a few decades. India's political parties, Congress or Communist, are under Mr. Nehru's leadership, thoroughly hostile to the award of preferential treatment on any large scale. They denounce it as a caste-motivated measure while they are themselves viciously caste-ridden, perhaps unknowingly. They denounce caste by birth, but in enthroning the principle of merit, they keep secured their privileged positions.

On no account do the high castes comprise more than one-fifth of India's population. But they keep to themselves almost four-fifths of the nation's leadership. In respect of the top leadership of the four main departments of national activity, business, army, high civil services and political parties, the highcastes easily comprise four-fifths. When we talk of the top leadership of political parties, we mean not the members of legislatures but the directing executives which choose them. When more than four-fifths of a nation's vital leadership is traditionally selected from among one-fifths of its population, a state of atrophy is bound to ensue. Four-fifths of its population sinks into a state of listlessness and inefficiency. The nation is sick and continually on the point of death. To revitalise such a nation, a designed selection of leadership has to be made. At least half or sixty per

cent of the nation's top leadership must be selected by design from among the lower castes. This need not be done by law. It had better be done through a purposeful understanding. A start can be made through change in the nation's political leadership. That it can be done was recently demonstrated in the elections to the National Committee of the Socialist Party. True enough, the party has had to suffer a grievous maligning at the hands of ignorant high-castes, both outside and inside its ranks. Time alone will show whether the maligning succeeds. Whatever happens on this occasion and in this party, the attempt to revitalise the nation's leadership in terms of caste must be made again and again until it succeeds.

The overwhelming majority of the high-caste truly belong to the ranks of the lower castes, but they are ignorant of this situation. It is this ignorance, which is preserving the most artificial social order the world has ever known. No more than half or a million men are the true high-caste. They are the men of money or talent or influence. They belong to the very special castes such as Bengali Baddis, Marwari Baniyas, Kashmiri Brahmins, which spew out the leaders of trade or the professions. On this pinpoint dagger of a million truly high caste persons rest the eight crores or so of false high-castes, on whom in turn are heaped the thirty crores or so of the lower castes. The dagger has torn apart the vitals of the entire nation.

The wheel of caste revolves remorselessly. If it grinds out the hundreds of millions of the lower castes, it also divides the high-caste into the true high-caste and the false high-caste. The true high-caste wears coat and tie or Sherwani and Chudidars. They are the Brahmins and Baniyas, Kshatriyas and Kayasthas of Delhi and the capital towns. To them are only illusorily related the hoards of Dwijas or the twice-born, who live in the villages or small towns. These false high-castes wear the dhoti or pyjama of the people. But they hug the illusion and discard the reality.

They are no longer men; they have become listless shadows of tradition. In actual fact even the true high-castes are pointless shadows of tradition in the midst of a mobile world where Khrushchevs and Eisenhowers stride with the energy of somewhat activistised nations. Mr. Nehru and India's political leaders may appear big

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to their own countrymen; to world history, they are the performing pygmies of weakened nations. Caste more than anything else causes debility to the nation.

How irrational caste is and how remorselessly its wheel grinds is obvious from the schism, not merely real, but also in nomenclature, within the Bania caste. The well-to-do Bania,

the wholesaler, of ancient times became the Vaishya. It is difficult to say how exactly this happened. It may well be that the wholesaler or the well-to-do remained the Vaishya, while the rest became the Bania. The vast mass of the Bania caste, the Teli, the Jaiswal, the Pansari and the like, are treated by orthodoxy as Sudra. They are the retailers of ancient times, and, largely so, of today. The former wholesaler is the Dwija, the former retailer the Sudra. The wholesaler and the priest have hitherto always combined in Indian history. Their political, economic and social intimacy so picturesquely described as the Sethji- Bhatji combination by Maratha politics, has turned them into the twice-born and the high-caste par excellence of modern Hindu society. And this most obvious fraud continues, which shows up caste as nothing but the congealing of money and status.

This first wordy war on caste, led by the Dwija, is evenly matched by the second empty struggle against caste led by select Sudra groups. Among the Sudras, certain castes are numerically powerful, even overwhelming in some areas. The age of adult franchise has placed power in their hands. Some castes like the Reddys and Mudaliars of south India and the Marathas of west have made use of it. They and, not the Dwija, are the political overlords of their areas, though, even here the high-caste has strengthened his economic grip and is making most clever and deceptive efforts to stage a political comeback. This is possible chiefly because these are empty struggles against caste. They do not change the social order in the sense of making it more just, mobile or active. They do not give power to all the lower castes, but only to the largest single section within them. They do not therefore destroy caste, but merely cause a shift in status and privileges. Some of the trappings of the high-caste belonging to the Brahmin or Vaishya are stripped off them and patched on to the Maratha or the

Reddy. This solves no problem. Rather, it disgusts all the other lower castes and enrage the high caste. Caste, with all its debility and some more of its irritations, remains.

Taking the country as a whole, the Ahirs, variously known as Gwalas, Gopes, and the Chamars, also known as Mahars, are the two most numerous lower castes, the former Sudra and the latter Harijan. They are the colossi of the Indian caste system, like the Brahmin and Kshatriya among the Dwija. Ahirs, Chamars, Brahmins and Kshatriyas, each comprise around 2 to 3 crores of people. Together they are roughly 10 to 12 crores of the Indian population. That still leaves a little less than threefourths of the entire population outside their fold. Any struggles that leave unaltered their status or condition must necessarily be deemed empty. Shifts in the status and conditions of the four colossi may be of the greatest interest to them but are of little significance to society as a whole.

The Ahirs and Chamars of north India have made efforts, perhaps without much awareness, similar to those of the Reddys and the Marathas. They were bound to fail, because the Dwijas are far more numerous in the north and, second, because, they are not quite so numerically strong among the lower castes of the north. Nevertheless the effort continues on a somewhat lower key. Democracy is in many ways government by numbers. In a country where groups cohere through birth and long tradition, the most numerical groups tend to acquire political and economic privileges. Political parties run after them to select candidates from among them for elections to parliament and assemblies. Additionally, their shout is the loudest for share in trade or the services. The result is most disastrous. The myriad lower castes, each of whom is numerically weak, but who together form the bulk of the population, stagnate. A war on caste must necessarily mean an elevation of all, and not merely of any one large section. A sectional elevation changes some relationships within the caste system, but it leaves the basis of castes unaltered.

Sectional elevation is dangerous in yet another way. Those among the lower castes who rise to high positions tend to assimilate themselves to the existing high-castes. In this process, they inevitably appropriate

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the baser qualities of the high-caste. Everybody knows how the lower castes, on their rise, tend to segregate their women, which again is a quality not of the top high-caste but of the medium high-caste. Also the lower castes that rise begin to wear the sacred thread of the Dwija, which has so long been denied to them but which the true high caste has begun discarding. All this has an additional result of perpetuating the distinction. Furthermore, such a rise does not cause a general ferment among the lower castes. The risen are alienated from their own groups; instead of fermenting their own original lower groups they seek to become part of the higher castes to whose positions they rise. This process of an extremely sectional and superficial rise gives birth to another misfortune. The lever to the rise is supplied not by the cultivation of good qualities or talent but by the arousing of bitter caste jealousies and the play of intrigues.

A somewhat peculiar situation obtains in an area like Bengal. It is commonly supposed that Bengal has no caste-politics. What is meant is that the vast bulk of the lower castes are too unaware to speak, much less to shout. They are silent. The high-castes are very vocal. Furthermore, they are somewhat like the Europeans, for every single high caste has tended, at least in the towns, to acquire an individualised personality. This silence of the lower castes and the comparative modernisation of the higher castes has obscured the true position in Bengal, the most caste-ridden portion of India. Someday, the silence will break. That will be the time when empty struggles against caste may repeat themselves. The Mahishyas, Sudra, and the Namsudras, Harijan, are the two most numerous lower castes of Bengal. They might assert themselves, not with a view to destroy caste but in order to equal or rival the Brahmin and the Kayastha. The time to prevent such empty struggles is now. A deliberate policy of uplifting all the lower castes and not merely the Namsudra or the Mahishya into positions of leadership must be followed.

This brings us to the third and true struggle against caste now on the agenda of India's history. This struggle aims to pitchfork the five downgraded groups of society, women, Sudras, Harijans, Muslims and Adivasis, into positions of leadership, irrespective of their merit as it stands today. This merit is at present

necessarily low. The tests of merit are also such as to favour the high-caste. What long ages of history have done must be undone by a crusade. The inclusion of all women, including Dwija women, which is but right, into the downgraded groups of society raises their proportion to the entire population to 90 percent. This vast sea of submerged humanity, nine out of every ten of India's men and women, has drowned into silence or, at best, some routine noises of seeming life. Economic and political uplift, by itself, may put some fat on their lean limbs. A restoration of self-respect through the abolition of caste, of course, when it goes side by side with economic uplift, can rouse them into the activity of full men and awakened peoples. Let it not be forgotten that the high-castes, Dwija, have also suffered grievously from this atrophy of the people, their education and culture hides, under the veneer of good speech and manners, the deadly poison of the lie and self-advancement through deceit. A crusade to uplift the downgraded groups would revive also the high-caste, would set right frames and values which are all today askew. This crusade must never be confused with the niggardly award of preferential positions to a few scores among the lower castes. This only irritates the high caste. A howl goes up. It does not at all ferment the lower castes. What matters if a dozen or two of the lower castes are added to the high-caste oligarchy of several thousands in any sphere of life? There is need to add them by the hundred and the thousand. That will turn into a crusade what is today only a vote-catching, quarrel-making and jealousy-inspiring device. The fact that an entrant or two from the lower castes into the higher reaches receive sharp notice, while dozens of simultaneous entrants from the higher castes are accepted in the usual course, indicates what a hot crusade would be necessary. It must be emphasized again and again that hundreds of lower castes, who might otherwise stay unnoticed, must receive greater attention in a deliberate policy than the two colossi who would attract notice anyway.

This policy of uplift of downgraded castes and groups is capable of yielding much poison. In fact, care may only mitigate some of the worst aspects of the poison; it cannot be totally eliminated. A first poison may come out of its immediate effects on men's minds; it may speedily antagonise the Dwija without speedily influencing the Sudras. With his undoubted

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alertness to developments and his capacity to mislead, the Dwija may succeed in heaping direct or indirect discredit on the practitioners of this policy long before the Sudra wakes up to it. Secondly, the colossi among the lower castes like the Chamars and Ahirs may want to appropriate the fruits of this policy without sharing them with the myriad other low castes, with the result that the Brahmin and Chamar change places but caste remains intact. Thirdly, the policy may be misused by selfish men among the lower castes for individual advancement, who may additionally use weapons of intrigue and caste jealousies.

This would rend society further apart and subject it to grosser selfishness without bringing it any benefits of weakening and expansion. Fourthly, every single case of election or selection between a Sudra and Dwija may become the occasion for acrimonious exchanges. The baser elements among the downgraded castes would use it as a constant weapon. In their over-weening desire to eliminate the particular Dwija against whom they are ranged, they would in total seek to oust all Dwijas or to fill the air with darker suspicions when they fail. Fifthly, economic and political issues may be obscured or relegated into the background. Reactionaries among the lower castes may misuse the anti-caste policy to serve their own ends. For instance, the Backward Castes Commission Report, by which the lower castes are swearing, has side-stepped the great issues that confront the people such as abolition of land tax on uneconomic holdings and the impositions of a ceiling on all incomes. Its concrete recommendations are just two in number, one good and the other bad. It has recommended reservation in services for the backward castes and the reservation could justifiably be more disproportionate than the Commission has wished. But it has erred in making a similar recommendation for education. Let the backward castes ask for two of three shifts in schools and colleges, if necessary, but let them never

ask for the exclusion of any child of India from the portals of an educational institution.

Such is the poison that this policy may bring forth. Continual awareness of this poison may check it in great measure. But the fear of the poison should not blind us to the miraculous power of this policy to create and cure. India will know the most invigorating revolution of her history. The people will have become alive as never before. She may also have indicated in the process a lesson or two to mankind. Karl Marx tried to destroy class, without being aware of its amazing capacity to change itself into caste, not necessarily the ironbound caste of India but immobile class anyway. For the first time, an experiment shall have been made in the simultaneous destruction of class and caste. The young high-caste must now rise to his full measure, instead of seeing in this policy an attack on his interest, he should view it for its capacity to renew the people. After all among the very few relationships of marriage between high and low castes, those between Dwija and Harijan can be named but not so between Sudra and Harijan. The young high-caste must decide to turn himself into manure for the lower castes, so that the people may for once flower into their fully glory. If human nature were capable of infinite sacrifice, we would have the high-caste become advisers, while the executives are all low-caste. If this is not possible everywhere, let it be so in as many places as possible. With faith in the great crucible of the human race and equal faith in the vigour of all the Indian people, let the high-caste choose to mingle tradition with mass. Simultaneously, a great burden rests on the youth of the lower castes. Not the aping of the high-caste in all its traditions and manners, not dislike of manual labour, not individual self advancement, not bitter jealousy, but the staffing of the nation's leadership as though it were some sacred work should now be the supreme concern of women, Sudras, Harijans, Muslims, and Adivasis.

*[July 1958]*

## **Principles of Parliamentary Behaviour**

Future generations will have cause to remember Mr. Rajnarain Singh as the greatest parliamentarian

of free India's first few years. Mr. J. Nehru will probably be remembered as the other notable



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parliamentarian, a crafty strategist, who knew how to shift blame, to quieten opposition through praise or threat or a commingling of both, and that in the larger parliamentary histories, Rajnarain's name is assured in the briefest parliamentary history, a champion of the people, a warrior of parliamentary rights and, above all, a foe of violence and a crusader of civil disobedience as much within the parliament as outside. He would be remembered as the man, who made his body a witness to his creed, who taught the weak, helpless and lonesome man more through example than through words, how not bend to tyranny.

The facts of the Rajnarain affair are not in dispute. What is in dispute are the fundamental principles and assumptions of parliamentary behaviour. What is a parliament? It is the place where three categories of persons, elected representatives, government and a presiding officer meet in order to debate and resolve. Each of these categories should be bound by rules and, what is more, everyone of them must put himself under voluntary and appropriate restraints in order that parliament may truly reflect the people and that parliamentary business may be properly transacted. None should be free from these restraints, in particular, must the presiding officer bind himself to rules, possess an unruffled tranquillity, hold the scales even between the government and dissenting representatives and, above all, obliterate his own individuality in order to regulate parliament as an orderly reflection of the people's will.

Every one of these categories may indeed have made mistakes. That is the first direction in which the current controversy must be put straight. The assumption is grievous that the speaker can do no wrong. In fact, the speakers and governments of parliaments, which have only recently won their freedom and statehood, are prone to act outside the bounds of parliamentary rules and etiquette. The government is likely to think and act in the fashion of people who bigotedly believe themselves to be right. The speaker is likely to share that feeling. He has no living tradition behind him, no internal light to guide him, unless he is a very brilliant or a deeply liberal person. He is guided by books of parliamentary practice and rules from abroad. All zealous copyists are, in essence, monkeys, particularly so when they

have to assert a new-found authority. They kill the spirit of freedom and copy the more rigid kind of rules.

We shall make a sample list of questions on which speakers in India have made decisions: (1) What words and usages are unparliamentary; (2) Which questions may be disallowed; (3) Which adjournment motions may be disallowed; (4) Which deputies may be seen and called upon to speak oftener than the others; (5) What should be the procedure for entertaining motions of no-confidence; (6) If, and to what extent, should the police, armed or otherwise, be called upon to restore order within the legislature.

On all these six issues, speakers have made a habit of making mistakes, primarily because they are officious and zealous to maintain a decorum that belongs to a finishing school for uppish middle-class girls, who they are in essence, rather than to a parliament.

It is true that the exercise of all authority, no matter how bound by rules, must always remain discretionary in certain measure. Even discretion should be bound by certain broad principles, though not by rules. The authority of speakers of parliaments, therefore, should be bound by rules, whenever possible, and by principles, within whose ambit they may exercise their discretion. Parliamentary life in the country has suffered from the lack of such rules and principles, and, above all, from the stupid belief that the speaker must possess the authority to evoke unquestioned obedience from members of parliament. The speaker must undoubtedly possess the power, more morally than legally, to evoke obedience from parliament's members, but the obedience should also be principled and not unquestioned.

Rajnarain has been known for his normal obedience to the speaker. But speakers in India are yet quite often unprincipled and unruly. What is one to do in such a situation? Parliaments would never grow up to adulthood, if members did not devise some means to keep their members within the bounds of principles and rules. Alone in the latest Rajnarain affair, three speakers, two of parliaments in Delhi and one in Lucknow, have not been adults. The Lucknow speaker erred on several counts. He should not have disallowed

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the debate on the arrest of hundreds of people, that had taken place a day before the debate was demanded, which was occasioned by the near-starvation of millions of people in his state. Even after he had illegally and officiously denied debate, he should not have denied expression to a dissenting member who would have walked out after his dissent. After the speaker had got into a brawl with the dissenting member, he should have adjourned the House, as indeed he did, but not to invite the police to restore order. He should have adjourned the House in order to talk to the dissenting member and to the leaders of all other parties, if necessary. He should have adjourned the House for a whole day if necessary in order that the dissenting members and the government could understand each other's viewpoint, adjust or accept. A parliament is not a battle-field. An operation is sometimes held back even on battle field. But speakers of Indian parliaments, essentially because they have never or rarely been face to face with personal danger, are a little too prone to threaten their members with police men who dangle their revolvers and use their fists and boots.

The two speakers of the Indian parliament, of the People's House and of the Senate, have grievously erred. After disallowing the debate on the plea that the Lucknow parliament and its proceedings could not be a fit matter for debate in the Indian parliament, the two speakers violated their own ruling and expressed voluble, intemperate, rhetorical and emotionally surcharged opinions on the proceedings of the Lucknow parliament. The speaker of the Lok Sabha went so far as to say that the Lucknow speaker and police did what was right. The Delhi speaker said this in face of the Lucknow speaker's declaration, made the previous day and when the adjourned House had met in the afternoon, that he had asked the police not to use excessive force and complaints should be made to him in writing if the police had done so. Nobody has denied that one member, Ramsingh Chauhan, was kicked unconscious. The speaker of the Lok Sabha has charged like a mad bull into this situation. He has violated his own ruling. He has commended an action of brutal force with the backdrop of weapons in the innermost sanctum of peoples' sovereignty. He has done so when the Lucknow speaker was himself in doubt about the propriety of the police action and

its extent. We do not know if the speaker of the Lok Sabha can be prosecuted in a court of law on charges of contempt or breach of privilege of the Uttar Pradesh legislature or similar jurisdicstic issue. We do know, however, that he should put himself under a rigorous course of self-control, and strive to achieve a certain dullness of spirit if he cannot achieve tranquillity, in case he does not wish to be a continuing disgrace to his chair.

The speaker of the Rajya Sabha, Dr. Radhakrishnan, has the additional reputation of being a philosopher. A speaker should never indulge in cheap gibes particularly when he happens to be a philosopher. On a walk-out by members of his parliament on serious and solemn occasions, he should not gibe that the business of the house would be transacted easily and smoothly.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was so hit up that he described the scenes in Uttar Pradesh parliament as ugly and defined democracy as a consideration for others. Unless the philosopher was equivocating, which would be worse than lying, these remarks were obviously meant against Rajnarain and his comrades and not against the Uttar Pradesh speaker and the police. The serene philosopher has outsize feet of clay and, when his self-interest is aroused, the serenity of his spirit vanishes. Philosophers have not been unconsciously advised to keep within their cloisters. But the Vice-President of India has always yearned to adorn the top places of safe politics and he may recall how he used to beseech Rajnarain, who was then only a student leader, to put in a good word for his vice-chancellor with the Congress leadership.

The problem of the speaker's behaviour must be viewed in greater perspectives. The speaker must indeed ration the time of the legislator with justice as well as protect the debate from a greater irrelevant or disorderly derailment. But, then, this matter of time must be more fundamentally examined. Indian parliaments, even of such populous states as Uttar Pradesh, which is larger than the largest West European state, West Germany, sit for four or five months in the year. They should sit for ten months in a year. What after all is a parliament? It is the most sensitive mirror that man's dexterity has yet devised, to people's wrongs and sorrow. When men die by the

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million through smallpox or hunger, when they starve by tens of millions and when they are arrested in their hundreds for protests, the mirror must gleam with the red light of danger and must be in operation as long as possible. If the mirror is kept out of commission for the greatest part of the year, democracy is bound to be curtailed, almost fatally. Rajnarain's or the speakers' behaviour must be viewed against this background of unreasonably short parliamentary time. The speaker has to crowd together or disallow much that should be allowed. Parliaments in India must sit for the greater part of the year.

Rajnarain's action of civil disobedience within the legislature deserves a searching but comprehensive examination. He might indeed have hurled a shoe at the chief minister or given a whacking slap to the food minister. This would have passed off as an expression of temporary passion, for which the offender would have received the light punishment. Large numbers of unthinking people would have admired the act for its surfacial courage or passion. However, the act would have been totally devoid of value. In fact, such acts promote the spirit of disorderly conduct and breed situations of insult to man's dignity. They are of no use to the weak and lonesome man, and all men are

that when faced with overwhelmingly superior might. They depress the general run of men into the habit of surrender. Rajnarain's act is a symbol of what the totally unarmed or powerless man can do in the face of armed might. He need not bend his knee. He need not hit back at the tyrant. All that he does is to refuse to obey, propelled as he is by the almost religious force of civil disobedience. Reason has hitherto always collapsed against weapons. When reason summons the aid of weapons in its fight against armed unreason, it collapses just as much as when it is suppressed because of its refusal to resort to arms. Reason acquires its appropriate weapons through civil disobedience. Humanity knows of no other way to arm reason; civil disobedience is armed reason. Rajnarain's act within the Uttar Pradesh parliament will indeed be long remembered for its two-fold meaning. It will live long as a symbol of what all men might do in their hour of distress, in the moment that a weak spirit invites them to submit to tyranny and exploitation. It has also been a powerful blow struck at parliamentary fraud, or, better, a most strenuous exercise in suffering in order that the mirror of parliament may be kept without spot or blemish. However much sycophants and frauds are condemning it today, it will have acted as a great cause for the correction of parliamentary procedures.

*[October 1958]*

## **India, China and Our Borders**

I should like to make some proposal, entirely non-controversial and non-partisan, which all political parties, publicists, in particular, the radio and the press, would do well to adopt.

1. The division of the people of India into Aryan, Dravidian and Mongolian should be irrevocably ended. There are no such divisions at present nor have been in the past 3000 years and some times I imagine the European scholars have invented these lies to disintegrate India.

The Chinese are making use of this lie in order to wean away the emotional loyalties of more than one and half crores of people of the Himalayan India by telling them that they are both brothers of the

Mongolian race. From my personal experience of people right up to Thailand, as also my knowledge of history, I can categorically assert that India and her immediate neighbours like Tibet, Thailand and Cambodia are certainly not Mongolian in the Chinese sense and they are all definitely more akin to India than China in their mind as well as race.

2. The frontiers between India and sovereign Tibet may and should have been the McMahon Line and that between China and India should be the Kailash, Mansarovar and East flowing Brahmaputra and in fact 30 to 40 miles further north, where the land shows a steep fall. I had so far depended on cultural, mythological and geographical evidence for this policy. But I am now producing an administrative evidence

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insofar as the village of Mansar, gave land revenue to India definitely until the Chinese occupation and the vital statistics of that village formed part of Indian census. It appears a ruler of Ladakh gave away these lands with the exception of the Mansar village, which he retained as a token of Indian sovereignty, to a ruler of Tibet and in all probability this gift deed was invalid and even assuming this was valid the government of China can under no law become beneficiaries to this gift made to the government of Tibet.

3. Tibet and India are related in matters of script, language and general ways of living and thought. I might almost say that Tibet is about 80 per cent India and 20 per cent China and even in regard to the racial build up the Tibetans are certainly as much related to India as to China. What should decide frontiers between any two countries is the will of the people, the contours of the land, general cultural, geography and history and economic considerations. The Chinese should be told to learn from their master Lenin in that he tore up old imperialist treaties for the sake of a new and free world. Even if the treaties are to be a basis let treaties of Mansar type or of the Mahabharat age be brought on the conference table. India should of course always make it clear that if China chose to make Tibet sovereign they will not lay claim to Kailash or similar areas.

4. Such names as Mount Everest or NEFA must be immediately abandoned and in their place the name of Sarga Matha or Sagar Matha which have been prevalent throughout the ages as native names of the Everest and Urvasiam for NEFA must be put to immediate use. Furthermore, the administration of

Urvasiam should be taken away from the External Affairs Ministry and if the Delhi Government is averse to transfer it to the Home Ministry, a separate ministry of the Himalayan Affairs under the direct care of the Prime Minister, be formed.

5. An integrated economic and population planning for Himalayan India must be put into operation and resources of all India in money as well as in men must be utilized in order particularly to make this whole area lush with orchards.

Responsible government must be introduced in Bhutan, Sikkim and Urvasiam, and the peoples of these lands must be enabled to send representatives to the Indian parliament.

However low India might have currently fallen, it would be wise to tell her own people and the neighbours that this greatest continent of human race called Asia in English, Asien in German or Asien in French, derives its name not from a Chinese or any other word but from the Indian word of Usha or Ushas, the land of the morning sun of the Eastern lands. Our ancestors at one time were great enough to give the areas now peopled by the Chinese and others their name.

I must confess to an utter incompetence because I have been making some of these suggestion for several years but to no effect. I should like to make an appeal to the Prime Minister of India who is the only effective leader of opinion in the country to give a serious thought to these absolutely non-party and non-controversial suggestions.

*[June 1960]*

## **The Issue of Skin Colour**

South Africa has forced the issue of skin and colour on the attention of the World. But the issue prevails everywhere in one form or another. Its virulence is just as high, if not higher in Kenya or Algeria as in South Africa. Among the coloured peoples themselves, discriminations flowing out of skin colour take fairly rabid forms. They spoil relationships not

alone between one coloured people and another but also within a single coloured people. There is perhaps just one spot in the world where disadvantages do not flow out of colour and that is the cafes of San Michele in Paris. In the adjoining residential houses of middle-class Frenchmen, colour prejudice is just as sharp, though a little more polite, as it is in the



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African possessions of France. England and London have amply demonstrated that their tolerance of the coloured skin does not go beyond a certain point of employment pressures or female favours.

The issue of colour in South Africa received the continued attention of the World for a week and more because of the British Commonwealth. As it has become half coloured by virtue of the number of countries represented at its conferences, the British Commonwealth is somewhat sensitive to legally enacted and blatant discriminations of skin colour. It is unable to do anything. It talks and that too mildly. Whether it exercises any restraint in favour of equality and freedom is anybody's guess and the answer depends on ones like or dislike of it. We dislike the Commonwealth. And yet we are not entirely sure whether it does not exercise some kind of a short-run restraint on the cruder excesses of colour discrimination. That it cannot be a long-run restraint is almost inherent in the South-African situation.

South Africa possesses around 15,00,000 whites. Its total population is around 15 million. One out of every 10 in the population is white. But the whites run the government. They own the country. They can pass what laws they like and have in fact done so. They have uprooted hundreds of thousands colored men and women from their homes, segregated them into localities which they have chosen, forced them to take out police permits and identity cards and otherwise sought to humiliate them and suppress them. In the process, hundreds have been killed and thousands have been imprisoned. Democracy and the adult vote do not obtain in South Africa. Such sections of the population as are of European ancestry have usurped the government. They have usurped the government because they possess a monopoly on effective weapons. They possess weapons because of certain accidents of history but also because they are better producers of goods and wealth. They are better producers of goods because they own higher intelligence, in the strictly limited sense of contemporary ability to produce goods and to wield weapons. They are currently better able to make use of and research for applied science and to organize. The current capacity in organization and useful knowledge rests overwhelmingly with the whites and with the

historical accident of monopoly of weapons, their position becomes almost unassailable.

How the British Commonwealth can alter the situation over the long run and in a fundamental way is difficult to comprehend. What is likely is temporarily cushioning of conflicts, some adjustments here and there, and a little lessening of cruelty in the inevitable execution of discriminatory policy. Then, there are two elements in the white population, one of Dutch ancestry and the other of non-Dutch or pre-eminently British ancestry. Those of Dutch descent are extremists and thorough in the execution of white policy, while the British progeny is little more liberal and a little more capable of political craftsmanship. As the two sects and political beliefs coincide more or less with the lines of ancestry, it is difficult to foresee a situation in which the more liberal white party could win an election in South Africa, but world pressures are there. The boycott of South African goods is also telling. The British Commonwealth is also exercising a certain influence. With a somewhat more liberal government in South Africa, which however is a remote possibility, the colour situation may ease for the time being. But what fundamental changes are possible? Liberalism goes only up to a point and no further in the matter of adjusting relationship within the same frontiers. It could hardly go to the extent of equality between coloured and white in a situation where the white is the owner of government, wealth and land. In order to let the white have a free and long run in South Africa, the coloured population will have to agree to a subordinate position. Even this kind of contemporary easing of race relationships is dependent on uncertain and a highly uncertain liberalism. It may at its best give breathing time to the coloured peoples, enable them to improve their status and learning and reduce violence, but a drive for final resolution of the race clash in South Africa will come not from the British Commonwealth nor from liberalism of the whites but from the increasing strength of the coloured population in South Africa and their friends to the bitter end outside.

The world consists of over 2,50,00,00,000 persons. Of these 250 crores around 90 crores are white. Every 3½ persons out of 10 in the world's population are white or of European ancestry. They have not always

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been so numerous. Over two or three hundred years ago, there could not have been more than one white out of every ten of the world's population. They have been multiplying fast. This has been their age. Their present net rate of reproduction is higher than that of the coloured peoples. If this could go on indefinitely, the world would become overwhelmingly white or pink complexioned and trace its ancestry in Europe, but the peak of relative superiority in net reproduction was reached long ago and the reverse process or relative equality in the growth of pink and coloured may not be distant.

The whites rule the world. They own its weapons, its goods, its organising ability and its intelligence for useful knowledge. A story almost identical with that of South Africa is re-enacted on the scale of the world. Russia and America, which possess between themselves only one-sixths of the world's population produce nearly three-fourths of its wealth. The whites own a 100% monopoly on the world's nuclear weapons. They produce the scholars and scientists and on any test, whether of the Nobel prize or any other, which the coloured peoples might choose, they own nearly 90% of the world's contemporary intelligence and scholarship. The situation is almost unrelievedly black for the coloured peoples.

Almost all the south and central America is coloured but the leadership in practically every sphere of life and in almost all these countries with one notable exception is held by the whites of European ancestry. The Mexicans alone have been able to build up a multi-racial leadership, of which the Mestizzo or the mixed element forms a very large part. In almost all other countries, the white is presumably recognised as the leader through willing consent of the entire population. The whites are no more than 4 crores out of a total of over 20 crores that inhabit these areas. One in five of the population, they control and direct all industry, government, learning, politics and cultural life. Brazil is the largest country in this area, the second largest in all the world after Soviet Russia, inevitably destined to become the great power of the next century. It is fabulously rich potentially and not so poor as the Asian countries in terms of current realities.

Its new capital Brazilia might reasonably rouse

the envy of several south and east European states. As far as wealth and living standards go, let this be known well and fully, that the poorest regions of the world are in Asia. Among coloured peoples, there are various levels of poverty. Indian poverty for instance is abysmal and beyond compare and the new African Republic or Ghana has a living standard twice that of India. These were side remarks. Coming to the essential point that the whites dominate central and south America, in spite of numerical inferiority and in a situation where democracy on the whole prevails, a central fact of some importance stands out. The coloured person generally feels inferior to the white person. Even when he is truculent and expresses himself in arrogant behaviour, the coloured person feels inferior in his heart of hearts. This is most definitely so in the Americas, where the coloured person is obsessed with the beauty of the fair skin and lives a life of most permanent agony, because he ascribes low value to his own skin. This sense of inferiority inevitably travels over into other spheres.

Juridical and aesthetic norms and material realities are intertwined. They give each other being. While the white is so overwhelmingly superior in current material realities of wealth and weapons, it is only natural that juridical and aesthetic norms should be based on his superiority. Norms and precepts on the other hand change earlier than reality. When an injustice is detected and felt, it gives birth to a new norm which contravenes existing realities. Juridical enactments may generally, though not always, follow material realities, but juridical precepts and aesthetic norms often precede them. The coloured person is as good as the fair person, also in respect of beauty and good looks. Skin colour has nothing whatever to do with beauty whose criteria have to be discovered elsewhere. Similarly, brains and intelligence are as frequent among the coloured peoples as among the whites, only their use and organisation has hitherto been scanty. These precepts and norms must now begin to reside in the human mind, particularly of the coloured person.

Asia is a coloured area, and yet colour discrimination, particularly of the non-legal variety is sharpest here. This is so at least in India. Light skin is rated high, exceedingly high. The lower castes are generally dark

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skinned. They have from times immemorial been segregated in low lying areas of the village. What South Africa is attempting to do today appears to have been achieved in India several thousands years ago, with the religious chant or the stick or presumably both. A witch's cauldron of religion, aesthetic, social ordering, political status and wealth have created a situation in which the darker the skin, the less worthy the person. The Negro is probably worst treated in India. He is indeed treated politely, and there are no legal discriminations against him, but the worst of it all is a situation where the question of discrimination does not arise because there are no social contacts. While general social ordering, religion and caste may have something to do with the social neglect of the Negro as of the European, there is no doubt that the Negro is more completely ostracised because of his colour. The average Indian is after all a coloured person in the total scheme of the world. He is subject like the Negro to discriminatory laws whether in Africa or in the southern United States. He is a part of the weak and poor world constantly begging for wheat or aircraft from the whites. This situation will not change unless he is able to rid his mind of the cancerous error that has gone deep into it. Some persons doubt whether the cancer can now be cured. The cancer is nothing more nor less than the social and aesthetic belief that fair or white skin is superior to coloured skin. India's protest against South-Africa will be empty until she strives to end caste norms and segregations sanctified by centuries.

Africa is the great hope for setting right the distortions of social and aesthetic vision relating to skin colour. In Africa, the coloured skin is smoothly dark and there are no gradations or mixtures as in Asia or in America. When the sense of inferiority goes, it will go completely. Persons of European ancestry in the whole of Africa would not number very much more than 50 lakhs, while the total population is over twenty crores. A small fringe of North Africa is populated by the Arabs, who belong definitely to the coloured world, but whose skin is almost as light as that of the south European. The Arab however has few spiritual and cultural traditions of skin discrimination. The essential point is how this enormous mass of truly dark colour will come into its own in South Africa, Kenya, Rhodesia or Sahara, where the white skin has

built an almost impregnable line of defence against the overwhelmingly numerous but suppressed and tortured dark skin.

Feudalism in land ownership based on skin colour also exists. There is no need to stir up old history. If one did, all of America and a large part of Russia would be one long and unrepentable wail of physical and cultural genocide. As it is California, Siberia and Australia are outstanding examples of feudalism. These enormous areas have a density of population around 10 to the square mile. They have been taken over completely by the white races. The coloured peoples can enter them only in dribbles or not at all. This feudalism will end either through a world population policy or after the coloured peoples have acquired strength enough to knock open the barred doors. In the formulation of a world population policy, Asian and African areas of small populations like the Andamans must also come into the pool. It may incidentally be of some interest to note that countries like Fiji and Mauritius are inhabited by populations of Indian ancestry, Fizi in majority and Mauritius very nearly. These lands are still ruled by the whites. Had India been a white country and not a coloured one, Fiji and Mauritius would have by now acquired independence. In any event, the Fizians and Mauritians of Indian ancestry would do well to end political parties based on ancestry and to form new ones of principle and ideology so that they and others might play equal roles in a common organisation.

Schoolish visions have often thought up combined armies or governments of India, China and the African peoples knocking at the doors of the white world or for a one world of juridical and material equality. These visions are just as unreal as European fears of the yellow peril or the black peril. This world of ours does not run according to principle or idea. The coloured peoples have numerous problems among themselves. It is much easier for a coloured government of greater armed power to seek solutions of problems it has with weaker coloured governments rather than to combine in diplomacy or war against the whites which might end up in smoke and defeat. Furthermore, every coloured government and people takes its machines and its weapons from one or the other white government.

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There is no escape then from the need of white assistance in solving the colour question. That should not mean compromise or surrender of principles, nor should it mean manoeuvring or intriguing in order to obtain the cooperation of white governments. It only means the formulation of universal principles acceptable to white and coloured alike, the absence of hate and the readiness to invite and accept opponents of colour discrimination from among persons of European ancestry.

The most effective opponent of colour inequality is the coloured person himself. He must get rid of his feeling of inferiority. He should not want to be like the white person, which often enough means desire and action to lighten somewhat his dark colour. In large areas, he has already been deprived of his language and religion. Individual conversions are often an index of active faith, but whole millions of coloured persons have often been forced or tempted into their conquerors' religion, which must be a cause of continuing debasement of the soul. In similar manner; the great Inca and Aztec languages have been wiped out and so also the African dialects. It is impossible now to unscramble what has been so irremediably scrambled. Apart from such remedies as encouragement to the Negro language, Swahili, and revival of the south and central American folklore alongside of creation of a human culture, the essential points is for the coloured person not to wish to be like the European, not to imitate him, but to be his equal, not to be arrogant and not even to flaunt his equality but also gently and firmly to reject all notions of white superiority to leadership, to take equal pleasure in the world around him, of the white as of the coloured skin, in other words to strive to be right where man through the ages has been wrong.

The role of coloured governments is of exceeding importance. What coloured peoples do with their freedom, how they build up their strength and what they do to assist the sorely harassed brothers of colour is of decisive importance. A coloured government like that of China, which is out-lawed by the whites, is able freely to assist the victims of white terror. Everybody knows that its activities will diminish or even stop, once it is integrated into the existing world order.

And yet men live in the present and are influenced by what actually happens around them from day to day. It is therefore necessary for coloured peoples and governments which dislike communism because they like a world union in freedom and equality, to assist more actively the victims of colour discrimination.

The most crucial point is that of strength and new creation. No coloured people is striking out into a path of strength and creation different from that of the whites. Herein lies the greatest failure of the coloured peoples and therefore of the world. Every coloured people is feverishly imitating, though rather unsuccessfully, the technology and economy of the whites. Any other way is perhaps very difficult. But even in this way, to catch up with the whites would appear to be impossible because of the enormous handicap of earlier advantage or at least a matter of many, many decades. Some experimentation should therefore be made with the small-unit technology wherever possible and mass production wherever necessary. Even outside of this debatable field of technology and economy, there is a whole area of social and ethical thought, which needs to be revised. The European concept of citizenship, for instance, is too grossly physical, tied up with birth or domicile. Coloured governments should try to evolve a concept of citizenship, which is at least partly cultural, which recognises as individual's cultural declaration. In like manner, the concept of a world parliament elected on the adult vote perhaps with regional weightages, should become an integral part of the coloured man's thought today as of the whole world tomorrow. There is also need for the helpless little man, when he is unarmed and unorganized of the European world to acquire personal dignity, at least in the coloured world through the matchless weapon of civil disobedience. Above all, equality in the sense of comparative equality in material possessions as also of tranquility of spirit must become the supreme aim of the coloured man's endeavour—Only so would a civilisation arise where the government of the people, for the people, by the people would be sustained by the government of mankind, for mankind on one side and the government of the commune for the commune, by the commune on the other.

[July 1960]



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### On Hidden Imperialisms

I have long held to the notion that the world is divided between the privileged white and the coloured under dog. This act of vengeful hostility to the white peoples, which does no good to the world. I have, however, felt emotionally at home with Euro-America and, in fact, found greater awareness of the world among them than among the coloured peoples. The coloured man generally is emotionally hostile to Euro-America and intellectually enslaved to it. Men like me are emotionally friendly to Euro-America, but strive for intellectual freedom from it. Our position has been a little difficult of understanding both for the white and the coloured lackey but the coloured man's angle that we bring to bear upon our interpretation of the world and its events helps reveal the truth. We did not create the division between the privileged white and the coloured underdog. It is there. In acknowledging the division, we aim to destroy it, not to reverse the roles but to achieve equality. One could, therefore, have legitimately expected more of the Chinese Communists than of the Russian Communists, at least in certain spheres. I will first record the spheres of these expectations before trying to discover what has happened to them. Mankind must know of many insidious but hitherto unknown imperialisms. As imperialism is a somewhat odorous word, it creates a wall on genuine understanding, when it should not. The idea is not to blame anybody. A certain situation of empire-colony relationship has arisen in several spheres of human activity. History, if anybody, must be blamed for it. The coloured peoples must bear the blame for it just as much as the white peoples, if not more, for they were supine, indolent or stupid when the whites were active, masterful and bloody.

#### **International Landlordism**

Lebensraum imperialism, or international landlordism, is the first of the unapprehended criminals. Countries like the United States and Soviet Russia have enormous space with little density of population. Accidents of history alone have gifted these enormous land masses. Cruel barbarism has incidentally been a contributory factor to such accidents. Siberia and Australia are

peopled at one person to the square mile. Canada is not much different. California is well under ten persons to the square mile. We may contrast these with the densities of 350 persons to the square mile in India and nearly 200 in China. If landlordism within a country can be so unsavoury to the progressive, as it ought to be, what of this international landlordism? Some day, somebody or perhaps the whole of mankind will have to set right these unjust turns of history. Mind-imperialism is as much a mark of our times as any other. It is true that there is a willingness on the part of the intellectual imperialist to impart his learning, though not necessarily all the skills or the situation of elemental awakening, to the colonials of the mind. It may be pointed out that a similar mind-imperialism exists internally in India. Certain castes have become mind-imperialists through long tradition. One might say that several thousand years of division of labour by birth have been acting almost like a natural selection. On the world stage, this has been going on for about 400 years. The white mind-imperialist would be just as wrong as the coloured high caste, native mind-imperialist, if he were to deny all responsibility for this situation and content himself with the nostrum of equal opportunity. Equality of opportunity can only continue and deepen the injustice of mind-imperialism. Only through unequal and privileged opportunities to colonials of the mind can mind-imperialism be abolished. A third such hidden tyranny is productivity imperialism. Everyone knows that Russia and America with roughly oneeighth

of the world's population produce more than half of its wealth. The landless labourer in India earns eight annas or ten American cents a day, while his opposite number in the U.S. earns about Rs. 25 or five American dollars a day. Russia and America produce wealth worth between Rs. 8,000 and Rs. 14,000 per person per year, while India has to be content with a paltry sum of Rs. 400 per person per year. Russia and America are growing each year at the rate of Rs. 250 per person per year, while the corresponding amount in India is just Rs. 5. The idea is not to apportion blame, at least not in the present. The basis for this productivity-imperialism may be traced to ancient exploitation. If

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there is exploitation today, it is more or less with the willing consent of those exploited. No imputation of blame or any other kind of accusation must be read into this. The situation has to be recognised. If we the human race are to be one, this situation must be deeply understood and remedied. Weapons-imperialism is a necessary corollary of the previous imperialisms or perhaps their source, and it is not so hidden. Russia and America have often agreed in their drafts on the need to keep the knowledge and the reality of nuclear weaponry to themselves. Some of the progressive Americans and Russians would be shocked if they were told that this amounts to weapons-imperialism of the white against the coloured. The coloured peoples have indeed no right to fret or fume. They are more than willing to stockpile any old conventional weapons while they pay worshipful homage to the unilateralist disarmer in Euro-America. Such is the split mind of the coloured man. Once again it is not a question of blame or accusation, but of simple recognition of a situation in which one part of mankind possesses almost the ultimate in weapons. Price-loot-imperialism is the fifth one in this category with which I shall stop the present enumeration. Price movement and the terms of trade are almost always unfavourable to agriculture and the producer of raw materials. If the prices of manufactures have gone up by a hundred percent in the last ten years, primary produce has increased just by 74 percent. Robbery on this score alone must be running into billions every year. I dare say that there is a similar internal price-loot in the relationship between manufactures and primary produce. But that is aggravated to a very large extent by the presence of indirect taxation. One hears almost every day of foreign aid and the philanthropic motives involved in it. The taker of gifts must indeed be contrite and humble, at least until the taker has learned not to misuse gifts and both he and the giver have become aware of the world situation as a whole. However, one never hears of the price-loot inherent in every item of international trade between the white and the coloured. Against each of these imperialisms, India and China and all the other coloured peoples should have been able to act with firmness and in unison. They should, of course, have made every effort to include such white peoples in their ranks and, in fact, invite to leadership those willing to recognise the world situation. But none of this was to happen. I had sometimes day-

dreamed in my earlier years that China and India and the just-minded whites would be able some day to knock at the doors of Australia, Siberia and California and have them opened. But the knocking has taken place elsewhere. Bursting with some kind of power, one knows not which, China has sought the easy way out. She has knocked at the Himalayas. Not to talk of Australia, she did not even knock at Hong Kong or Macao. She did not have strength enough in her knuckles even for measly enterprises. She has chosen to knock where she thought her strength sufficed. I am compelled to believe that this shall ever remain a tragedy of the human race. Enthroned man will work not for the removal of injustice but for the attainment of aims that lie within his reach. The reach of the coloured man must necessarily remain small, even wicked, for a long time yet. Not much can, therefore, be expected of the coloured man that sits on the throne. Deliverance must come, if it ever will, from the white man. He has infinitely greater power and potentially greater intelligence. If ever he sees the world situation as a whole, he may do something about it. Coloured peoples are indeed not out of the arena altogether. Such of them whom little packets of power do not corrupt may take a wider view and the more risky initiative. I must, however, add an item to the theory of the struggle between the white and coloured peoples. This struggle will be overcome, if at all, by the intelligence of the white as much as by the self-interest and radicalism of the coloured.

### **Soviet Superiority**

I rather turn towards Russia and America. I do not intend to make a very close examination of their respective merits in regard to the five imperialisms. So far, neither has shown much merit or intelligence. Some rough isolated trends may be indicated. The Russians seem to have been more willing to communicate their skills of the steel industry to Indians than the West European has been. They have also charged lower rates of interest on their investment. This would demonstrate their superiority in relation to productivity-imperialism, although in a very small way. Americans, on the other hand, have been willing to take coloured settlers into California, although only nominally. Coloured students at their universities are apparently more numerous than at the Russian universities. How far this is due to the

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willingness of coloured governments to open their students to Americanism rather than Russianism and how far to the inclination of Russia to emphasise a particular type of general education rather than technical and scientific skills at least for foreign students is more than I can say. Russian record against open imperialism, of political domination by one people over another, has in recent years been

undoubtedly superior to the American. Would there be a future improvement of achievements in respect of the five imperialisms enumerated here, and who would be better—Russia or America? I hope and pray that both Russia and America in whose hands, more than any others, rests the betterment of the human race, will become equally aware of the world situation as a whole.

*[The Illustrated Weekly of India, 12th August 1962]*

## **Revolution Arrested**

No spectre is haunting the world or any part of it. The two decades after the last world war have been curiously anti-revolutionary. Some earlier revolutions were indeed brought to fruition in this period. But no new revolution has germinated. Various regimes such as those of Rhee, Balewa and Nkrumah have toppled. But that is no revolution, no reordering of the social structure or inflaming of men's minds and engaging in such activity as would lift a people out of slime.

What took place in the forties was bringing to fruition of an earlier gestation such as in India and China. The revolution in India succeeded in 1947, but was arrested immediately after. Such arrested revolutions have been the mark almost everywhere of new-won freedom. The Chinese revolution of 1949 was not a freedom revolution in that sense, it was a unity revolution that had started in the second decade of the century. That the communists brought it to fruition has indeed given it a special character, well worth examining. It is certainly not an arrested revolution.

Cuba and Vietnam are the only two examples that some may like to cite against the hypothesis of the post-war world being anti-revolutionary. Vietnam's is no revolution. It is to large extent a hot extension of the cold war among nations, pocket-edition one no doubt, and, therefore, a reflection of contending social features. Cuba is not very different, with a strong dose of national pride thrown in. Assuming Cuba for argument's sake to be somewhat different, it has but marginal import for the world.

The period until the outbreak of the last world war was characterised by uncertainty, anxiety, expectancy and the air of something about to happen somewhere every other day. This held good of Europe and its most advanced countries. Mr. Churchill had called out armoured cars on the streets of London in the twenties. For almost four years between 1929 and 1933, Germany lived continuously in expectancy of a revolution, not to talk to the earlier spartacus and other efforts immediately after the war. Spain actually gave a day to celebrate, when its king abdicated after a long series of news alternating between hope and sorrow or anger. Before Italy went fascist, there was the socialist expectancy.

Euro-America of the twenties and the thirties still knew depression. The misery of the people bred an air of expectancy. There was always the breath of revolt in it. European peoples cannot accept misery and premature death beyond a certain point, certainly not when it is not the result of their willed resolve. In dying of famine, and other forms of forced death, the people of India are today the hero of all history; meek, resigned and dying like ants or flies; in dying of revolt and war, decisions that partake of will and resolve, the European peoples have been somewhat ready. They might not have always calculated, but, in actual result, death comes much less frequently to these areas of revolt and war than to those of resignation to fate. As misery has been comparatively absent, the post-war European has shown no revolutionary desires.

Automation, cybernetics and manipulation of investments have given to Euro-America the affluent

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society, an ever-growing economy. Technology seems to make it possible some day to produce as much of essential commodities as anyone might want, thereby destroying the need to buy or sell. One will just pick up as much as one wants of whatever one wishes. But that is to be in the future. In the present, hunger has more or less been banished from Euro-America, therefore also revolution. We do not understand what stupid routines and habit of thought are preventing Americans from declaring bread and milk free in their favoured land, a proceeding which is economically possible for them to carry through whenever they wish. The Russians are yearning to achieve such a state, but they are not yet in a situation to do so.

Affluence due to technology and regulated investment has revolutionised economic thinking in some places. Even conservatives, economists included, of a certain type have started propagating the idea of a guaranteed minimum income. In that favoured land, every son of a mother, and of course every daughter, must have a certain monthly income guaranteed. Whether on works or not, or simply lolls away in bed or on turf, this money is one's rightful due, some kind of a legally provided American edition of an Indian Sadhu. The proposed guarantee to the income of an American Sadhu family of two adult and three children amounts in terms of present rupee-dollar relation to around Rs. 1500/- a month. Spectres do not haunt such a society, where it is possible to day-dream of manna falling from heaven.

But the other two-thirds of the world have been there all the time, the world of filth and forced death. Why have they not been revolutionary? Most of them have moved or are moving into a state of physical and political freedom. Revolution has nonetheless been away from them. The greatest single reason probably lies in their state of mind born of a quiescent culture, which they have not yet thought out to its end, despite outwardly revolutionary changes. Of this, however, on some other occasion, although it is certainly for India the most important single reason.

We shall here talk of the two obviously urgent factors that have made the Afro-Asian peoples and those of Latin America anti-revolutionary. One lies in them and the other outside them. They have adopted

the mode of modernisation of the consumption of their elite, before they have modernised the production modes of their masses. Luxury goes up. For some, it is luxury almost à la America. For substantially large numbers it is luxury on decreasing scales. Added to this is the colossal waste of overstaffing due to relationship, caste or pressures of group politics. So much less is left for investment. Economy stagnates and with it the society. For a long while, this criminal luxury and waste is concealed under the deceptive slogans of national dignity and needs of representation. In this manner, the elite of a revolution arrests it, after it has succeeded, either because of natural greed and indolence or because of misunderstanding of what is modern. What can be a worse medievalism than to wish to modernise the consumption of an elite, of which the erstwhile revolutionary forms a considerable part, before the people's production has been modernised.

To this has been added the external factor of revolution by order in the fifties and later. Soviet Russia has become a factor in international politics almost as important as the U.S., in some ways more so. Two such giants must evolve viable modes of living together without all the time coming into conflict. Soviet Russia has therefore had to evolve a scheme of revolution that does not all the time bring it into conflict with America. The evolution of such a scheme was possible without too great a strain on revolutionary conscience and in the measure that a successful and affluent government may be expected to possess.

A substantial number of newly independent lands, particularly India, have yielded to a leadership of sterile Marxists, who have known how to profess revolution without practising it. These voluble revolutionaries have adopted the current Euro-American philosophy of technological revolution with regulated investments occasionally in the public sector. Whenever this leadership is under pressure, its profession of revolutionary poise challenged sharply, it raises a shrill outcry in favour of the public sector. If it has to attack the private sector in some of its minor or medium expressions like life insurance, it more than makes up by providing private contracting in the public sector. This suits Soviet Russia perfectly. It



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does not have to initiate or help people's revolutions. All it needs to do is to evolve a theory of institutional changes like the public sector, which will provide the framework and the discipline for any later take over of the economy by the people.

From President Soekarno of Indonesia to ex-president Nkrumah of Ghana over the Nehrus and Indiras of the India, this leadership of sterile Marxists strides the emergent lands. Revolution by order as conferment of a boon from above without permitting too great striving from below is their principle. In the process, they know how to live well, they and their crowd. Some of these have been kicked out of office by their peoples, who alas have not yet anywhere displayed the uncertainty, anxiety and expectancy that precedes a revolution.

At this point, the China-brand revolutionaries might exclaim that they have been left out of this anti-revolutionary world picture. The Chinese and their adherents all the world over are no more revolutionary than are the Russians, West Europeans or the sterile Marxist Afro-Asians. They go through the motions of revolution with somewhat greater sincerity but that is all. From an account of the North-Vietnamese revolution published elsewhere as a document the ferocity and thoroughness of some changes is quite evident. We do not wish to raise here the question of ends and means. Admitting for a moment that ends justify means, the question still remains: what happens after the end has been achieved. A stagnant rural society must become dynamic after such an upheaval. To what end is this dynamism used afterwards? The revolution animalised in its processes may continue to remain so afterwards in its ends. The ends and means equalisers are however under an obligation to prove that all they are capable of is not just an arrested revolution. A revolution monstered is perhaps a wee bit better than an arrested revolution.

The disease of the Chinese revolution and, all others patterned on it, is peculiar and arises out of an event unique in history. These are revolutions of equality and tied one with another in the kinship of a doctrine of equality. Beginning with Russia, the family is at the moment seeking to multiply in Vietnam. However, much the Russians and the Chinese may abuse each

other and Marxists of different hues call this that revolution perverted or distorted, most of them do not deny this kinship. The fact of this kinship places a country so obviously wronged as India in a position of disadvantage to wrong-doer China among all kinsmen, for they deeply believe in their paternity. But the trouble starts when the wronging starts within the family. Inequality with America can only anger China into another ferocious spurt. Inequality with Russia rankles, for it is against the doctrine, against paternity.

The revolution goes wild with grief. The doctrine does not help understanding. As long as the nation is there with its frontiers, communism as a philosophy of government must perforce play itself out within those national frontiers. Russia must necessarily work out its affluence and such equality as it may within its frontiers. But the doctrine had spoken otherwise. China however refuses to believe that its doctrine of Marxism is no answer to the challenge of inequality among nations, however much it might achieve equality within the nation. The revolution goes wild with inability to understand. It begins to prowl and, as is usual with beasts, attacks weaker victims. It does not attack America. It does not attack Russia, the faith's traitors. It does not attack Australia, nor even Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macao. It attacks the Himalayas. It organises revolution in Vietnam. Coloured sentiment in China's favour in an illusion. Because of its faith in force and organisation, China must necessarily choose weaker victims which can only be coloured peoples. If Soviet Russia has become the exponent of revolution by order, China is fast becoming the teacher of revolution by force and organisation. Doctrinal spontaneity is finished. It has been replaced entirely with calculation, force and organisation. If Americans believe in organisation and in the C.I.A. to enforce their will in all the world, the Chinese are equally ferocious with their belief in organisation and in compulsion for such communist and allied elements as have accepted their will. Organisation is after all a mother of calculation. It can be brought to bear only against a weaker combination. True, without force or organisation, nothing probably has ever been done. But we appear now to have entered an era, where organisation and force reign supreme, where the idea is at best secondary and at worst a tool. It is the age of the joyless revolution.

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Some discerning sociologists are looking into a future of joyless plenty, of joyless automation and joyless technology, where everything would be plentiful but repetitious and monotonous. Already, the revolution has become joyless and a matter of mechanical motions. In the shape of the world communist revolution, it decides that Rhodesia is not as important as Vietnam and necessary motions are mechanically executed throughout the world. It makes the decision not on the merits of issues involved, for without a doubt the case of Rhodesia is as clear as daylight and of Vietnam the murk of dusk, but on the possibility of where the weight of force or organisation can be brought to bear with success.

How totally spontaneity and joy have gone out of the world communist revolution is evident from the way Indian communists of both hues are continually organizing demonstrations over Vietnam or the atom and against America. A mighty people's upheaval next door in East Bengal and the repression with which a military dictatorship seeks to smother it do not move them. The possibility that a people and country artificially divided may be reunited does not put joy into them. They are strange beings with shrivelled and organised souls.

Why concentrate on the communists; in its other shapes, the revolution in India has been equally soulless in respect of the East Pakistan and much else. No other political party has chosen to assemble or demonstrate for the people of East Pakistan, for these crows have been busy spying where their votes lie in the general election to come. These craven souls would not get the votes either, for if the vote must go to men of calculation and lacking in vision, the government party qualifies best.

Not to talk of issues across the frontier, those nearer home, such as devaluation, which occasioned spates of written statements from oppositionists decrying it as the most ignoble event of the two decades of freedom, have melted away like a surface ripple. Not one mass meeting has been held against devaluation in the capital, although it is now a month since the government decided to commit the crime. There have been several on Vietnam or cow killing or minor

aspects of property. Revolutionaries are not taking up, not to talk of the question of property as such, just one major aspect of property, that of house-rent. House-rents in India are nine times as high as in Russia and communist Europe, for there they average a rupee to the square metre and here a rupee to the square foot. Average incomes here, particularly low incomes, are one-sixth of those in Russia. One-sixth, the income and nine-fold, the rent, and yet the people do not rise, the youth does not stir, for the arrested revolution has acquired a craven soul.

Gandhism has become worse than sterile; it has acquired a priapist mind. It talks of unilateral disarmament; it kills with proxy power and borrowed weapons. The challenge of poverty at home does not affect its smugness; the challenge of inequality and war among nations is beyond its voluble but mindless comprehension.

If the earlier can be fused with its later development, a movement which could well be lumped together under the label of international Gandhism has come into existence. On the one hand is the non-communist, peace movement with war resisters at one extreme and pledge-signers at the other. On the other hand is the world federalist movement with minimalists who simply want the shell of a world government at one end and maximalists desirous of world conventions and disobedience if necessary at the other.

The non-communist peace movement has a long past, in patches even uplifting. At one time, the Peace Pledge Union in England counted more than ten million signers, but they all melted away at the German assault. The march to Aldermaston, an atomic war establishment, and back to Trafalgar Square showed promise and has become an annual event. But it has begun to dissolve, even before an assault of any kind has been mounted. The people of England are not slow to see that hortatory movements which sign away frontiers in a world which is cut up into nations are unreal. A man lives within his skin, his frontier, and must needs protect it against attack. So long as men live within nations, they must need protect their national skin, the frontier, against attack. The Gandhian peace movement has been too oblivious of existing realities. It has dreamed up a situation of

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prayer, and therefore devoid of revolution. In its shape of civil rights for Negroes in America, international Gandhism may well claim to have registered some success, for it has built its teeth into reality. But one can hardly call it a revolution, at least yet.

If the peace movement has tended to wish away national frontiers, the world federalist movement has been far too much aware of them. Like all moral movements without a sound political, economic and social base, it has been very extravagant in its desires and aims. At one time, it sought to build the Atlantic Union, almighty on our planet. Then, it widened its desires into a world union and spread into many branches and sprouts. One wanted existing governments to accept the plan and constitution of a world government and with that end in view to sponsor campaigns and assemblies. Another strove for acceptance by local legislatures of a constitution for world parliament and a world government with minimum powers to arise out of it. A third started enlisting world citizens and this agitation showed some kick, for the first citizen of the world tore up his national citizenship. A fourth began persuading towns and villages to declare themselves for the world. A fifth set about to campaign and organise the convention of a world parliament, if necessary, at the people's level and without help from national governments. Alone the fifth sprout bore within it the seed of great change, for the world convention might well have sparked off civil disobedience throughout the world against national sovereignty in much the same way as the French convention of the tennis court began the revolt against kingly sovereignty. But the seed is dead.

Today, all the world over is spread the litter of these earlier campaigns. Honest men are busy cyclostyling or printing sheets and mailing them to select addresses. They collect messages from men of renown and print them in a manner befitting the particular celebrity. They probably hold this or that annual convention. How much devoted labour and money goes into these incestuous campaigns for one or another type of world federalism is anybody's guess. But they are all hibernating, because they mistakenly imagine they can form a world government out of national governments, which is a contradiction in terms. If sovereignty resides within national frontiers, how does

it or any portion of it leap outside of them. A worthy and strong nucleus alone can attract such a leap. This cannot be any existing national government. This cannot be any United Nations or League comprising governments with one of them or a group trying to rule. This can only be a parliament elected directly by the peoples of the world with regional weightages, whose government responds to the challenge of inequality within nations and without.

The sole hope for unequal and warring nations lies in the search for peace through equality and equality through peace. Both searches are of decisive significance, and neither is wholly the consequence of the other. The seeker of peace may not be fully aware of the search for equality and may at the outset disdain it. The seeker of equality may be equally blinkered at the outset. Their devotion may be exclusive. The wise will not exclude such blinkered persons from the scope of their movement. They will hope that passage of time and sympathy will bring to both types of seekers greater consciousness. Action which may be somewhat crude and emphatically exclusive in the earlier stages will clarify itself with time and will become wisely revolutionary. Peace institutionalised is world parliament and world government. Equality institutionalised is acceptance of comparatively equal productivity to man's labour anywhere irrespective of national frontiers. When effort is made to wed to peace institutionalised to equality institutionalised, the revolution of our times will have emerged.

The Euro-American peoples have greater understanding for peace and federalism and they possess resources for worldwide campaigns and travels. Afro-Asians, unable to meet effectively the challenge of poverty and inequality, which press on them more than on Euro-Americans, have not much understanding for peace and federalism. And yet to federate these various initiatives, whose framework is littered all over the world, and make them interpenetrate may well lead to creative situations. Mankind will be glad to be of help.

The revolution for equality has met a strange foe in one who was earlier its most virile adherent. Communism proudly proclaims today that it is not for equality. A little shame-faced for having been

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such a votary for equality and having now to explain the growing inequality and affluence in communist lands, communism loudly denies its own womb. One is tempted to ask if communism is inequality, or, is it neither equality nor inequality. The revolution for equality must run its own course, hoping that time would help communism rectify its errors. True enough that equality can never perhaps be wholly or perfectly realised. But equality is more an urge than its total fulfilment. It will always have to overcome blocks. Some of these will occasionally prove difficult or well neigh impossible. But the urge must ever come on anew to take up the battle again.

A ray of hope appeared in India around ten years ago. This was the theory of permanent civil disobedience. The theory was correct. In practice, after the first years, it has proved to be, a damp squib, at least so far. To combine permanent civil disobedience with permanent democracy and elections and debate has proved difficult. More often than not, the practice of either is halting, reserved and crooked. While undergoing a jail term or worse during disobedience to tyranny, the mind turns to elections and their organisation and

the wish to secure release through bail or compromise becomes insistent. While arguing an issue out in its fullness and when at a loss to answer the opponent, the civilly disobeying democrat is inclined to clinch the issue by referring to the extraneous argument of struggle and sacrifice. It is not so easily open to man to follow two paths at the same time, to give total devotion to the path he is treading and to switch to the other when occasion so demands. When men argue not with a view to dazzle or to make talking points, although some spiced styles are necessary to dramatise issues, debate is honestly democratic and enlightens the people. This requires of the democratic debater, study and thinking. Similarly, civil disobedience requires faith and patience, willingness to toil and suffer without tasting the joy of victory and to lay the head down with peace in the soul, should the time for it arrive before the cause has won. The combined theory of civil disobedience and democratic debate looks forward to a future when the reigning tyranny will topple in a climax of mass disobedience or electoral victory. The revolution for equality and peace is alive, although hibernating.

*[July-August 1966]*

## **Civil Liberties and The Criminal Procedure Code**

Chapter V of the Criminal Procedure Code, from sections 106 to 146, supposedly makes provision for the prevention of crime. But these sections of the Code put the ordinary citizen without money or power or status so completely at the mercy of the executive that instead of preventing crime, they have become instruments for turning ordinary people into criminals. While the police can haul up anyone under Section 107 for alleged apprehension of a breach of peace, or under Section 109, for being without any ostensible means of livelihood, sections like 144 can make democratic functioning impossible. Off and on, we hear a cry raised against the Defence of India Rules or the Preventive Detention Act in Parliament or outside in newspapers or conferences. But one seldom hears anyone protesting against the above sections of the Cr. P.C. The reason probably is that

the D.I.R. or the P.D. Act directly affected the vocal middle classes, particularly those in opposition to the government, while sections of the Criminal Code are usually employed against ordinary innocent people. This is yet another example of the basic split in India's social mind, in which a denial of human rights to the ordinary people reduced to the level of animals is not considered worth paying any attention. On a conservative estimate, at least a third or even more of the jail population in India at any one time consists of people arrested under any of these preventive sections, not because they have acted against the law, but because some police officer states that he thinks a particular person is likely to commit a crime. For the ordinary people, imprisonment without any offence has existed for nearly a hundred years and still exists, two decades after the people became free and adopted



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a democratic constitution.

It may be said that people arrested under these sections are produced in courts of law, and are punished only through a judicial process. But the Indian judicial system is so weighted in favour of property and status that an ordinary citizen stands almost no chance. The tens of million people, who are without regular employment, have no status in the eyes of the law. It is not uncommon for a person to be in jail as an undertrial for months or even years for an alleged offence for which he could be sentenced for a few weeks at the most.

The fact of the matter is that the Congress government eager to establish itself as the successor to British rule, rather than to the popular revolution, blindly accepted all the oppressive laws that the British had framed to keep the Indian people in bondage. Section 144 of the Cr.P.C. is an example of it. Arguing in the Allahabad High Court against the constitutional validity of this section, Rammanohar Lohia made a guess that when the Cr.P.C. was framed in 1888, this section did not include the clause about public tranquillity. On making a reference, the court found Lohia's guess to be correct. When the criminal code was framed, the British rulers had aimed at restricting the people's freedom of movement and association in the context of internal, non-political trouble. The mind that conceived this section, probably also conceived a set-up wherein internal dissensions were to be kept alive, but not allowed to go out of control, so that the British could remain as impartial protectors and just rulers. But when popular political movements began to take shape, the same law was amended to include political situations as well.

The Congress governments have in many ways tried to emulate the British example, and in the process identified themselves with the class of 'Sahibs' which the British had nurtured for the support of their raj. This class has now increased to about 10 million, against the 490 million ordinary people reduced to a life of dumb animals. These dumb millions continue to be oppressed by laws like section 107 or 109, and sometimes political opponents of the government are also roped in, and the vocal elements of society do not

bother, for the ruling sahibs are above the operation of these laws.

On the other hand, there has grown to staggering proportions another type of crime, organised crime, in which a section of the 'sahibs' also are involved. Financial swindles and manipulations are one such crime. Smuggling is another. We all know about the smuggling of gold, in which the internal price of about Rs. 140 per ten grams as against Rs. 80 in the international market, leads to the smuggling into India of crores of rupees worth of gold every year. What is not so well known is the smuggling out of opium, a kilogram of which brings Rs. 40 to the farmer, but is sold for Rs. 400 to the customer in India, and for Rs. 900 abroad. These fantastic prices are themselves an open invitation to smuggling.

On a conservative estimate, anywhere from Rs. 50 crores to Rs. 100 crores worth of opium is sold either illegally in India, or smuggled out.

In the running of these rackets, there is an alliance of the criminal with the police and the big men—big in terms of money and power. As a consequence, by and large, the criminals are able to carry on their work unhindered while the other parties in the alliance receive a cut.

A non-Congress government should, on one hand, repeal laws like those in Chapter V of the Criminal Procedure Code. The ordinary citizens' liberty must not be at the mercy of a petty district police or administrative officer. Citizenship in itself should acquire a status in the eyes of law. The argument that reduction in the powers of the executive would lead to maladministration and disorder is wholly false and fallacious. On the contrary, a state with excessive powers invariably leads to a set-up in which the tendency is towards more and unlimited powers, while no problem is solved, and crimes continue to increase. In fact, no society can grow in a healthful way on the basis only or mainly of the coercive power of the state. The dynamics for growth and development can come only through free acceptance. And for that the ordinary small man's freedom should be secured.

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We believe that even for checking organised crime in which the big man is also involved, the state need not acquire any more powers. It could do with less. A state with limited powers, if no longer engaged mainly in oppressing the small man, would naturally

be expected to turn more vigilant eye to the organized racketeering, which corrupts not only our economy, but the society as a whole and hampers healthful growth.

*[January-February 1967]*

## **UPSC Examination**

A most fantastic situation prevails in India, unparalleled in the world. The Union Public Service Commission holds an examination for recruitment to the Indian Administrative Service every year. Out of a total of 20,000 candidates appearing in the examination, a bare hundred qualify for admission in the service; a few hundred more are later taken into various other central government services like, the Income Tax, Customs, Railways, Audits and Accounts etc. A hundred out of a 20,000! This social leprosy with its festering wounds and sores should make the people, their leaders and rulers, their educationists and sociologists, their economists and planners, their intellectuals and social workers sit up to find out what is wrong with our system and seek out remedies. But in India everything is accepted, taken for granted, so this curse too goes on. Instead of fighting it tooth and nail, this social malady, too, is allowed to go on, it is taking firm roots since independence. In no other civilized country, at any rate not in the Europe-American world would it ever be accepted.

But then, perhaps we are not civilized enough. In no other country there is greater disparity in income and expenditure, between the top elite and the rest of the people. Such a yawning gulf is there between one crore, the top elite, western educated or western-imitation-educated, the Bura Sahibs as we call them in India; and the rest, the forty-nine crores living an animalish life, herded together with a meal of below minimum subsistence day. One crore earning and spending anywhere between hundred to fifty

thousand rupees a day; and forty nine crores anywhere, between three annas and five rupees a day. The top elite, the Bura Sahibs are Europe oriented in standard of living, but not in thinking, leading an unreal and hollow existence. The rest of the people are leading an animalish existence. This great gulf between these two classes, among other things, is the cause of this phenomenon: a hundred out of twenty thousand qualifying for the bureaucracy.

This brings us to the nature of bureaucracy in this country. It is the most inefficient, corrupt and at the same time the most arrogant and authoritarian in the world. This 'steel-frame' of the British administration which was transferred to Nehru along with the historic 'transfer of power' on 15th August, 1947 was, transferred with all the arrogance and authoritarianism of the departed empire, which was once necessary for the preservation and glorification of the empire. The present bureaucracy took those vices and added their native ones, of being inefficient and corrupt, the current vice of the ruling party. Arrogance and authority, once necessary for the consolidation and continuation of an empire over which the sun never set, is now being used for the consolidation and preservation of a system and its privileged members which has lost all rationale for existence. This arrogance and authority is sustained by the fact that a hundred, out of a twenty thousand emerge as successful candidates for the top men in the bureaucracy every year. A rude and thorough shake up, whatever form it may take, can cure the disease and restore normalcy in the system.

*[January-February 1967]*

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### **Elite and Expenditure**

A revealing news item has come in the Hindustan Times of June 11, 1967 indicating what it costs to have a large cabinet.

“Maintenance of the union cabinet costs the exchequer Rs. 22.23 lakhs annually. This amount does not include expenditure on travelling by ministers.

“According to the latest estimate, the salaries of the ministers, ministers of state and deputy ministers account for Rs. 12.87 lakhs, sumptuary allowances to Rs. 1.25 lakhs, electricity and water charges to Rs. 1.22 lakhs, rent of residential buildings to Rs. 3.43 lakhs, rent of furniture and electric appliances to 3.44 lakhs.

“The cabinet ministers draw Rs. 9.67 lakhs annually as salary and as perquisites. The amount in the case of ministers of state is Rs. 7.74 lakhs and of deputy ministers Rs. 4.81 lakhs. Ministers of state, (except four) and deputy ministers do not get any sumptuary allowances.

“The monthly breaking in the case of a cabinet minister is: salary Rs. 2,250, sumptuary allowance Rs. 500, rent of building Rs. 650, electricity and water charges Rs. 200 and rent of furniture and electric appliances Rs. 642.

“This amount does not include expenditure on travelling, the use of staff car, secretarial and other staff provided to ministers, to enable them to discharge their official duty, and medical facilities.

“For the purpose of income-tax the value of the rent free accommodation is determined at 12.5 per cent of the salary and the value of water and electricity as 6.25 per cent of the salary.”

The above news item reported in The Hindustan Times cannot be taken as giving the correct expenditure as it contains only notional rates in calculating the house-rent, water charges and other facilities to the ministers. The facilities and the staff along with the attendants provided to those ministers and the security personnel that stand in waiting on the body of ministers even at their residences, numbering hundreds

of people also are to be taken into consideration along with their salaries and the other expenditure on them for their maintenance in calculating the expenditure on the cabinet.

Building rent being the notional rate is so insignificant in comparison to the present day market rate that in order to come to correct figures the market rate must be calculated, in which case the building may cost many times more than what is actually mentioned in the report.

If the expenditure without taking into account travelling by ministers, the use of staff car, the secretarial and other staff and the medical facilities, is reported to be Rs. 22.23 lakhs, what could be the real figure on the union cabinet when all these and other expenses are also added. It must be so huge an amount that a poor nation like India can never be able to bear in thirty to sixty years to come.

When the nation is to live on foreign aid no proper agricultural production in the offing, this huge expenditure running into crores on the maintenance of cabinet ministers cannot be in any way justifiable. This is one of the glaring examples of the upper class one per cent of the population of India appropriating the lion's share for themselves.

Neither has the government of India realised the magnitude of waste nor have the people become so strong as to force the ruling party to cut down all the wasteful expenditure of ministers, administrators, businessmen, company directors and the like to utilize the same on nation-building projects. Facilities to the ministers are so numerous and complicated to calculate that a common man can never come to know what those departmental expense accounts are and how they manage to spend under different departments. Bureaucracy helps them with clean audit. And even if one comes to know, these comforts and facilities are so tempting that after coming to the position where these are easily available one rarely thinks of the countervailing factors. The facilities and comforts corrupt the man who comes to that abode of heaven and reaching that abode itself is a great

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achievement; he forgets that he had been elected to that office by the poor people. He reaches a stage where he persuades himself to equate his occupying the office with doing good to the people.

So The Hindustan Times should calculate the expenditure on a more realistic basis, and report to the nation how much of our national wealth the ministers eat up.

[July 1967]

## **August Revolution: Twentyfifth Anniversary**

9th of August was and will always remain a people's event. 15th August was a state event. But, as yet, 15th August is celebrated with a lot of fanfare, for on that day the British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten shook hands with the Indian Prime Minister, and gave damaged freedom to a damaged country. 9th August 1942 expressed the will of the people—we want to be free, and we shall be free. For the first time after a long period in our history, crores of people expressed their desire to be free. In some places it was done with great strength. One district, Ballia, became free for some time. The district collector was arrested. Hundreds of police circles became free. But the will was short-lived, though strong. It did not have lasting intensity. The day our nation acquires a tenacious will, we shall be able to face the world. Any how, this is the 25th anniversary of 9th August 1942. It should be celebrated well. Its 50th anniversary perhaps will be celebrated in such a way that 15th August will be forgotten, and even 26th of January will be put into the shade, or will only equal it. 26th January and 9th August are events of the same class. One expressed the will to freedom and the other the will to fight for it.

Among all national days, two are best known in the world. One is 14th July of France. On that day there was no declaration, no handshake, no celebration. On that day the people of Paris, the capital city of France, had come out in lakhs, had broken the jail called the Bastille and had freed prisoners of the French King lodged there. The other day is 4th July. On that day the American people, fighting against British imperialism for their freedom, had declared their independence. Both of these are people's days and not a state day like 15th of August.

Some might think that this distinction is merely academic, of interest only to the scholar. But it

indicates the roots of the tree. The writer of these lines had realised within three or four months that the tree which Mahatma Gandhi had planted but could not nurture, had turned sterile and was going to rot. He had also written to Mahatma Gandhi about it in a letter. But even he did not realise the depth of this rot. Such lack of awareness is inexcusable. Those in politics should be fully alert.

After independence was achieved, the bureaucracy and the police remained unchanged. Other things also continued as they were, and some people realised that. But attention should have been paid to one aspect of the bureaucracy. During the British regime the bureaucracy sustained the status quo and was meant to suppress the people and secure privileges for the officers. The situation did not improve after independence. It became worse. There must have been some good men in the bureaucracy. But they were ignored. The bureaucrat who was given the highest position in free India was the man who as the British agent in Washington had given all sorts of arguments to justify the death in jail of Kasturba, Mahatma Gandhi's wife, in 1942. The man was Mr. Girija Shankar Bajpai, whom Anglophiles like to call Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai. There must have been a spiritual kinship between Mr. Bajpai and Mr. Nehru. How otherwise could such a thing happen. It was not a lone incidence. It has been a process which still continues. Truthful, honest, and patriotic members of the bureaucracy are continually suppressed, their good feelings are repressed, and those who are cruel, who keep the country weak and make the government officer-oriented instead of people-oriented, rise and make gains.

The meaning of practical skill must soon be understood in this country. Who is more practical,



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a Mansingh or a Pratap? Among contemporaries, Mansingh is praised and Pratap is considered obstinate. After death, Pratap is worshipped while Mansingh is condemned. We think that a Pratap should also be more careful, and when a Mansingh comes

to him, treat him as a respected guest. But there is no doubt that so long as the country does not learn to appreciate Pratap in his life time, it can't acquire the strength of determined will and resolution which make a nation great.

[August 1967]

## **To be Somebody**

To be somebody or to do something is the question in our country, at least that ought to be the question. So long has philosophy and religion ennobled the idea of pure or excellent being in this country, that the idea of doing has been relegated to a secondary if not an unpleasant role. Let a man cleanse himself of ignoble ideas and emotions. Let him free himself from the base passions of arrogance, envy or selfish expansion, in short, climbing. Let him try to achieve purity of being, for, otherwise, the cycle of rebirth cannot be broken.

A few Yogis may have attained this ideal and in fact some types of social organisation in the past may have in some measure achieved success. Today, this idea of excellent or pure being stays on paper for almost all our countrymen, but they have not as a result taken to the idea of doing. Somehow excellence of being has degenerated into the desire to achieve status, to be a big shot, to be soft spoken, polite but to intrigue and manoeuvre, not to make enemies or at least too many of them, if possible, to do nothing, but to hold on to one's position and climb.

All politics in this country after the achievement of Independence have suffered from this disease of inaction. Government and opposition consist almost entirely of men who would rather be something than do something. That is why the usual propensity of the Indian to stop at making declarations has received further impetus. Talk is the essential question. To make a declaration of what has to be done in future is the essential point. Then, to quarrel about these declarations that have no meaning for the present and that relate to a future that will never come becomes a main activity of politicians. The people too watch this play with intense interest. They have become used to life of negation but continual talk.

For 20 long years Congress ministers had specialised at this skill of acquiring positions and bettering their fortunes without doing anything at all or at least not much. This evil inheritance fell to the lot of non-Congress ministers. On the whole, they have maintained that tradition. They have sometimes had to carry out measures, which departed somewhat from old established routines. But they did not stretch out their necks too long or too often. To continue in the position that they have come to occupy became their main occupation.

We are no cliff-hangers. What is the use of an existence in which one just manages to keep alive without being able to do anything at all. We would much rather that these non-Congress ministries engage in action that would mean a break with the past, that would change conditions, that would destroy old relationships in society and re-fashion them. This would involve taking of risks. If in the process of this activity, non-Congress ministries suffer a temporary defeat either at the hands of assembly manoeuvres or because of manipulations at the centre, this will itself be an instrument of progress.

Cliff-hanging over a long period must inevitably bring disaster. The will and capacity to take risks in the cause of social and economic progress may mean a temporary failure but will inevitably bring ultimate success.

Some kind of voodoo exists in our politics today. On the one hand, non-Congress ministries and their parties in the various states are afraid of losing power and bringing the Congress Party back into seats of authority and on the other these very parties are nervous about attempting a combination at the

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centre. One of the reasons why they are so chary of combining at the centre may well be the desire not to annoy or anger the central Congress command, on whose mercies these parties think they have to depend for their continued existence in the states. This must inevitably cripple their capacity to do anything worthwhile in the states.

Furthermore, this fear of Congress coming back to power in this state or that state, when it is so very much in power at the centre, deserves to be psychiatrically examined. In the first place, why should the Congress come back to power? A number of combinations and permutations of totally new types have emerged. Secondly, if the Congress Party comes back to power as a result of the non-Congress parties attempting to achieve a radical transformation of society, that power shall indeed be, exceedingly short-lived. The Congress will earn further infamy or loss of strength. At any subsequent election or Parliamentary encounter, this Party may well be reduced to an insignificant existence.

Are these non-Congress parties capable of taking any risks in the months to come, even if they have not shown any heartwarming indications of it in the past few months? Leaders of these various parties have shown that they lack both conviction and will. But, not unoften have the rank and file of these various parties demonstrated their capacity to risk their lives or at least to suffer. Such occasions have indeed been rare. Most of the time, the rank and file have been silent spectators. But just those rare occasions, when they have striven hard for the success of a scheme or suffered imprisonment for one cause or another hold out a promise that the situation may still change.

What would be the best form of attack on the present ugliness? We do not think that the time has come for a new and effective party to be born. We also do not think that existing parties can singly achieve national re-construction. Even a crippled combination is not in sight, for although such a combination may not be able to achieve anything enduring or spectacular, it will have at least inspired the people with the new faith and hope that the Congress Party is out also at centre. There seems to be only one way out.

The people must try to build single aim organisations. Such organisations should be open to everybody. No particular party should be able to command them. The leadership of these organisations should, in significant measure, come from those who do not belong to any of the existing parties. But a majority, however, of this leadership will have to come from existing political parties which find it possible to subscribe to their aim.

Quite obviously, one such single aim organisation is and must be the fix or regulate prices conference. This conference has in the past had two annual meetings. But it is moribund in the last few years. In fact one may well forget its past. One could write on a clean slate. A difficulty will naturally arise as to how to fix prices.

Some will say that expansion of the public sector and state trading is the remedy. Some others will maintain that removal of controls and freeing of enterprise is the remedy. To us, these controversies appear irrelevant and even stupid in the Indian context. Business and bureaucracy have both failed. To trust either to do the job by itself would be the rankest folly. They have learnt each other's vices and whatever virtues the public sector or the private sector have in other countries, have more or less been given up in our country.

A main remedy is to attack the rot where it started. Excessive expenditure of the top crust, of just one per cent of the population, of 5 millions out of 500 millions, is where the rot started. To this must be added the ancillary rot of providing for relations, hangers on, and caste men and in some cases people who would otherwise create trouble as a result of unemployment. Any fix prices conference will therefore have to be at the same time a reduce excessive expenditure conference. We must make clear that bureaucracy spends not alone its salaries but as a general rule 10 times more by way of various amenities than what it obtains as salary. Aside from certain relationship which sale price must have to costs including transport or agricultural to industrial price, the entire population must experience the joy of equal scarcity in at least one significant commodity.

An irrigation volunteers conference could be another such single aim organisation. True enough,

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between the two millstones of indefensible luxury of the few and the ill nourishment and indolence of the many, volunteer work has just been ground out of existence. Among the many offences of the past twenty years is the crime that all work of national reconstruction has been brought in terms of profits and wages and similar payment. Nevertheless, volunteering is the pre-condition of national uplift. In the course of irrigation volunteering, questions of conflict relating to land redistribution, money-lenders' interest, minimum wages, poor man's homestead and the like will have to be brought to the fore, as also the central problem of our agriculture namely, simultaneous fixing of minimum production per acre and provision of minimum requirements for the purpose and confiscation of land in case of failure.

We will now only list single aim conferences, some of which have a record but have become moribund and therefore, all of which have to be started from scratch. Thirdly, the Angrezi Hatao Conference, fourthly, the End Caste Conference, fifthly, the Hindu-Muslim approximation and Indo-Pak Re-union Conference. About this fifth organisation, let it be only said that Hindu-Muslim approximation and Indo-Pak re-union are two sides of the same coin and one is impossible of attainment without the other. A sixth single aim organisation could simply be the Save Country Conference.

The country is beset with perils all round, disintegration almost all along the frontier in which foreigners also play a part and disintegration over the length and breadth of the country because of the rise of separatist nationalisms. Certain major disintegrations due to caste or language or income differences have already been shown as the scope of specific organizations like the End Caste Conference. Here we are dealing with the general peril and that can best be tackled by a Save Country Conference. A major peril certainly is the bureaucracy and the police, its tyranny on the one hand and corruption on the other. No one dares touch it, for the usage of many centuries of foreign rule has sanctified it. Once the remedy of abolition of collectors was suggested and, if that appears to be too drastic a remedy at the first shot, the people and the youth particularly must be organised to tame and curb the bureaucracy and

the police in some of its practices.

The word 'conference' should not be misled. It is not a mere annual gathering. It is a day by day affair. The word is preferred because no strict or elaborate constitution is necessary. These various conferences here suggested are an integrated whole arising out of the concept of equality through prosperity and prosperity through equality. But all the people may not be able to accept the whole. Some who will passionately devote their energies to the abolition of caste may have blind spots in regard to language and income differentiation and the reverse is also true. That is why these single aim organisations have been suggested in order that the maximum number of people may be mobilised.

The editors of the journal will be happy to receive letters from people wishing to organise one conference or another and activity centering around it in their own area. Those who are already officebearers of existing political organisations at whatever level will do well to assist these conferences not as office-bearers but as active members. Membership of a political party should, however, be no bar to officering in such a conference. These letters will be sifted by the editors of the journal and passed on to people competent enough to deal with them and further the activity. We must warn against the kind of action that leads to nothing, the issuing of statements to the press or assembling of messages of the allegedly great. What we need is person to person talk, house to house campaigning, local meetings, discussions and debates, which culminate in mass meetings or processions, Indolence has so affected our politics that the culmination takes place without adequate preparation. We hope that these various conferences will soon be set in motion and that they will succeed either in freshening up existing political parties or in time help build up a new and mighty political organisation that will change the face of the country.

[October 1967]

## *Some Historical Letters*

To Prof. H.J. Laski

Central Jail  
Agra  
(No date)

Dear Prof. Laski,

“As the newspapers of my country have not yet learnt to cut the question hour in your Parliament, I have to trouble you over something you would know nothing about. The Under-Secretary for State, India, Mr. Arthur Henderson, has said that I have made unfounded allegations in respect of my detention in the Lahore Fort. “I doubt if the Under-Secretary knows what my accusation is. The amazing thing is the repose with which the British Government has asked my country to dismiss my accusation when, in practice. It has made some very awkward though successful attempts at suppressing its publication. Aside from odd bits, my country does not to this day know of what I have accused the Government. “While still a prisoner in the Lahore Fort, but after I was allowed to write to the High Court, I made a Habeas Corpus application in December 1944, and supplemented it with somewhat fuller details in January 1945. When the hearing was held, the Judge ordered it to be secret. The Government had earlier taken an added precaution and banned, under one Ordinance or another, all reference in the newspapers to this Habeas Corpus case. At the hearing, the Judge declared his intention to go into the merits of my application and I was examined on oath, and they were on the way to enquiring into my accusation, when he accepted the Indian Government’s plea that I was under orders of transfer to another province and the proceedings were scotched. In the order dismissing my applications, the Judge also felt that the ‘sole motive’ of the India Government in detaining me was not to torture me. I regret I am unable to give you the exact wording of this strange order. I may add that I was arrested in Bombay in May 1944, and kept there for a month. If it was the Government’s intention to secure the King’s peace, that could have been very well achieved by continuing to hold me in the Bombay jail or taking me to another as now, in my home province, the United Provinces. “In respect of prisoners ill-treated in the Lahore Fort, the Punjab Government has often amused the country

by passing the responsibility on to the Government of India. The British Under-Secretary has now almost passed it back to the Punjab Government. So far as it concerns me, the Government of India is the culprit, for I have been its prisoner in law as in fact and recurrent orders for my ill-treatment emanated from it, and the Punjab Government is an associate in crime. “No Government in your country could so interfere with Justice or shirk a criminal charge against it. On my transfer to this jail, I made an application to the Federal Court, but the Chief Justice of India felt that he had no jurisdiction of any sort. After several months’ delay, I have succeeded in contacting my lawyer Mr. Madanlal Pittie, but I do not know how much longer it would be before he is supplied with copies of my applications to the Lahore High Court. These were seized from me on my transfer from Lahore to Agra.”

### **Torture in Lahore Fort**

“I do not intend to detail to you my rather long experience in the Lahore Fort. Should your Parliamentary Party or any of its members be genuinely interested, they could easily obtain the two applications to the Lahore High Court and the third to the Federal Court as court documents. I must add that these applications are a definite understatement of what I had to go through. In the first place, I have avoided mention of vulgarities and, in the second, the short scope of a court application and inadequate talents would have made me sound dramatic, if I had tried to communicate the dull but ugly cruelty as I felt it. I had hoped that the hearing in the court would bring it out more fully. I would here indicate that I was ill-treated in one way or another for over four months, that I was kept awake day after day, night after night, the longest single stretch running into ten days; and that, when I resisted the police in their efforts to make me stand, they wheeled me round on my manacled hands on the matted floor. It took me some time to learn as a physical feat, and a lesson I should like never to forget, that no pain is actually unbearable; it has either been unbearable in the past, but then the man is insensible or dead, or it appears to be unbearable as an imagined state of the next moment. It is true that I was not beaten nor were needless driven under toe-nails. I do not wish to make comparisons. A European, more than another, with his better sensibility to the human body and if he is not dulled with horrors, may realise



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what I underwent. But, beating and bastinadoing to death or near about it and forcing the human mouth to considerable atrocities—these and worse have also taken place. I will give you one or two instances, as readily come to my mind. One man swallowed poison in a police outpost of the Bombay Province, another threw himself down a well in a United Provinces jail; and of those who died through beating or illtreatment after their arrest, there is no checking up except that in one Orissa jail out of over 300 in the country, the number of deaths among political prisoners rose to around 29 or 39—I cannot exactly recollect. “My country has gone through a great deal in the past three and a half years. Men have been shot dead by the thousand, some out of moving vehicles as a test of marksmanship or to instil terror, women have been strung up on trees and lacerated or raped on the public road, and houses razed in the Lidice or Becassi fashion, though not as intensive in a single area but in the total vaster by the score. This is not surprising. Once it is understood that the country was reconquered in terror and vengeance, the fact that nothing more massive than the August Rebellion is known to modern history explains itself. Three to four million died in the created famine. Already there was beating of an another kind fifteen years ago. My father, who died in a bus two weeks back, was beaten unconscious in the wholly peaceful raid of the Dharsana Salt Depot. Aside from my regret that we had not enough time together, it is as well that he is freed from successive imprisonments and worse in his own country, and from the oppressive sense of a nation’s suffering that goes with these.”

### **Orderly Rule Gone**

“I have given you the national picture to fit into it my own experience as very small bit. The British Labour Movement, as any other socialist movement, has been erring, because it views foreign rule on the ground of democracy or fascism or other political forms at home. If pre-conceived notions are cast away, it is just possible that the British system of ruling my country may be found to be slightly worse than any other, or it may be slightly better. That would depend on one’s understanding of facts. No one would deny that British rule in Hindustan has, as a young brute, been heinously atrocious. It is again becoming so, now that it is declining into an aging ogre. The

middle period of secured and comparatively orderly rule is gone beyond recall. I do not know if it is at all possible to prevent or even to mitigate the ugly doings of this ogre. But this I know that the British Labour Movement will not even have made an attempt, if it theorises foreign rule on any other view than that of bloody youth and crueller decline, with the middle period, at any rate in my country, dead and gone. “In face of all this, the Under-Secretary has had the brass to call me a liar. All Governments, as known to everybody, tell lies on the plane of high policy, but when a Government does so at the level of persons and minor things, it must be wholly mucked. Isn’t there one man in the Parliamentary Labour Party who can bring this out? Should it be said that the doers of these atrocities are in large numbers my own countrymen in British employ? I do not deny that there is a great deal of rottenness in my country and that is what makes it so galling, but the Englishman thinks he would not be here unless he made use of it.”

### **Miss Usha Mehta’s Case**

“Not wanting to release me, the Under-Secretary has also said that the Government is considering the question of my prosecution. I am now under detention for over a year and a half, apart from my imprisonment of two years early in the war, and if the Government has not yet completed considering this question, it may as well go on doing so indefinitely. There is a young woman in a Bombay jail, Miss Usha Mehta, perhaps the only woman political in the jails of that province, who is doing a term of four years for running a freedom radio. I am not quarrelling with her sentence, although, had this young woman of rare attainment and rare courage been Spanish or Russian, your countrymen would have glamorised her into a heroine. She was held under detention for a year and for several months more as an under-trial, so that, if this judicial lapse had not taken place, she might have well completed her term and be out now. I might add that her trial and that of her colleagues was banned from the newspapers. “Of the eight to ten thousand political prisoners, a large number of whom are classified as ordinary criminals, almost the entire lot are held in prison, aside from the inherent inequity of their sentence or detention owing to one lapse or another even under the existing law. A few days back, ten persons serving life terms were released,

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because the Allahabad High Court found they had been convicted on the evidence of an ‘unmitigated liar’.

### **Jayaprakash Narayan**

“Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, General Secretary of the Socialist Party, is now under detention for over two years, apart from his earlier conviction and detention of nearly three years, and the India Government, on its own declaration, has been considering the question of his prosecution ever since his arrest. It will presumably go on considering the question, meanwhile holding him in prison. I do not know what kind of an answer Mr. Leopold Amery would have returned, had he been asked about my detention and presuming that he had still wanted to hold me in prison. I like to think that he would have taken his stand on the usurper’s unhedged power and would have just said that I was detained under the laws of the land, whatever they might be. That would have been better than a Labour Under-Secretary’s screening of a bad deed. “The Government is afraid of placing us on trial and it will continue to be so afrighted. Our trial may end up in its own trial. Except for the Indo-Russians, no one can possibly think that we have worked for Axis victory in intention or even in the unintended results of our deeds. In fact, Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan had wanted that an appeal be sent from the Freedom Press of this country to the British Socialist Movement, but I felt that there was not at that time a worthy enough head of the Movement nor any actively favourable element to whom such an appeal could be sent.”

### **A Vague Charge**

“Then the charge is levelled against us that we have tried to achieve our aim through violence. It is a vague charge and as such has no validity in law nor a place in any coherent political discussion. The drawing of the line between violence and nonviolence as a method of political endeavour is an essentially Indian beginning and is wholly distinct from the accepted opposition between constitutional and unconstitutional means. It must, therefore, await recognition, until, if at all, the Indian National Congress is able to create a State with its politics. Such an event will also radically alter the concept of Government and its obligations. Meanwhile, it does not lie in the mouth of the British Government or of any other, to throw about this charge, for the right to violence is, in the dominated

world, linked up with some of the finest efforts of man. If I were to follow the British Prime Minister, Mr. Clement Attlee, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, I would have to call it the sacred right to violence. For the rest, the Indian Penal Code is drastic enough, more drastic than any now prevalent. There is ghastly provision in it against the political kind of killing, or the very vaguest association with it, or sedition, or the mere owning of arms. I have not been put up for trial on any of these counts, nor the many hundreds, who have been detained almost throughout the war and are still in prison several months after the last fascist was let out in your own country. In lending the smallest countenance to Government’s plea that everybody still in prison is a Socialist and advocate of violence, the British Socialist is deliberately enabling the British Fascist in this country to work out his lawless ire against the Indian Socialist. “If Mr. Stephen Davies, a member of your Parliamentary Party, thought it worthwhile to question the Under-Secretary about me he should also have acquired necessary information to bring out through supplementary how inept and unworthy the answer was. Questions asked in a hurry and in pursuit of an unpleasing duty or to create illusion are worse than no questions at all. For the present, at any rate, I have little desire for release and there is no urgency of any sort whatever. The British Government is welcome to hold me in prison as long as it lasts in this country. But the fact remains that there was not one man in your Parliamentary Party who could tell the Secretary with facts that he was lying, that he has not so far, nor shall, put me up for trial, that he did his habitual screening to make my detention more palatable to the stupid. “All writing from a slave country to the ruler’s land is largely ineffectual, and wearies, but I hope you have not asked yourself why I have not addressed this letter to your Parliamentary Party.”

Please accept my warm greetings.

Yours sincerely,

Rammanohar Lohia.

(From *The Price of Liberty*,  
Edited by Yusuf Meharally)

## *Some Historical Letters*

To Acharya J.B. Kripalani

P/410, Lake Temple Road,  
Rash Behari Avenue P.O.,  
Calcutta 29.

10-7-1947.

Dear Rashtrapati,

Permit me to write to you on the subject of such sections of our population as are claiming to be minorities and have even introduced a separatist element in their claims. In particular I wish to write about Christians, specially Catholics, Nepalis and the Adibasis. These together form nearly 10 per cent of our population. They have in various degrees all-India organizations and all-India policies. Unless we too prepare to treat this problem on the all-India level, we will probably be faced soon enough with a new and major obstacle to the building up of our nation. I will first present to you nature of the problem. It is possible that the cases that I have come up against may have differently interpreted. But that would not take away from the urgency or the serious character of the problem. Such Christians as operate on the all-India level either through the Congress or their own organisations are generally protestants and although there is much to be done with regard to the mass of them, they are on the whole not very much subject to foreign influences. But the Catholics are a different story. The Catholic Church is under the control of Rome. Through the various church organisations, schools and colleges, foreign influences work subtly but very effectively and sometimes openly. In addition, the Portuguese in India through Goa exercise an effective control over the Catholics. Nevertheless a considerable number of nationalist Catholics have been working in their own limited spheres and in recent months there has been an increase in their number and also their zeal. But in the absence of any systematic Congress policies and programme, encouragement is often given knowingly or unknowingly by Congressmen to the unnational and reactionary sections among the Catholics. I would here mention the case of Dr. Alban D'Souza, whom the Bombay Congress has elevated to be Catholic representative for the Constituent Assembly, Bombay

Corporation and such like. Dr. D'Souza is a complete reactionary on such issues as those of Portuguese India or of the need to bring Catholics into the main stream of our national life. The acceptance by the Congress of such a man as its spokesman inevitably leads to a great deal of confusion and weakening. It may be that internal stresses within the Congress are a reason for such selections. Perhaps any other Catholic acceptable to the masses may be more independent minded and those in control of the Bombay Congress may not feel quite safe with him. But then such considerations if at all they are present of any other are dangerous. The Congress should be prepared to lose a seat rather than to encourage reaction. And in any case there is no question of losing a seat, I know the Bombay Catholics as well as any other non-Catholic and I am perfectly behind him would be able to beat everybody else, provided he did not have to oppose the Congress.

The Nepalis have long been a considerable element in the Indian army and no doubt they are among the bravest in the world. And yet they have until recently hardly been touched by any kind of national pride or awareness. The All-India Gurkha League which was founded during the war had as one of its aims recruitment to the army. This organisation, in addition to the circumstances attending its birth, has chosen to play on the communal sentiment. It is trying to give the Nepalis of Darjeeling and elsewhere a separatist attitude. Its leader, Dumber Singh Gurung, is widely known to have incited hills - men against plainsmen. And yet the Bengal Congress has once again chosen him as its nominee on the Constituent Assembly. I may here add that the Darjeeling Congress Committee had recommended two names of such Nepalis as have the Congress tradition behind them. Why the Bengal Congress should still have selected Dumber Singh Gurung is unexplainable except as a measure of some kind of power politics. I am not suggesting that the Gurkha League should at once be dropped by the Congress. All that I am suggesting is that a consistent policy be worked out with regard to these all-India Nepali organisations. The Adibasis are perhaps not yet an all-India problem. And yet there are certain common features in the life of Adibasis in the Central Province or Bihar or even Assam which may well be seized upon by an enterprising person or organisation so as to turn them into a major problem. Already they have

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become a problem in Bihar. And in the Naga territory also the separatist sentiment has been allowed to grow. The provincial Congress Committees are hardly in a position to cope with this problem in any just or effective way. Energetic effort must be made to satisfy the economic, social and cultural aspirations of these Adibasis. Otherwise they are threatening to become a political problem. In all these cases the Communists have thrown in their lot with the communalists and the foreign agents whether in the missions or the British political service. The All-India Congress Committee must set up a special department to deal with these enormous sections of our population. This department would collect all relevant materials and be the source for nationalising publicity. It will also command all the information necessary for formulating all-India policies and be a medium for putting them through. The Congress Governments or even the Government of India will hardly be competent to do all these. They may tackle the question in its economic or social aspects. But the Congress alone can deal with it in its political and cultural aspects. And even the economic and social measures to be systematic and effective will have at least in some measure to be proposed by such an A.I.C.C. department. Should you decide to set up such a department I will be able to suggest you some Catholic and Nepali and Adibasi names, of course only in the event that you have no such names in view. The head of this department must ofcourse be a member of the Congress Working Committee. Otherwise he will neither have the status nor the qualifications for formulating any all-India policies, much less of putting them through. In the first formulations of these all-India policies, it would

be advisable to invite a representative meeting of the group for which the policy is to be formulated. Thus for instance, the head of this department may invite representatives of the Nepali National Congress, the All India Gurkha League, the Gurkha Dhuka Nivaran Samiti and some other outstanding Nepalis in India. It would be known at this first meeting as to which elements in the future will be willing to pursue a national policy and also what measure of agreement is possible. Similar meetings may be arranged for the other groups. It may also be necessary to set up a training school for the purpose of training political and social workers for these various groups. Some of these workers may be recruited from the group among which they will be expected to work while some others not belonging to that group may select it for purely missionary reasons. It is remarkable how few non-Adibasis know any of the Adibasis' languages. I would not be surprised if there are more Europeans who know the Naga language in comparison to other non-Naga Indians. A new beginning must be made and soon. I need hardly add that work among these various sections would be spoiled if it is undertaken only as one-way traffic. It is a two-ways activity in which the Adibasis and others may have a lot to give to the general body of Indian thought and culture.

I pray you to treat this matter as serious and urgent.

Your sincerely,

Acharya J.B. Kripalani,  
President,  
Indian National Congress,  
6, Jantar Mantar Road,  
New Delhi

Sd/-  
Rammanohar Lohia

To Jayaprakash Narayan

My Dear Jayaprakash,

I have read the Prime Minister's letter twice which you showed to me. Nothing that I write is out of fleeting irritation. I do not remember having ever said anything "highly offensive and personal". But I am noting what flunkys might well consider interesting enough for the fear of a big man. (1) To have mounted the funeral carriage of Mahatma Gandhi was irreverence rarely suffered by a nation. If this act was the result of passing insanity, the doers should have absolved themselves through repentance and apology.

I have made use of this argument very exceptionally in three or four meetings. (2) The slogan and mantram to work hard in order to produce wealth is false and empty unless supported by an abundant supply of tools and machines. I have in this connection advised the Prime Minister to pull a riksha for a week in order to discover how hard the people are already working. (3) The Prime Minister and his Government bear the guilt of famine and blame should not be transferred to rain, clouds and the like. By refusing to prohibit all ejections of farmers after assumption of power the Prime Minister has caused a deficit of at least two million tons of food crops annually, by refusing to form a food army for cultivating waste lands another



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two million tons, and by refusing to redivide land and thus to encourage voluntary labour on minor irrigation another four million tons.(4) The Prime Minister's Relief Fund running into millions should be subject to Government or Parliamentary audit and should not be a matter of personal discretion as at present. The suspicion should not be permitted that this sum is being used for bolstering up the personal prestige of the Prime Minister. I have rarely used this argument in the hope that something would happen. Among the Prime Minister's critics I believe I am the least personal, but of course the bluntest and everything is reasoned out. I have never referred to any act which the Prime Minister does not do publicly and when once a relation did so in private conversation, I asked him to shut up and that was the end of it. I do not think that that could be said of the Prime Minister or at least of his entourage. They specialise in cheap suggestions and jokes. As to impersonal affairs of public policy, the Prime Minister is airy and vague and sits on the high perch of unreasoned abuse. He has often resorted to the vulgar expedient of denouncing me and praising you and others. The Prime Minister seems to think that I have no other business than to talk about him and his Government when I travel overseas. That is wholly untrue and I do not give them that importance. The records of my speeches and even private conversations are available. I do not think I have given more than 5% of my talking time, both public and private, to the India Government and the Prime Minister, and in most cases when I was pressed to do so. Two years ago I had adopted a different policy but I think that a person who believes in socialism and a world government cannot obviously draw such a line between home

speech and overseas speech as the Prime Minister seems to. I do not expect the Prime Minister and his stupid embassies abroad to show me any courtesy, however much that may hurt me, but I would not at the same time have them expect me to go calling on them. Either we should leave each other alone or they should observe protocol. Furthermore, when Norman Cousins acts like a McCarthy and ferreted some article I wrote in the Harijan in 1942 in order to prove that I was pro-Japanese, I wondered where he could have got the information from. The Ambassador was also kind enough to refer to my visit to the U.S. two weeks in advance and, before a meeting of Indian students in Chicago, as that man on his red wagon who will say and do things hurtful to India's cause. I can easily understand the stranglehold which the Prime Minister has on the country's organised opinion, on newspapers, commerce chambers, political parties and the like. A programme of personal vilification is easily let loose against a person and ideas are no longer debated. To go beyond capitalism and communism, beyond the Congress and the Communist Parties, beyond America and Russia, is to walk on a razor's edge and to suffer vilification at the hands both of the Prime Minister's entourage and the Communists. I should like to get rid of it.

Yours affectionately,

Sd/-

Rammanohar

1 March 1952  
Calcutta

To Dr. B R Ambedkar

Hyderabad  
10th December 1955

Dear Dr. Ambedkar,

The enclosed folders are self explanatory. "Mankind" would try earnestly to reveal the caste problem in its entirety. It would therefore, be very happy to have an article from you. It expects its articles to range between 2, 500 and 4,000 words. You are of course free to select your own subject. Should you select one or the other aspect of the caste system prevalent in our country, I would want you to write something which makes the people of India sit up, not alone in anger but also in wonderment. I

do not know whether the speeches I made about you during the parliamentary campaign in Madhya Pradesh were communicated to you by your Lieutenant who also travelled with me. Even now I very much wish that sympathy should be joined to anger and that you become a leader not alone of the scheduled castes, but also the Indian people.

The Zonal Study Camp would be very glad to have you in its midst. The accompanying list of subjects is meant to help. If you could give us a resume of your lecture in advance it would be good for the purposes of publication afterwards. We expect that a lecture lasting an hour would be followed up by a discussion of similar duration.

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I do not know whether the foundation conference of the Socialist Party would have any interest for you. Although you are not a member of the party the conference would want to have you as a special invitee. The conference will take up, among other subjects, problems relating to agricultural labour, artisans, women and parliamentary work, on any one of which you have something significant to say. If you feel like participating in the proceedings of the

conference in order to bring out one or another point. I trust that the conference will extend you special permission to do so.

With warm greetings.

Yours sincerely,

Rammanohar Lohia

To Ravela Somayya

Dear Ravela,

I can understand your irritation with me. But I have now read the book Humanist Politics by M.N. Roy which you sent me. I must disappoint you again. While I agree with some of the motivations of M.N. Roy, I am unable to understand his modes of action. In fact, I do not know whether there are any modes of action; they are not there at least in the book you have sent me. The sole concrete mode that M.N. Roy has suggested is to have some people throughout the country who would "begin the task of awakening the urge for freedom in the individuals" and who would tell people not to be carried away by election speeches but use their brains and who would teach people "to examine the promises that are made to them in a critical spirit". I fail to see how this work can be done by a group of people who stay outside of, and above, political parties. Even if such a group should come into existence, which is itself almost impossible, it will soon turn into a political party with its own promises or a pack of high brow and superior people whose capacity for action is completely blocked. In such a situation, they would either become cynical or seek for an adjustment and accommodation with all kinds of important people. The critical spirit is absolutely necessary. My own appeal to the electorate is based precisely on this critical spirit. That is why presumably I have so far been failing. But there is a firm belief that sustains me. Some day the electorate will examine programmes. But that it will do not because of the doings of non-party people but because of an honest political party that assists them to this critical spirit as also to the enthusiasm needed for all political action. Enthusiasm and criticality must go together if they are to be effective and useful. In M.N. Roy's way there is no possibility of enthusiasm and criticality by itself must necessarily become cynicism

or kowtowing. The way of the Socialist Party awakens hope that enthusiasm and criticality may emerge in combination. Even if the Socialist Party should fail, I am certain that only another party of similar aims but with better people or different circumstances would succeed. Mr. M.N. Roy has talked of the "original democratic doctrine of the freedom and sovereignty of the individual". He believes that this original doctrine has been way-laid by Communism or Fascism and also that at the time of its first birth it could not be realised due to lack of knowledge. Now, with better knowledge and information available, rebirth of this doctrine is necessary and this is what Roy calls "New Humanism". While much of this historical presentation is open to doubt, the need for the freedom of the individual is incontestable. Such freedom requires a more thorough examination than European scholarship has so far been capable of. The freedom of the individual would seem to depend as much on external as on internal conditions of equality, also the mental and the material. That is why I have tried to examine the four conditions of equality: (1) internal material, (2) external material, (3) external mental, and (4) internal mental conditions of equality. Kinship, which is the word for external mental relationships, and tranquillity, which is the word for internal mental conditions, would be better words to use. Unfortunately, the world is not yet ready for a scholarship that would go to the whole truth and not only that part of it which has been seen by the ancients, particularly by ancient Indians or that other part which has been seen by Europeans.

Give my warm regards to Mrs. Ellen Roy if you are still corresponding with her.

Yours Sincerely

Rammanohar Lohia

[25th June 1958]

## *Some Documents and Debates*

### **Non-Violence—The Only Salvation**

*Following are excerpts from the statement made by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia on the occasion of his trial under the Defence of India Rules:*

I was prosecuted a year ago under the law of sedition in the court of the chief presidency magistrate of Calcutta. The occasion was an anti-war speech. I have now been brought up before a Sultanpur court and my offence is again an anti-war speech. On neither of these two occasions have I cared for a legal defence which has necessarily to work within the framework of the law as exists. I do not accept the laws that govern our political life. I do not wish to disown the views and even the expressions as set out in the reported speech. There is some confusion due to wholesale omissions particularly into two places, but unless one wants to torture the report, one gets a fair idea of the general trend of my speech. I have at the outset emphasised the insecurity of the times in which we live. Nearly ten countries with governments of their own and some with formidable armies have inside of the first ten months come under the conqueror's jackboot. Economic and political systems are collapsing under the weight of war. Nothing is safe. It is little use clinging to old hopes and suffering from old fears. The hope of a life stable in well-worn ruts is old alike as the fear of the might of the Governments that oppress us is old. I have asked my countrymen to give up these hopes and fears. I have then tried to discuss the war as it affects—my people. We have been made participants in this war under foreign orders. We have no freedom of decisions. No proud people ever tolerates outside decision in the high matters of war and peace. The Congress asks the British Government to state its war-aims. The Viceroy of India replied that Britain sought no advantages from the war. This reply dodged the question of the Congress. It was impossible for the Congress to continue in ministerial officers in his state of enforced war. There arose a supreme test for the Indian constitution. Was this constitution capable of expressing the will of the people? It was clearly not. The element of freedom to whatever little extent it was present in the constitution broke down. In two-thirds of British administered India, the will of autocratic governors prevails and people's representatives have

been thrown out. In all our activities we have to be non-violent. Nonviolence is dictated not only by the circumstances in our country but by considerations that operate throughout the world. It is not only a practical necessity. It is an ethical desirability. Whatever confusion there might be on this point due to faulty reporting is set aside by the reporter himself. I am reported to have said when we have recourse to weapons, we become weak of hearts. Those who rely on weapons do not rely on their hearts. They turn into slaves of their own weapons. They have no strength left in themselves. I am an opponent of the old cult of the lathi and its modern equivalent the cult of the aeroplane. There is an inner contradiction between these cults and the enduring of human life, a contradiction which is daily becoming more fierce. The next twenty years will show which wins and the dualism cannot last longer. Should human life endure, there can be only one form of organisation. Adult democracy must obtain throughout the world and there will be no place in it for imperialism nor for capitalism. I have given an indication in my speech of this form of Government as it will affect the Indian people. It was with a view to bring into foreground this principle of adult democracy that I suggested immediate peace plan to Mahatma Gandhi. I claim no originality for this plan whose items are: All peoples will be free. Those newly acquiring freedom will determine their constitution through a Constituent Assembly. All races are equal and there will be no racial privileges in any part of the world. There will be no political bar to any one to sitting wherever he likes. All credits and investments owned by the Government and nationals of one country in another will be scrapped or submitted for impartial review to international tribunals. They will then be owned not by individuals but by the states. When these three principles will have been accepted by the peoples of the world a fourth will automatically come into operation. There will be total disarmament. I am happy in the knowledge that Mahatma Gandhi has endorsed this peace plan. Let me in conclusion state that I have no ill-will against any people. I have lived among the German people and liked their thoroughness of enquiry, the scientific bent of their mind and their efficiency in action. I am unhappy that

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they have today to carry on their shoulders a system which exults in war and conquest. I have no intimate knowledge of the British people. I dare say that they have their virtues. I may be permitted to quote from my speech. "I do not want the destruction of Britain.

The British have done evil to us but I do not want to do evil to them." Again, I am unhappy that the British people have to carry on their shoulders today a system which has enslaved the peoples of the world.

[*National Herald*, 17th July 1940]

## **History, Historians and Historiography**

*Lok Sabha Proceedings, April 26, 1966*

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** Mr. Speaker, The subject of today's debate is the International Commission of Historians set up by UNESCO for the purpose of writing a history of mankind and the book published by the commission. It is the first volume of the projected history of mankind and deals with pre-history and beginnings of civilization. Although it is published by the Commission the responsibility for what is written there falls on the UNO, the UNESCO and the Government of India. Dr. Radhakrishnan is a corresponding member of the Commission.

This is perhaps the first occasion for the Lok Sabha to debate on a scholarly treatise. This is why I would like this Government to be prepared for a discussion on basic issues and not merely to give replies on some minor points as they usually do.

If the reading or writing of history goes wrong, grave consequences might follow. For history is, after all, a process of understanding the past, whatever it is correct or mistake full or partial, determines our present and the future. If our understanding is wrong, our making of the present and the future also goes wrong. To provide an illustration, in medieval India temples had been ravished and sacked. But if the historian only says that Muslims had sacked Hindu shrines, it is true but partially. It highlights only one aspect of history and produces anger. In order to have an integrated approach we must also say how incapable our forefathers were, who could not resist the aggressors, and such readings of history would give rise to agony instead of anger. Our attitudes would be broadened towards the present day Muslims who, after all, are ex-Hindus and had no hand in the acts of vandalism. It would also generate a will not to allow such things to happen in the future.

The errors that I am going to point out in this book may not at the outset seem very important, but misunderstanding of Indian history by writers within and outside the country is so great that I shall try to explain its significance by a number of examples. Firstly, it is supposed that whatever occurs in India must be imitation of some other country or civilization. It is either from China, or Misr or Ur or Chaldea or some other place. It has been said in this book by Leonard Wooley that when one looked at the north gateway of the great Stupa at Sanchi one could not help feeling that it was inspired by the wooden architecture of China. And the strange part of it is that this statement was challenged not by any Indian member on the commission nor by Dr. Radhakrishnan but by a Russian historian, Prof. Ilyin. And then Mr. Wooley writes in a small note 'It is an impression, and, there is no proof; but the impression is worth recording'. This is how history is being written. Mr. Wooley writes that the Stupa at Sanchi had inspiration from China. He is challenged by a Soviet historian. Then the learned Professor Wooley writes because that impression was on his mind that was to be recorded although there was no proof for it... (Interruptions)... Historians both Indian and foreign are such rotten headed people. It is ingrained into the minds of our children that India had nothing of its own, everything was either imitated or influenced by outside factors. These historians can go to absurd lengths. In the book there is mention about another book called 'Five thousand years of Pakistan'.

**AN HON'BLE MEMBER : Mad!**

**ANOTHER HON'BLE MEMBER:** No, it is deliberate mischief.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** I won't use these phrases. But it is the intention of western writers to



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give Pakistan the impression of being very ancient and familiar. By associating Pakistan with Mohenjodaro and Harappa which was only a part of the older civilization of a bigger unit, they want to strengthen the roots of India's partition. It is history, art, or some other thing? It is as if one could write a history of England of last 20 lakh years or a history of India for the last 3,000,000,000 years. For that is supposed to be the age of the earth of which India is a part.

There is another matter in this book of history about which perhaps the communalists of India do not know. I do not want to go into the details of the agreement as to how old is Rigveda. That there was no poetry worth mentioning in India about 3000 years ago. I am not prepared to admit.

I can admit so far as music is concerned. There is mention about the poetry of ancient Egypt and ancient China but it categorically says that it was not possible to write about poetry in ancient India because no sources were available. And about Rigveda the book says that Aryans came to India only in 1500 B.C.

This division of India into Aryan, non-Aryan, Dravidian etc. is a myth. But I shall not blame Mr. Chagla for this. It has become a trend of thinking. The book purports to say that Aryans came to India about 3500 years ago and took about 500-700 years to achieve that sophistication of language which could produce the Rigveda written about 2800 years ago according to this book.

**SHRI M.S. ANEY:** 6,000 years ago.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** That is what you say. But can you convince Mr. Chagla or Dr. Radhakrishnan who are responsible for this publication? The book does not provide space for the Rigvedic poetry because it maintains that the Rigveda is not so ancient.

I don't want to go into detailed arguments. There are other arguments to prove the ancientness of Rigveda. But I may here draw your attention to what Professor Goverdhan Roy of Kosambi excavation says. I had asked him to write an article which he has sent me. It is very technical in parts. A new process called the radio-carbon process has been invented with which

you can tell the age of things. He says that this process was not available during the Kosambi excavation and now by applying it on the Kumbari pots the latter are being placed between 2035 B.C. to 640 A.D. These excavations have not made much impression on foreign scholars and the indigenous scholars do not attach much importance to them. If you like I may pass on this note to you and you may place this on the table of the House so that the Government may be enabled to carry on

some dialogue with the United Nations.

**CHAIRMAN:** Now he must conclude in a minute.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** I shall require about five minutes more to finish. Let me hurry. The book says: With regard to the Harappa Civilization, 'The elaborate fortification of the citadels would hardly have been necessary to protect the cities against raiding parties from the mountains of Baluchistan; more probably they were intended to overcome the countryside, the assumption being that the ruler and citizens were of an alien stock which had reduced their indigenous inhabitants to the states of serfs. This is what the author says. Against this I do not wish to add much to the controversy raised by the Soviet Russians, who perhaps are not very assertive in their own country in respect of the Czars. Nevertheless I want to bow my head to them for having demonstrated greater understanding of the ancient history of India than the Western historians and the British historians in particular. 'Prof. I.M. Diakonoff and Prof. G.F. Ilyin note that no conclusive proof exists that the ruling class was of foreign origin. The citadels may have been similar to the baronial castles of Germany in the Middle ages.' Sir Leonard Wooley in order to assert the foreign origin puts out the arguments, that there appeared a new culture within the citadels against the destruction of an old culture. If similar studies are made in respect of Germany, Russia or England one would frequently come across the phenomenon of the several parts of the same culture fighting one of which gets victorious to the destruction of others. That is the process of the development of new trends in a society. But these historians rule out the possibility of new trends emerging from the core of the Indian society. And they rule the mind of the Indian historians, the

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biggest of them, in such an overwhelming manner that even the historians of India suppose that any renewal of the Indian culture was impossible without physical contract with the foreigner. The latter could be either the Afghan or the Mughal or the English and so on. This has affected our speeches. One often hears of India being unique in the matter of assimilating her aggressors. Ours is the country forever working out a synthesis, it is a

case of unity and diversity. This is not merely gibberish. It poisons the mind and weakens the will. The impact of such a belief prepares the mind not to resist present aggressions. We are broad-minded and progressive, so what do we lose by aggression. Any defeat would be temporary. Ultimately the synthesising power in our culture would convert the alien victor into a subsidiary part of ourselves. We must cry a half to this kind of thinking. Assimilation is always of two types, it is either of the slave or of the master. The history of India of the last one thousand years can teach only the assimilation of the first type. It is no use blaming only the foreign historians. The Indian historians are wallowing in the same poison. Both the schools of history here—one led by Dr. Tarachand and the other led by Dr. Mazumdar— belong to the concept of unity in diversity and assimilation. Their attention is scattered on what the different parts are without any regard to the task of understanding what India is essentially.

The new trends of culture are attributed to Raja Rammohun Roy or Mansingh or Ghazni or Ghorī. But such renewals can hardly withstand the next foreign onslaught. That is why the government of India should consider these problems with all seriousness. Today there is only a half-an hour discussion. But it deserves a debate of two or three days. For the problem of the Nagas, the Mizos, Kashmir, Adivasis and the like have behind them this poisonous error of interpreting our history in a wrong way, of dividing the people into Aryans, non-Aryans, Dravidians and Mongols. And this whole edifice has been erected on the slender evidence of linguistic variations. The result is before us. Such writings are sponsored by a world organisation. Let not Mr. Chagla try to reply to me.

**SHRI SARAF:** The Hon'ble member should listen

to the Minister's reply.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** I do not need a reply for myself. I want him to do something about history and mathematics in India. These are the two essential studies on which depends the progress or otherwise of present day India. History, as I have pointed out earlier, is the understanding of our past. Our understanding of the past is erroneous and the younger generation is not taught properly, this country cannot achieve happiness or prosperity. Mathematics is the basis of all present day scientific developments, it takes man—the Soviet and the American man—to the moon. Both history and mathematics are dead in our universities. I plead for improvement in these fields.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA** (The Minister of Education): Mr. Chairman, in the heat and dust of political battles it is very refreshing that we are now striking an academic note by discussing the question of history. I am very grateful to Dr. Lohia for having raised this question because it is very important that from time to time we should withdraw from these political contests and think of more important subjects like history, culture and art.

Dr. Lohia has asked the question: What is History? It is a fascinating question and everybody interested in history would like to give an answer to it. History is recapturing the past, but it is not merely recapturing the past. A historian does not merely write down the facts of the past. A historian also assesses the past. He interprets the past. He passes judgement on the past. Even in writing down the facts and the date he can be selective. He may omit certain facts. Therefore, the role of the historian is very important. It is wrong to think of history as merely a catalogue of the past. The greater the historian the greater his interpretation. And may I say this to Dr. Lohia that interpretation will always differ? One historian having the same factors will interpret them in one way and another historian will interpret them in another way. Very often the interpretation may not be acceptable to us; but, as I said, it is the right of a historian, if he is honest to his vocation, to interpret the facts in his own light. Having said that, may I, first of all, clear the misapprehension in the mind of my hon. friend, Dr. Lohia? He said that the responsibility of this history which is, History of

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Mankind: Cultural and Scientific Development, is firstly on the UNO, secondly on the UNESCO and thirdly on the Government of India. This is entirely an erroneous statement. And I will point it out.

What happened was that the UNESCO appointed an international commission of historians, the most distinguished historians of the world according to UNESCO, and it is quite clear that the responsibility for writing this history was not on the UNESCO, but on the international commission. I make this clear from what has been stated in the foreword to this volume by the Director General of UNESCO. It says: "The author of this history is not UNESCO; it is the international commission which since 1950 has directed this venture in complete intellectual independence."

**SHRI SIVAMURTHI SWAMY (KOPPAL):** What authority has appointed this international commission?

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** UNESCO can appoint any commission. They appoint various commissions.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** Who did it? Who appointed this commission.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** It goes on: It is to the commission, therefore, and to it alone that the full credit for this work is due. It also bears the sole responsibility for its scientific work. May I add, full credit and, if there is discredit, it is solely the discredit of this commission. Then, Professor Carneiro, who was the President of the Commission, clearly takes the stand in the preface to Volume One of his book that the author-editors will be fully responsible for the text. Let me point out what happened. We had three Indians on this commission. Dr. Bhabha, Professor Majumdar, and Sardar Panikkar. When the text was prepared, it was sent to our national commission in this country. It was sent to all the national commissions. We submitted this text to Professor Mazumdar, the Director General of Archaeology and Shri Lal, who was the Assistant Director General. These distinguished gentlemen in India submitted the criticisms of the text. They violently differed from some of the interpretations put upon the past by these authors. I must say in

fairness to the authors that, although in the text they adhered to their view, they incorporated in the notes the criticism submitted by Prof. Majumdar and others, so that anybody reading this history not only gets the text according to the authors but also the other criticism of the text wherever they diverted. So where does the responsibility of the Ministry of Education come in? Here is an International Commission working in intellectual independence and, as it has been pointed out, consisting of eminent historians; they prepare the history of the past, the pre-historic period and it is submitted not to us, but to the International Commission; we send it to the proper authorities and their criticism is forwarded to the Commission and that criticism is incorporated in the history. Therefore, I beg to submit to this House and to Dr. Lohia that it is entirely wrong to blame the Government of India or the Ministry of Education for not having taken adequate steps to see that any misinterpretation of Indian history does not figure in so important a book. The responsibility was entirely of this Commission. Even so, the Government of India did do all that it could do to see that our objection to any misinterpretation of our history are incorporated in this volume I have no time; otherwise I would point out the number of notes where Prof. Majumdar's view is set out. The author says that he does not agree. After all, he is an author; he is entitled to his view; we may not agree with him. This is the position.

**SHRI BHAGWAT JHAZAD:** I can understand honest interpretation but not mischievous interpretation. We hold the Government of India responsible for this. The Government of India knew that here was a body which was giving a wrong interpretation of history—differing not honestly but mischievously—and they should have protested. It is not enough to say that it was an honest body. What is honest in that body if it tries to tarnish the fair history of our country? We want to know from the Government as to what they have done in this regard? It is not enough to say that Prof. Majumdar's criticism is incorporated. The Government should have made efforts to drop that passage from history.

**SHRI KAPUR SINGH:** The Hon. member who has moved this motion has demonstrated before this House that these historians are not only ignorant but

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might say things for ulterior purposes. Merely by calling them eminent and distinguished, the Minister will not be able to meet the point which the Hon. member has raised.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** As I pointed out, Government did all that was possible. The texts were submitted to distinguished and eminent Indian historians; their criticism was invited and it was forwarded to the International Commission and the International Commission were not responsible for its publication; the UNESCO was not responsible; the UNESCO, having appointed an International Commission, left it to the authors and on that International Commission we were represented by these distinguished Indians.

**SHRI BHAGWAT JHAZAD:** The Government of India is paying a handsome amount to them and this body gets the money to write a history against us. As Government, what have they done? Why did they not protest? If Prof. Majumdar failed, why did the Government fail? We want to know this.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** As I said, we did all that we could. I do not know what more we could have done to point out the errors into which the historians had fallen. The criticism is also part of this history. Any body who reads this history will not only read the text which may be liable on our culture, but will also read in the notes the comments made by the distinguished historians like Prof. Majumdar, so that any fair-minded reader will know both sides of the picture before he draws any conclusion. What more Government of India could do? We did not publish this book. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia has raised the question of the age of the Rigveda. I agree that this author takes the view that the Rigveda does not go beyond 1200 years. It is quite contrary to what all of us know and feel strongly, namely that the Rigveda is a very ancient book, one of the finest symbols of our culture, a great contribution to our literature and poetry. Here also in the note it has been pointed out what our view about this is. As I have said, again the error has been pointed out, and the criticism of that error has been incorporated in the notes.

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia has also talked about

Five Thousand Years of Pakistan. Pakistan came into existence only nineteen years ago. As I said in the Security Council, before nineteen years, the only culture was Indian culture; the only history was Indian history and the only background was Indian background. No Pakistani can look back to his own country beyond nineteen years. If he tries to look back, he can only look back to Indian culture, to Indian history, and may I add, to Indian forefathers. Therefore, it is ridiculous for any historian to talk of five thousand years of Pakistan. I do not know who has written this book. I have not come across it.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** If you want the name, I can tell you: R.E.M. Wheeler: Five Thousand Years of Pakistan—An Archaeological Outline, London, 1950. He is a great archaeologist, not an ordinary person. He can teach you all sorts of things. Please do not give me an answer today. Take your time. It would gladden our hearts to have a lengthy discussion on it some time.

**SHRI KAPUR SINGH:** We had kept him here for a number of years. Even after the partition he was here. He has written the book entitled Five Thousand Years of Pakistan. He was a former Director-General of Archaeology here. He is the same fellow.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** We are very proud of our ancient civilisation. It goes back, thousands of years. I agree with what my Hon. friend Shri R.S. Pandey has said that it is time our own people write our own history and give a correct interpretation about the past.

**SHRI SHAM LAL SARAF:** But how soon?

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** I am coming to that. I have always felt that one of the misfortunes of our country is that most of our history books have been written by foreigners who have injected poison into our country, and have given a totally false reading of what happened. Now I shall tell you what we are doing. That is more to the point. We have set up a board of distinguished people who are re-writing Indian History, from the point of view of India, from the point of view of our national integration, from the point of view of our culture. These books are not ready yet, but some of them will be ready by the



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end of this year. My view is, my hope is that these books will be sent to the various states and will be translated into our different Indian languages and will be taught to the students. There is nothing more important in education than to give to the young boy and young girl in school a correct view of his or her own country, of his or her own history, and of his or her own past. Therefore, I agree with the view that we should attach much more importance to history. Then, take the other thing that we are doing. We have set up recently the Nehru Library and Museum where we are collecting all the books possible for the period which starts from Raja Rammohun Roy till modern age. The idea is to get Indian scholars there and try to write the history of modern times. Raja Rammohun Roy played a very big part in our Indian history, but there is hardly any history about him. From that period down to Independence or beyond, we had a galaxy of men who have contributed to India's Independence and India's struggle for freedom. So, there again, we are doing what we can, to promote historical study and historical scholarship. Therefore, we are doing what we can to help young people to think about the past of India and to write about India. We do not want a history which is biased in our favour, and I do not think that we need that bias, because our history is great enough, and even an honest and fair interpretation would be sufficient to prove to ourselves. But as far as this particular question about the UNESCO book is concerned, as I have said, I do not think that it is right to foist upon the Government a responsibility which is not its. It is the responsibility, not even of the UNESCO, certainly not of the UN, but it is the responsibility of this international commission.

[29-4-66]

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** I did not get an opportunity to reply to the discussion, on the 'History of Mankind', so I could not acknowledge my debt, and secondly, a misunderstanding was created about native and foreign historians. Now I would like to give a personal explanation.

I am grateful to Shri Vinayak Purohit who in his forthcoming book *Bhartiya Kala* is commenting on the mistakes detected in the UNESCO publication,

and who showed the manuscript of his book to me before publication. The question is not of native and foreign historians but of approach. Russian historians, Prof. Diakonoff and Prof. Illyn have given notes on two serious mistakes in the book, foreign rule in Harappa, and foreign influence behind the Patliputra architecture. Dr. Majumdar has given a note on the mistake about Rigveda, but that is only an opinion, whereas evidence is now available from the Kausambi excavations. Kausambi can in no way be considered a part of Indus valley civilization, and this, a part of the Vedic civilization, goes back to 3500 years ago. In this connection I had requested your permission to keep on the table of the House the note of Dr. Govardhan Rai Sharma. You have received it. Indian historiography is diseased. Our ancient culture gives it the form of poetry. Foreign playboys of history, from Farishta to Vincent Smith regard almost every conquest of India as inevitable and useful. All native historians, who count in academic circles, are imitators following the trail left by these foreigners. I do not know of a single native academic historian who has succeeded in coming out of this rut. The question is not merely of the UNESCO publication. The book 1857, published by the Government of India, is even more defective, false, and unacademic. All academic historians in India have the same attitude, although there may be differences about this or that detail.

Now the need is of historians who would leave the rut.

*Portions of Lohia's statement which the Speaker did not allow to be read in the House.*

There are three main identifying characteristics of this diseased attitude or tradition.

(i) Insignificant and surfacial changes are given the name of a renaissance. Contact with almost every foreign conqueror is called a renaissance, even though it is so short-lived as to be destroyed by the next aggressor. Dr. Tarachand and Dr. Majumdar differ only on question as to which of the conquests brought about a renaissance.

(ii) The same symptoms are marked in the

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integration of the slave as in the integration of the master.

(iii) They are so fascinated by Vincent Smith's disastrous slogan of unity in diversity that in their laboured search for diversity, unity is lost from their sight.

The disease is now beyond the capacity of academic historians. Only politics can now overcome malady. Just as foreign regimes gave birth to Farishta and Vincent Smith and their attitude, the native state should now try to correct the vision of historicism. But history has now become official, or superficially national, or untrue, or suffer from the personality-cult. I was sorry, that in the name of 'renowned historian' the Minister stuck to the old attitude. Renowned historians are treading the same old rut.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA** (The Minister of Education): I would not have intervened in this matter but for the last paragraph in Dr. Lohia's statement, and which has nothing to do with the subject-matter of the half-hour discussion. It was a book published by the International Commission, requested by UNESCO. Dr. Lohia cast a serious reflection upon the author of 1857 India, who was a very distinguished man. He is no longer.

**SHRI RANGA:** He wrote under the orders of Government.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** I will read one paragraph from the Foreword written by Maulana Azad, then Minister of Education.

**SHRI RANGA:** At that time we took exception to that book.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** I would request Shri Ranga to allow me to proceed.

**SHRI RANGA:** He has become the Education Minister now. But long before this, Sir, when you were the Deputy Speaker, this book was discussed and so many comments were made by different speakers in this House.

**MR. SPEAKER:** On the half-an-hour discussion

that took place, Dr. Lohia wanted some personal explanation. Now the Minister wants to say a few words on that.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** If I would have been allowed to speak that day, he would not have been able to speak like this. I was not allowed to speak that day in violation of rules.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** This is what he has said: "The present book is the result of the work that Dr. Sen has undertaken at the commission of the Government of India".

**SHRI RANGA:** That was the gravamen of our charge.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** Then he says: "The only directive I issued was that he should write a book from the standpoint of a true historian." I emphasise that.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** Try to be a little modest, Mr. Chagla, speak with a cool head.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** Then he says: "Beyond this general instruction there was no attempt to interfere with his work or influence his conclusion. The responsibility for the selection and interpretation of events is, therefore exclusively his. The Government of India are not in any way committed by any expression of his opinion." I have got a book here: which Dr. Lohia may read in his leisure time. It is called 1857 India. Here I have got a collection of opinions of different historians who have taken different views about 1857. 'There is Savarkar who has taken....

**SHRI NATH PAI:** Why don't You re-publish Savarkar's book. It was re-published by Bhagat Singh and Netaji Subas Chandra Bose.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** That is not the position.

**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** That historian is utterly wrong.

**MR. SPEAKER:** He may be right, or somebody else may be right. What you said and what the Minister is saying, both will go on records. Let him finish, as controversy cannot be raised at this moment.

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**RAMMANOHAR LOHIA:** Not we, he is raising a controversy.

**MR. SPEAKER:** You gave a statement, he should also have the say.

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** Last but not least, Shri Mazumdar, one of the most distinguished historians of our country, who is still alive—Dr. Lohia has quoted him in his support—has taken that view. I have also got here a quotation from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India*, where he takes the same view as Dr. Sen.

**SHRI HARI VISHNU KAMATH:** That is not the last word (Interruptions).

**SHRI C.K. BHATTACHARYA** (Raiganj). Sir, it has become difficult for us to follow the proceeding because of these conditions (interruptions.)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Has the Hon. Minister of Education concluded?

**SHRI M.C. CHAGLA:** Yes Sir.

### **POSTSCRIPT :**

1. The real question is, to what extent is India's history really rotten and how far has historical writing aggravated this rottenness. What are the possibilities? It is possible that the Indian people have been specially prone to the voice of foreign subjugation.

2. It is possible that historiography in this country has turned this vice into a virtue and has caught successive generations to confuse enslavement with synthesis, surface changes with renaissance, disintegration with diversity.

3. It is possible that Indian history-writing has further sinned in looking for synthesis where it does not exist, for foreign inspiration and even influx all over the place.

*[Mankind, September 1966]*

## *Excerpts from the interview with Rammanohar Lohia by Prof. Paul Brass which was recorded on 31st July and 5th August 1967 at New Delhi:*

**Prof. Brass:** I would like to hear about your views on the history of the socialist movement in India, your relations with Jayaprakash, Aruna; Acharya Narendra Dev, Ashok Mehta. Are you a disruptionist or are you not a disruptionist ?

**Dr. Lohia:** Yes, that is so. But curiously enough I was the only one who never fought with any one of them over anything. And unless they are liars, they will all have to substantiate it. Jayaprakash, Aruna, Achyut, they all fought each other on something or the other. I never did. Ashok, Jayaprakash, big clashes. But then, maybe, something wrong with me, maybe I'm unlucky. Maybe as Jayaprakash himself told me once, precisely because you don't ever fight with us, relations with you become

difficult. Because if you fought, we would kind of get together on something or the other. You know, fighting over, in politics after all, people fight over, you know what kind of things. They don't fight over issues. ...Interruption...

**Prof. Brass:** your interpretation of the history of the socialist movement. Why have all these people gone different ways? Of all the early leaders, I think there are not two who are in the same camp... *Interruption...*

**Dr. Lohia:** ...and a few others. And they hadn't a proper jail. So they put us in an open room, you know, open kind of, you know, three walls and the fourth side open. And seven of us, side by side,

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and with two armed sentries all the time kind of tending us, I mean, so that we wouldn't run away or something. And eventually what used to be then known as the Azad Dasta, Free... Bands you might... Freedom Bands or Free Bands, you know. So, we were organizing them. And they came along sometime midnight or little after midnight and they had done their job rather well, you know, cut the telephone and telegraph wires -- which is where I suppose the Arabs made their mistake in their war against Israel -- improper organization -- and more or less kind of made the collector captive, at least for that half an hour or so. Then there was an exchange of fire with the sentries. I mean, as I told you,... and Jayaprakash and I were lying side by side. We were asleep -- at least I was -- and so the din, you know, din or what shall I call it? And that woke us up and both of us naturally got up involuntarily, half, like this, and bullets were whistling all over. Now, I don't want to be, not that I know anything more of armed affairs than he does. In fact, he was more for armed action than I was. Anyway, I asked him to, I won't tell you in what language [laughter]. So, in any case, I at once laid down and I asked him to do likewise. I suppose a sentry or two died in the process,

I mean, that was unfortunate. I don't like deaths of any kind. And then we escaped. That I think was our, and then after that we had another encounter, another encounter with them. A person who was accompanying me, you know, because there was change of, change of, what shall I say, companions. So, one of them was arrested by the railway police for pickpocketing and the fellow came along to our compartment asking me to give him the clothes you know. And that gave me fright, because I could have been arrested as his accomplice. So anyway I reached Calcutta. In the larger city, you are sometimes safer than...

**Prof. Brass:** Where was this escape from?

**Dr. Lohia:** Nepal, Hanuvennagar...

**Dr. Lohia:** Because they were near the jungles,

you know, they were having all kinds of practice and organizing then because before that, you must remember that for a week or ten days British authority had ceased to exist in several areas -- I wouldn't say all over the country -- particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. And at least one district magistrate was arrested and that was the district magistrate of Ballia. Very few people know this.

**Prof. Brass:** And where were you working at this time ?

**Dr. Lohia:** We were all in Bombay when the decision was adopted. And after that, we dispersed -- Delhi, Calcutta, Nepal, and such like places all over, you know. We ran a radio too, with what success I do not know. But then, at one time, we had almost executed a scheme of twenty transmitters, you know, to be spread all over the country. I remember that. Perhaps that was so much money wasted. Fifteen or seventeen transmitters had been got ready, but then one after another people got arrested, they were... And then, I know Meghnad Saha the scientist, once told me that his cyclotron machine did not get the crystal that he needed because we had taken the crystal that we needed. That was a very fine thing, you know. Because when he told me the story when I went to see his cyclotron - Meghnad Saha is a kind of physicist of - he didn't get the Nobel prize, but he was somewhere near there, you know, somewhere near there. So while showing me the machine, he said, and mentioned the name of the firm, you know, from which he got these things, that for a whole two years, '42 and '43, he couldn't get the crystals. Then, I laughed, I said, professor, how could you get the crystals? We got them for our transmitters. So, but then, a girl, Usha Mehta, very brave girl, you know, she's now professor of politics at the Bombay University, very, very brave girl, because she was all the time instructing people to destroy their belongings rather than let them fall into police hands. And so, eventually when, how our arrest came, you know, after all some day, she did the thing for a whole three months. And then there was a knock on the door, on the flat, you know,



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around the flat from where she was transmitting. She realized, that knock, you know, somehow or other she got to know that it was just the police. Instead of opening the door, she started hammering the transmitter out of existence, the theory being that when I have been instructing people to destroy their belongings rather than let them fall into police hands, I must do that myself. Very brave girl, very fine girl, Usha Mehta. She's a doctor. I think she took her doctorate in one of your universities. And professor of politics....

**Prof. Brass:** And then she got arrested. And she opened the door and got arrested.

**Dr. Lohia:** Well, no, then she didn't open the door. Oh, no, that girl won't. They shot it open, the police. They had to shoot the lock, whatever is that, you know, that... *[end of tape]*.

**Prof. Brass:** Could you work with the DMK? Let's say that the, Mrs. Gandhi goes, the Congress is out in two or three years, as Dr. Lohia says. Can you work with DMK and can the Jan Sangh work with the DMK ?

**Dr. Lohia:** I don't know about the Jan Sangh. Incidentally, the Jan Sangh put up a candidate against me. It's not very widely known. Because of my strategy of trying to get parties together, everybody imagines as though everybody else is pleased with me, but that is not true. The Jan Sangh put up a candidate against me and put up a very, I don't want to make the situation worse than it is, a very unfair fight. I mean, I'm putting it at a very, very civilized level. You know what they did? They got hold of a Muslim defector from our ranks and went to the Muslim villages with a large Muslim voting strength, say a village called Javari, with a Muslim voting strength of 2,000, 3,000, about 60 to 70,000 Muslim voters, and this Jan Sanghi, that is, this Muslim Jan Sanghi who, in the earlier election had gone about canvassing as my agent, told the

Muslims that I was an enemy of Islam, that I was opposed to the Koranic law,

**Prof. Brass:** Well you are, I suppose.

**Dr. Lohia:** that I wanted a uniform civil code, but look - coming as it does from Jan Sangh.

**Prof. Brass:** Aren't you?

**Dr. Lohia:** Of course I am. I am for a uniform civil code, but so is the Jan Sangh. But the Jan Sangh, in order to defeat me, bid goodbye to its own programs, made use of a Muslim defector from my ranks to tell the Muslim voters in my constituency that I was opposed to the Koranic law and wanted a uniform civil code. So, for heaven's sake, forget this about the Jan Sangh and me. And politics in my country is yet a long way off from being principled.

**Prof. Brass:** Then let me just leave it to you. Can you work with the DMK in the central government?

**Dr. Lohia:** Ah, but then I can work with the Jan Sangh, incidentally.

**Prof. Brass:** Yes, I know you can.

**Dr. Lohia:** In spite of all this. Because I am not personal in my politics. It hurts me. Who isn't hurt? I mean, after all, I wouldn't claim for myself any divinity. I'm a human being. It hurts me. But then I could work with the Jan Sangh. As to the DMK, they are on record as having said that if there is any political party in this country with which they are nearest, it is my party, and they have mentioned me particularly, in spite of my language policies.

**Prof. Brass:** So you don't see then, any ultimate conflict.

**Dr. Lohia:** No, no, please no. Don't run to that conclusion. That's too fast a conclusion.