

DR. RAMMANOHAR LOHIA. Interviews at his residence, New Delhi, on July 31 and August 5, 1967.

/You have been saying, at least in the press I have seen statements, that you are not so happy with the way the non-Congress governments have been working in Bihar and U. P. especially and also you mentioned Kerala, but my main interest has been in Bihar and U. P. I would like to know why you feel this way./

That's not wholly true. I said that in the earlier stages, particularly about Bihar, but in the past few days I have been saying that I have changed my opinion, you know, primarily because of abolition of land revenue, not only for this famine year, but abolition as such, you know, forever. And you know it's that 3,000-year old rather bad tax, very bad tax. And then elimination or, I'd better say, steady elimination of English from public use, suspension of the vagrancy section 109. You just can't imagine what the consequences of that section were. A good one-fourth or one-fifth of all the prisoners in India were held under that section, vagrancy section. I mean it's part vagrancy and part something else. Then exposure of certain cases of corruption, one of which I would like to mention and that is the land case in Patna. It's value would go upwards of a crore of rupees, you know.

/You mean that house allotment./

That's right. So, all these and several other things besides would now kind of place Bihar at the head of the non-Congress ministries in the matter of performance. Formerly I thought Orissa was.

/But you were upset originally about the formation of the government itself and the selection of ministers./

Ah, no. About the selection of ministers, I haven't had anything to do nor would I have ever unless I myself were the head of the administration. Then, of course, that would be a different matter. But even, that, that, that problem doesn't arise, will not arise as far as I can [see].

/But what about that fellow Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal?/

Ah, that's another matter. That's another matter. Ah, the man was elected to parliament here and his acceptance of that job, or shall I put it this way, the bungling that the Bihar state Socialist party did about it, not the whole state party, but then officers who were concerned with it or the bungling that the all-India party may have done about it, in allowing him to become a minister, necessarily meant that he would resign his membership in Parliament here. And now we are not such a large party as to go about risking our constituencies in that fashion. People came and told me, now look, there is no risk; but that is kind of stupid politics. I mean, there is always a risk - a 1% or 50% or 60% risk, risking a parliamentary constituency, then risking an assembly constituency. And then the whole idea of it, the absurdity of it that there weren't enough men and women in Bihar already elected to the Bihar Assembly who qualified enough to hold a minister's job. So, I stepped in at a later stage, when all this was done because I didn't ever advise anybody as to who to take and who not to take, except of course certain general propositions such as, for instance, that the backward castes, the Harijans, and the Adivasis, and women ought to form at least 60% of the cabinet. You know, people came to me, or such as there shouldn't be a regional imbalance. But whenever people talked to me about individual members, you see, I mean it might sound very astounding, but then I just said, no, please don't, stop talking about individual members because I know my own limitations.

/Well what was the relationship between the central leadership as a whole and the state leadership in the selection of ministers?/

Incidentally, you must remember that I am not a part of the central leadership. I'm just a nobody, as far as officership goes.

/I understand that./

And, therefore, when all this was done and this fellow came along to Delhi, I told him the situation. I don't want to be any harsher to him than I have been. Well, I might tell you, Indians have lost all, most Indians or, shall I say, all Indians in degree have lost, what shall I say, backbone -- just can't depend on their word and there the matter ends as far as I am concerned. Because he was to have gone back and resigned his ministership and the whole thing would have finished there.

/Was he, ... did you tell him that, or was it your understanding that he would resign as soon as he got back?/

No, he told me that. He told me that. But then, as I told you, my ancestors were trying to overcome morality through a higher degree of spirituality, which was a very fine thing. I mean, I wouldn't joke about it. Because, you know, you fellows, you have achieved a certain type of morality. On the whole, in internal matters -- I'm not talking about external affairs, because as far as I know President Roosevelt was a liar in international affairs -- but, internal affairs, the American is certainly ten times superior or maybe a hundred times superior in the matter of telling truth, compared to an Indian. About that, there is not the slightest doubt, you know. There is that, all, all religions of the book, you know, Christianity, Islam, and all that, commandments are there -- don't, don't tell lies; that pricks your conscience. Whereas we are a spiritual race. Now, with you, that morality has resulted in arrogance. Well, it is for you now to discover the, the vices that you have acquired as a result of your arrogant morality. But, with us, in trying to overcome morality through spirituality, in trying to acquire equanimity of spirit, tranquility, being beyond good and evil, we have become, you know, liars, swindlers, kind of -- it just doesn't matter. Telling of a lie is a very ordinary matter, very ordinary matter.

/Well, let me ask you this question then./

Except Mahatma Gandhi, I don't think there has been anybody in Indian politics in the last thirty years who didn't tell lies. Maybe I too.

/Well, I am interested in this question of political morality. What, do you think that the way the non-Congress governments have been formed has fostered political morality in India or do you think it has had a contrary effect?/

Oh, you mean the --

/The defections and/

Oh, now, the defections. That you should easily understand. You fellows of individual conscience. After all, the representative is elected and is responsible a) to his constituency; 2) to the people as a whole; 3) to himself.

/Where does the party come in?/

Not, not there. Not there, not there. In other matters, yes. As long as he belongs to that party, he must abide as far as he can by its discipline. Then again, you know, all shades of differences are there. For instance, the Labor Party has permitted the liberty even to vote against the official resolution. In your own country, the southern Democrats and the northern Republicans, I mean, all kinds of things are there.

/Ah, but there, but there are two different things. You see, the British system is based upon party discipline. A Labor M.P. would never think of crossing the floor ... He might vote against the government./

Vote, yes, yes.

/But he would never cross over to the Conservative side./

Ah, that is another matter because things are settled.

/...In the United States, we have cross-voting. There is no party discipline in the or very little party discipline in the legislature, but the ultimate test or the ultimate test of loyalty is the constituency. Whereas in Great Britain, the test is, is the party. But here it seems you have neither./

No, you, you have this here that you're starting on the process and when you make comparisons, you must remember that America and England have had two hundred years of parliamentary democracy behind them -- all kinds of fighting and murdering and bloodletting and then they have come to this stage. Whereas, we haven't yet had that. It's really extraordinary how, how little fighting there is in this country and how much we can settle through talk, just talk. So, to that extent, we are far better democrats and parliamentarians than you ever have been. It's a country of talk. Unfortunately, talk resulting in very little action. That is the drawback of our democracy. But, I mean, I'm not being facetious. Don't think so. Coming back to your original question, I don't see that crossing of floors is, is anti-democratic, particularly in the context of a colossus, of a ... dinosaur, huge monster which has ruled the country for a whole twenty years. After all, form has to be related to the content. And now the content of our democracy has been that this particular, single party has been misruling the country for a whole twenty years. And now, if the party breaks up as a result of disorder, well I wouldn't waste my time finding out the morality or immorality of this or that thing. I would welcome the, the breaking up of this monster.

/But then it will affect you also, won't it? It will affect the opposition parties also./

I, I don't see how.

/I mean defections also go the other way./

Ah, but then at some stage or the other, one political party has to come up which will be able to integrate the country and integrate the parliamentary elements. If such a party doesn't come up, then obviously we will have either some kind of a Swiss system or, you know, some way will be found out. That

is precisely what I say.

/Do you think there is a possibility of one, single party integrating the country?/

Possibility there is, but then I would, I would give time to such a thing, you know. Actually, there are two schools of thought. One school is, you build the new house before you begin destroying the old one. **My** case is that unless you operate on both levels at the same time and particularly on the level of destroying the old house, you won't even have the rubble with which to build the new house. So the new house may be built a few months after or a few years after the old house has been destroyed. It is possible that there is a gap between the two. I'm not able to put this viewpoint across that satisfactorily as, as I should. But then this is the only viewpoint that will save the country. I don't know whether I have made my point.

/I think I understand your viewpoint and, as a matter of fact, in some respects, I have admired your tactics and your strategy. But what has puzzled me is what is the content of the new house you are trying to build./

Well, straightaway I would say, tell you, in very concrete and I should even say rather routine, dull terms - a water policy.

/A national water policy?/

Water policy, just water.

/You mean irrigation./

Irrigation. Ah, I don't think that great day would ever come that an administration under my, my control would be set up in this country because men with rather well-formed and strong opinions won't get a chance in this country for a long number of years to come. I think for the next thirty, forty, fifty years, it's men who will have, you know, kind of this and that and this plus that, that kind of man will be there, and men. But then, supposing I had something to do with an administration by way of advising it, I would say, now look, subordinate everything else to the provision of water to agriculture and, let's say, kacheha wells, pakka wells, electricity tube wells, in fact pumping sets, pumping sets also for rivers, set up on barges. You know we have a river length of at least a hundred thousand miles. And, supposing there were a pumping set for each ten miles. We would just throw water on without any canals or channels and some channels could be dug with voluntary labor if that became necessary, but more or less like pouring water from the skies, you know, pour water from the rivers, whatever. And then electricity. Subordinate requirements of irrigation, I mean subordinate electricity to requirements of irrigation. And, if any electricity is left, then provide it for ... other industries or crafts, you know. So, this kind of thing is what I want, you know.

/But the original intention, I think, of the planners, of Nehru was for rapid industrialization of India. What are your...?/

I would have wanted it too. In fact, I was all for steel. I still want it because, and I think with my policy, we would have achieved an industrialization of India at least twice or ~~thrice~~ the present volume and size. Because

what has happened is this -- because Nehru neglected this water policy, we had to import food, largely from you. We needed foreign exchange for that purpose. We had to exchange all kinds of things which we needed for ourselves. The whole economy got upset. Industrialization could not take place. And surely you don't have industrialization if you set up Coca-Cola and such like factories, or refrigerators. You know what is happening? I mean, I understand that we are exporting refrigerators to East European countries and to the people, the Parliament, the government says we earn foreign exchange, but at what cost? About 30% in terms of value of the refrigerators, you know, component and all that, is foreign imported. So we import that from hard currency areas and export that to these East European areas. Actually, in total, the, we lose rather than gain, but then public opinion is what it is, you know, because newspapers set up a howl and they say, well, we are earning foreign exchange. So this kind of industrialization is no industrialization at all. Furthermore, we -- not we; that's a very bad way of saying things -- I mean Nehru and his Congress party and what I would call the modern-minded India started modernizing its consumption before modernizing production. We were to have some kind of a moratorium, halt, no consumption modernization. I mean, it was not modernization of the consumption of all the 500 million people, just a few on the top, the crust, five million people getting modernized in their consumption. So there was no industrialization. It's just words and phrases.

/To get back to this question of the land revenue, I'd like to know what are the reasons for your desire to abolish the land revenue because, when I was here five years ago, there began a move in India initiated by the Planning Commission on the theory that to industrialize India, the states need more resources. To get more resources, the only way they can get it is from the agricultural sector. And they started with the surcharge on the land revenue and they ran into political difficulties. Now I come back five years later and the land revenue is gone altogether. So the question is what has happened to this idea of mobilizing resources from the rural sector? Do you think it's necessary or do you think that resources can be mobilized some other way?/

There you come up against a very significant question, you know. Statistically, that is, consideration of our statistics, we are in a rather bad way. We deal with the average more than the, let's say, the top 10%, the top 20%, the bottom 50%, bottom 60%, you know. And when you say mobilizing the rural resources, if you mean mobilizing the resources of the bottom 60% of the rural population, there you'll come a cropper. It would be a most stupid thing to do. But if you..

/Even with the rise in prices in the last three, four years?/

Oh yes, oh yes. But prices, I mean, about 25 to 30% of the rural population does not produce anything. Never forget that. In fact, I would go, no, this is, the sector would be larger -- maybe 35%. I thought only of the agricultural laborer, but the agricultural laborer, the artisan, they're not producing agricultural wealth.

/But nobody has thought of taxing them./

Ah, agricultural laborer?

/I mean the, the question has been whether to tax the landholders more, whether they're small or large./

But agricultural laborer, what are you saying? What are these excises? Ha, ha, ha, now, now, don't make that mistake. He is all the time paying taxes on his cloth, even on his food. Of course, I wouldn't talk of sugar because he probably, poor fellow, he doesn't get any sugar at all. But anyway, he's paying his taxes, enormous taxes. And then these landholders up to 5 acres, and in the very fertile areas, you know, coastal Andhra areas or maybe the Meerut and Punjab areas, maybe 3 acres, 4 acres. So, below that, the agricultural landholder, the owner, is also poor. So what resources would you mobilize there?

/Well why not mobilize from 3 acres and above?/

Ha! Now then you come to about 20% of the population. Three acres in the fertile areas and, in the areas of average fertility, I would say upwards of 5 or 6 acres. I mean, we have always maintained that these acres upwards of 6, some things could be done about them. But, then there are other ways of mobilizing resources. We have left out the most profitable way, and that is a limit on expenditure, all expenditure.

/But that doesn't affect the rural people, does it?/

Up to a point it would, up to a point. But then it would affect one percent of the population. Maybe I'm being very bizarre in my calculation, you know this thing has come up in parliament. I have been suggesting, or rather my party has been suggesting a limit on personal expenditure of 1500 rupees a month. It used to be a thousand rupees before devaluation. Now, as a result of that, we could have a savings, which means possibilities of investment in agriculture and industry of around Rs. 1,000 crores a year.

/If you could enforce it./

Yes, that of course. One thousand crores! But when I made that statement this time in criticism of the budget, the planning minister denied it. He said 25 crores. Then the finance minister repeated that figure. I asked the finance minister to have a debate on it. Of course, I mean, I won't go into the details of it. He tried to avoid it. But then we're having it this Friday. So, is it 25 crores or is it a hundred thousand crores? Now, 25 crores is a very small figure, and I think they have arrived at it merely by kind of, you know, taking up the income tax figures and whoever is upwards of 1500, now what would be the result? But that's hardly a genuine way of doing things, you know, because, in the first place not everybody pays income tax who should. In the second place, they don't. And, in the third place, which is most important, the bureaucracy in this country gets a much smaller salary than what it spends, a kind of thing which you won't find anywhere in the world.

/But, if you can't get people to pay taxes, how would you get them to limit their expenditure?/

That's precisely what I meant when I said, building the new house.... That will take time. That's why I gave myself five years. Because, you see, these new non-Congress governments come, they will do some things which will dissatisfy the people, some that will satisfy the people. The people's hunger for change will grow. Then, they will want to have men who will kind of put through change at a bigger, greater pace. I hope so, I mean, but there is also the possibility that this continual change may tire them and they kind of go, you know, into a state of lassitude.

/But still your proposal will augment the resources of the center. What about the states?/

Oh, that's a minor matter of detail. Now Brass, don't go into that. That's a minor matter of detail.

/Someone else: You are not opposed to imposing an agricultural income tax when land revenue is abolished./

Ah, not income tax. I wouldn't call it income tax. I wouldn't have income tax, you know, because the rural man doesn't know how to keep accounts and I wouldn't impose on him this additional burden of keeping accounts and kind of make him a victim of all kinds of other graft and, I would have a slab, you know, flat slab of tax upon any land upwards of the uneconomic holding, that is, six acres. And then all this talk of land problem, you know, this land problem in our country has been solved at least four times. It was solved when zamindari was abolished. Second time it was solved when bhoodan was completed. A third time it was solved when a ceiling was imposed. And a fourth time it is being solved when Naxalbari is on the way. This is all ridiculous. This is not the way to solve the land problem. The only way to solve the land problem, of course, after all the other things have been done like abolition of land tax, like redistribution of land wherever possible and to whatever extent, fix a minimum, every acre, of production. At the same time, fix a minimum of requirements which the state or some society supplies. And after that is done, if the minimum is not produced, take that land away from its present owner who might as well be an absentee landlord or whoever he is, and give it to the man who tills it. But all that requires naturally a big change. You are quite right. I mean, these governments can't do it, these present non-Congress governments, I mean, not the Congress. The Congress government is totally incapable. But then even the non-Congress governments can't do it. I hope that with this continual see-saw between frustration and elation, you know, I'm now talking as the ordinary citizen of India, you know, looking at the performance of non-Congress governments. I would on occasions be elated at their performance. Good, well done. And, on other occasions, I would be frustrated. These damn fellows are just as, what shall I say? You know. And, so this alteration of elation and frustration would perhaps put me in a state of mind where I would want to have a party of radical change, but at the same time patriotic.

/Let me ask you another general question. What do you think has been, or will be, the impact on center-state relations of the formation of non-Congress governments? Do you think it will increase the power of the center or reduce the power of the center?/

I really haven't thought of it and I wouldn't like to think of it because, to me, it's a very minor question of detail. Much depends on what these political parties do. And the leaders of the Congress party are very clever in intrigue and maneuvering and I rate their capacity to handle non-Congress chief ministers rather high. With the command of money, you know, that they have, and other things, I don't see why a Congress prime minister should not be in a position to handle a non-Congress chief minister with the same ease or even with better ease.

/Well what do you think about the general question? Do you think that the center should have more power or less?/

Again, you're forcing me into a discussion of administrative details. Now, I will be very frank with you, let me put it on this level. Supposing it is police powers.

/Well, let's say financial powers, that would be better./

Financial powers, I would certainly like the states to have more financial powers, at any rate so that they may be able to remove these regional disparities which are of a very crass kind, very crass kind. I mean, you may have heard of these richer states, now that's a very bad word to use, there is no rich state in this country, comparatively speaking, coastal states of Bengal and Maharashtra.

/Punjab./

And Punjab additionally, but Bengal, Maharashtra, and Madras, these are three [end of tape].

...that much. There may be a number of reasons, probably the midlands, you know the heartlands in any country is more nationalistic than the coastlands, particularly if the country has been in a very bad way. But there might be other reasons, for all that I know, these six poor states. So that the question you have raised goes into another question, you know, of regional poverty. Incidentally, please don't misunderstand me, they're all poor. It's all a question of how poor, you know. After all, compared to America, which has about 20,000 per year or 25,000 per year, what is the difference? Bengal probably has about, shall we say, 450 per year.

/Of course, this is a different standard of life entirely./

No, no, I mean don't dismiss it entirely as a matter of prices and this and that. Bengal is 450, Andhra, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar about 200, 250. But then a quarrel between 250 and 450 is so ridiculous, when you think of the 20,000 that the Americans have. But then that is precisely what India's politicians do. They all keep on quarreling between 250 and 450 and there a man like me is at a loss, you know. He just doesn't know what politics to do.

/Well, what, you know I've just read a book, I don't know whether you've read it. Have you seen Brecher's Politics of Succession?/

With regard to India?

/Mm./

No, no, but somebody told me about it.

/He has written a book on the succession of Lal Bahadur Shastri, then Indira Gandhi, and he has also written about the food problem and the language problem. And he concludes by questioning whether India can have an effective all-India government at all. And he's concerned about union-state relations on financial matters, what will happen if the states begin to ask for more financial resources, how will the government of India be able to govern India effectively?/

That is true, these questions come up. I mean I can see them coming up in parliament and sometimes I see more fervor and fire spent on them than on any other, you know, language, script, financial resources. What financial resources do we have? And that is precisely where I come in with my argument about imposing a limit on expenditure. But,... these questions which are posed in our country, who poses these questions? Do the people pose these questions? No. It's the bureaucrats and a very small crust of politicians who are largely influenced by these bureaucrats and so-called educated people. My opinion about them is rather low. And so they pose these questions. And they don't allow the right questions to be posed. For instance, if there were a limit on expenditures, and I concede your point, it would be extraordinarily difficult to, to kind of impose that limit or to, to achieve it. Maybe a lot of force would be necessary. By force, I don't mean killing and things of that kind, but then you know I don't see why force should not be used against, if it is used against thieves, why should it not be used against those who don't allow the expansion of the country's economy to take place. Anyway, I mean, if that problem were posed, then these other problems would comparatively get into the background, you know.

/Well what about the language issue?/

Language, I mean, there I have to abuse you folks. By you, I don't mean Brass, I mean the Americans and the British. You have your finger in the pie too.

/But I'm not so concerned about the Americans and the British as the DMK. Suppose Dr. Lohia comes in, perhaps with a Jan Sangh combination and.../

Jan Sangh!

/As in the states./

Jan Sangh! There's much more postering in English done by the Jan Sangh than any other party.

/I know./

What are you saying?

/They speak the best English. But, how will you get rid of English in the face of the DMK?/

Why DMK? How would I get rid of English in the face of the Uttar Pradesh Congressman? Or the Bihari Communist? Or, I shouldn't like to say that yet, who knows, my own party men? Well, the whole situation of course is very dreary, very dreary, very dreary.

/Well, you know, for years now people have been predicting disintegration of India and so forth and so on. Now the Congress has fallen apart. It's only a matter of time, as you say, before it falls apart at the center. Now what do you think is going to be the impact, the general impact on Indian democracy, center-state relations, language issue.../

There has been no integration in this country since Mahatma Gandhi's death. It has all been disintegration. The only point is that this disintegration may not have been there on the surface, but underneath the volcano was erupting. Because I don't see how English can integrate this country. The whole thing appears to me so fantastic.

/But can Hindi?/

Forget Hindi. The point is that there must be peoples' languages.

/Yes, but you can have them in the states, but can you have it at the center?/

Why not a system of translations and the states, the states will themselves adopt a common language. I don't like to answer that question myself. I would like the states to answer that question. I've had it said to me in a camp in Bengal, my own camp, Socialist camp, one boy, or young man, you know, he may have been out of the way, but I think he represents the ordinary opinion in that state, you know, ordinary educated opinion. I said, why don't you work for Bengali? Expell English. Achieve Bengali all along the line. He said, no, that is not correct, that's not good because we know very well that once Bengali comes, can Hindi be far behind? So there you are. And then when you think of national integration, please think of caste and incomes. Nobody has been thinking of them. We have had several councils of national integration. They have talked about religion, they have talked about language. What else have they talked about? But not about national incomes, I mean, personal incomes, or about caste. And these are the true issues which cause disintegration the most. Gradations of incomes in this country is probably, probably more numerous and larger than anywhere else in the country or at any time in history.

/I know, we had a discussion on that in Chicago./

About this gradation of incomes.

/You wanted to know the grades at the University of Chicago./

How many?

/We had some difficulty in deciding, but there were quite a large number of grades, but the range was, say, between 4,000 and, if you include the chancellor, I suppose 25,000, or maybe 50,000./

There you are. 4,000 and 25,000 or even 50,000. A ten-fold range and, in this ten-fold range, I'm perfectly certain the grades could not be more than 20.

/_____/

Maybe 30. Without having to go into the details of it, and without the slightest danger of making any crass mistake, I say that in any university in this country, the range would be at least two to three hundred fold. And the gradation would be several hundred.

/Yes, well, you would have a gradation from 60 Rs. a month to.../

62,55. I mean not only that there would be a 60 rupee on the one hand, and a 10,000 rupee on the other because the rector here, the chancellor, you know, would have his 3,000 rupees, but a house and several fleets of, you know.

/Whereas, in a university in the United States, the janitors, the custodians, would have the same salary as the lowest professional [staff]./

So there you are, there you are. So, nobody thinks of integration at that level. Nor do they think of integration at the caste level. And language, I don't see, I mean unless you want to provoke me, I, at least for an American, it should be easy enough to understand the problem of language.

/But how do you get rid of the fear of Hindi?/

It's a feudal language, English, in this country.

/But still how do you get rid of the fear of Hindi?/

Well, I have not been able to get rid of it in my own Hindi states. You're thinking of the fear of Hindi in Tamilnad or in Bengal. I am thinking of the fear of Hindi in the Hindi states of U. P. and Bihar. These blasted scoundrels of the upper middle classes, whatever they are Bengali or U. P.'an or Bihari, they just don't want to get rid of English. And it's they who control the country. Why doesn't Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit talk Hindi in parliament? Why doesn't Indira Gandhi do so, although...

/What about you?/

Although... I talk English?

/You always speak English./

Of course, I'm not a bastard, although I like bastards, incidentally. I mean, I didn't mean it in the physical sense. I meant it in the mental sense. Physically, I mean, I don't know whether I'm a bastard or not and, incidentally, I don't dislike them. I like them very much. In fact, I've been hoping for a mulatto civilization for a very, very long time. No, but then all these fellows elected from the Hindi areas, if they want to show that they are modern, they can talk English. And what English do they talk? Not that I am a master of it, but then at least I know enough to find out when the language spoken..

/Well, I think you know more than 2,000 words./

[Laughter]. [Now there, you see], it isn't Madras, it isn't, please forget that. It is the upper middle classes of this country.

/But does the DMK understand your strategy?/

I think, unless..

/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?/

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,

/Well you are, I suppose./

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

/Aren't you?/

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.

/Then let me just leave it to you. Can you work with the DMK in the central government?/

Ah, but then I can work with the Jan Sangh, incidentally.

/Yes, I know you can./

Inspite 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, inspite of my language policies.

/So you don't see then, any ultimate conflict./

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

/So you wouldn't see any ultimate conflict between.../

No, that's too fast a conclusion,...

/Oh, I see, I see,.../

too fast a conclusion.

/You're still worried about this./

Ya, I'm worried about it because, because, shall I be quite frank with you?

/Please./

Because the DMK no, but then I make my position rather difficult, you know, with my frankness, because the DMK, even after it agrees with my policies may find it somewhat difficult to convey them to its own electorate. You know, when you have fed a certain electorate on a certain body of ideas, to move the electorate away from that body of ideas is somewhat difficult. I don't, there is no difference between the DMK and me in respect of language.

/But they want English!//

That's only incidental.

/I think even the Madras legislative assembly uses English./

Yes, that's only incidental. Both of us want that the peoples' languages should be used. That is clear enough?

/Mm./

Two, both of us are agreed that, in case of need, our center could be a multi-language center. They would probably want it with alacrity (?) I would submit (?) it. But then, I would not be against it. If I had a majority under my control, majority in parliament, I would get the members of parliament together, also with the opposition, and say, hammer out a policy of how many languages do you want at the center. I'm quite sure the Gujaratis won't want to have theirs, at least I hope so. I think they won't be that stupid. I'm almost certain that the Maharashtrians won't want it, but then I add the word almost. And who else? Then come the Telugu; but, as you know, Telugus have often been described as the agents of the north in the south by these DMK's and Tamilians.

/The Telugu Brahmins./

No, even the other Telugus. Anyway, I mean, once the change occurs, you never can tell how things could go. Anyway, even if we have to have a fourteen-language center, but I'm quite sure that we will probably be able to manage with a five-or four- or six-language center. And, in course of time I hope that people will, that is, the Tamilians and the Kannadas and the Bengalis themselves would come up with suggestions as to how to have a single-language center.

/I see. And eventually a compromise out of frustration./

There is no other way out, there is no other, but anyways, I mean, I can quite see your point. I mean, I am more or less, more or less, I wouldn't say lone voice -- I have some impact upon people -- but then, you know, just kind of vague, fluid, flux, you know.

/Tell me something. You, of course, have been wanting, you've been the leading voice in proposing electoral alliances to get rid of the Congress, but did you really expect that the Congress would be defeated as badly as it has been in this election?/

Of course. What do you mean? I made these prophecies. I named the states where the Congress would lose. I went wrong only in respect of one or two. Anybody could have known it. One doesn't need to be an astrologer. All that one needs is to have a very clear and close knowledge of one's country, statistically also. Second, to know the character of the personalities involved, of the various parties. Third, be a little dispassionate about it. I've lost all ~~hope~~ hope(?), if ever I had, I don't think I had them, I have no ambitions to be something or the other and, once you are dispassionate enough, you can foresee events.

/But now you have, partly through your own efforts, you have created a situation in the states in which the Congress has become a pariah. What happens when the Congress' pariah status begins to fade and other parties begin to think of coalition with the Congress? Then where are you?/

If the Congress is reduced to one among many, an equal among equals, after all, what do you take me for? Am I a Mrs. Astor, trying to assert my own separate individuality? I would change too. The Congress would then become to me an acceptable party, but one among many, an equal among equals. And even now, there might be defections from the Congress. Would I refuse them? No. But then, why are you thinking of me? Nobody will think of me when executing all this takes place. Do they think of me now that these administrations have been set up? I am the sapper and the miner of our armed forces. That is about all. When the matter of, -- and at the most you might say, I mean, they might use my services in clearing up the land mines. But when the matter of ruling the country, and you know that whole business of setting up the government comes, I don't think my own party men will have much use for me. You have, you see that quite clearly. I have certain well-formed opinions on expenditure, on investment, on language, on caste, and this bloody country doesn't want to have these set opinions. I'm being a little unjust to myself. I wouldn't say set opinions -- firm opinions, opinions that can really change the face of the country. I'm, I'm arrogant enough to think so. But then this country has been in a rotten way now for over a thousand years -- soft, soft, bog. You know I've called it a bog. Did I use that word in Chicago?

/I don't remember. I don't think so./

It's a bog. Anything that you put into it just sinks. And, not that I've lost hope, but then now you've had enough from me. Tell me what your impressions are and also record them.

/All right. Ask me a question./

Could you not make some general remarks?

/About what, the non-Congress governments?/

You have been in this country before.

/Yes, I was here in '62./

'62, the change between '62 and now.

/Politically./

Politically and in all possible ways. I mean, of course, it's a very large question, but then.

/Well, politically, obviously, the political situation has become much more fluid and the Congress has gone down, but I don't think it's out. I mean, I, my reading of the situation is the Congress will never be what it was, but it's still the strongest party in India. It's still the strongest party in almost all the states, except perhaps Madras, in terms of electoral strength -- and even there, what, it has about 40%. So I think that any political calculations have to begin with the fact that the Congress is still the strongest force, especially in the countryside. The second thing I see that is different from 1962 is the rise of vocal, middle class sentiment in the cities and the development of new political forces, especially

the government employees, then the schoolteachers and the students. A third thing I see is the development of more, simultaneously while you have more vocal public opinion in the cities, we have rural people, people with more rural interests coming into power in some of the state governments, especially U. P., Charan Singh, Ram Chandra Vikal, and other people in the U. P. cabinet who more effectively represent rural interests. So one possibility that I see is that there might be some difficulties in rural-urban relations, in some of the states, because you now have this vocal opinion in the cities, at the same time you have a government which, while it right now has sympathy from middle class sections in the cities, might not be able to maintain that sympathy, and especially with the government employees, where already the U. P. government, although its a non-Congress government, has come into conflict with the government employees. I've yet to see ideology come into force, as a real force in party politics in India. I think still so far ideology has not, is not playing a significant role. I mean people are not coming to power who want to put into practice and are willing to sacrifice political interests for the sake of implementing a coherent ideological program. And, at the moment, I don't see any possibility of that. Now, I think that some of these non-Congress governments are going to last. The Bihar government might last five years. Of course, a lot depends on you, on how you view the situation. The U. P. government might not last. The Punjab government might not last. So that it looks like if C. B. Gupta succeeds in throwing out the non-Congress government in U. P., well he'll come in for a few months and then President's Rule./

Ah yes, that, that, that... means a new opening. Assuming for a moment that a non-Congress government falls, it falls only for a brief period, doesn't it?

/Well, certainly C. B. Gupta can't stay in power very long./

And then a non-Congress government comes into power for a, for longer period of time and with a much clearer program and a program of much more radical change.

/After the elections, you mean./

Or even without it, but, of course, more particularly after the elections. What I mean is this continual, you know, change of governments, this non-Congress government yielding place to a Congress government which itself doesn't last a long time, and then again a non-Congress government coming in, that other non-Congress government will be superior to this present non-Congress government. Would you hold that?

/After the mid-term elections./

Without an election, no?

/Well, I think if the non-Congress governments go out, then the only choice is either a temporary Congress government and a mid-term election or an immediate mid-term election. Obviously, C. B. Gupta wants to come back, wants to.../

All right, let us assume he comes back. He stays in power for a couple of months.

/And then there's a mid-term election, President's Rule../

Let's assume two different things apart from the President's election -- one that the Congress is further discredited and has to give place to a non-Congress government without any mid-term election; another that a mid-term election becomes necessary. So, in either event, what do you think would be the outcome?

/Well, let's say there's a mid-term election. The Congress comes back even the same or a little bit stronger./

You don't rule out that possibility.

/I don't rule out that possibility. Where is your strength in the countryside in U. P.?.../

What makes you say that? What makes you say that? It is true that all kinds of conflicting passions have somewhat blurred out passion, but then it is still there. And underneath it is probably still the strongest passion.

/But still, in U. P., you have barely made major party status./

Electurally. But that could be somewhat deceptive. We are still the strongest party, as parties go, in U. P. after the Congress. But the Jan Sangh has come in in force electorally, but take their district of Bahraich. They had nothing there and they got all the seven.

/They got the seven seats in Bahraich./

Ya, 7 or 8 or 6 or whichever ^{there are} ~~{they got}~~ all them. And you know they are very..

/Landlord support./

That plus other things. I don't know how far you accept this, this proposition of, well all kinds of money, you know, and you, I think you concede this, that my party at any rate doesn't have any money.

/I don't think so. No./

[Laughter.] So, that problem is there.

/I don't think the Jan Sangh has that much money, either, do you?/

Well, I don't know. I mean, they certainly have spent far more than we have.

/But, I think they have some passion and I think they have organization./

They have spent far more than we have.

/Passion, organization, and landlord support./

And, and also a vague, vague appeal to Hinduism. That goes a long way.

/Well, I'm not so much impressed by that as an effective force in the countryside./

It goes a long way.

/I don't think the rural peasantry is so communal as the urban classes./

I don't know it. I wish you were right, but then the cow, for instance,...

/I mean, what does it mean, cow, what does that mean in the countryside?/

the cow. It does mean something. Even a 5 or 10% vote, you know, can mean a large difference. [End of tape.]

August 5, 1967

/I was present during an interview of Dr. Lohia by a Newsweek correspondent, who asked him to rank the three main problems facing India./

First problem is water-water for agriculture, but also for drinking. I wouldn't be suprised if more than a million cattle have died due to lack of water this year. May have been several million. And, deaths by hunger are reported in our newspapers in, you know, kind of driblets, a single person, about two persons, three persons, because people don't know what is death by hunger. If they knew that, already a million or two, I wouldn't say two, well, say, half a million or a million have died through death by hunger. So, therefore, water is to me the first thing. And it is lack of a water policy over the past twenty years which has been the cause of famine, lack of food, rising prices, even lack of industrialization. And I would like to add something too for the benefit of American readers that, if only they had a combine of American manufacturers for irrigation machines of the style that they have for chemicals, we would have universities and foundations issuing books and innumerable pamphlets for water as the other chaps are doing for fertilizers.

/Newsweek man:.../

Oh, no, not all..., you wanted me to give the top thing, you know. You want me to give you the second top thing?

/Yes. Two more./

Two more, righto. Oh well, in that order, you must give me some time to think. Well, I don't know whether I would put it second or third, the defence of our frontiers. I mean I look upon frontiers of a nation the same way as I look upon the skin of the human being. And all this Russo-American talk about compromise and adjustment and this and that is baby-

talk... because I should very much like to know what Russia would do if Siberia were, even an inch of Siberia, were invaded by the Chinese. Or, well there is nobody to invade the U. S., therefore I don't know what example to give. Now if there were a world state or a world order or, shall I say, world parliament through which a world government came into being, then I would change my whole basis of thinking. I mean I may, I may fret and fume against a decision of a world parliament in regard to my frontiers, but even so I would accept it for, accept it in a military sense, you know, and strive to get it changed through informing the world parliament in a better way. But until that world parliament comes into existence -- and mind you I would like to distinguish it from the present United Nations. It's a body of governments. I want a body of representatives of the peoples, elected through adult franchise with regional weightages, I mean so as to avoid overrepresentation of countries like India and China. Until then, I would have no hanky-panky with my frontiers. And I think the India government has been idealistic in regard to, to, to our frontiers and realistic in regard to world affairs -- I mean both are subjects of foreign policy, incidentally, frontiers, as well as world affairs-- which is all upside down. If I had had the government under me, I would have been idealistic in regard to world affairs and realistic in regard to our frontiers. These Congress chaps have thought overmuch of what is practical and neglected to put forward any idealistic solutions in regard to world affairs. I'll give you just two, three instances. When the war ended, publicly and privately, I told the prime minister that he should come out with a forthright declaration that India did not recognize any distinction between victors and vanquished, that to India, Germany, Japan, America, Russia were alike.

/Newsweek man: You mean, World War II./

After World War II. But the government did not do so. I mean, this that... we start from the beginning, you know, we start from man. And we were not part of that old world which waged a war and which had conquests and victories and failures and defeats. I mean something like what Lenin did, although in a very small way and, perhaps, small, I say, I mean in this sense that he did it in the beginning and later his government backed down on it. But otherwise, his first declarations of foreign policy were tremendous, absolutely tremendous -- tearing up old treaties and things of that kind. And India certainly had nothing to lose by being idealistic. Similarly, I'll give you another instance. Instead of piping in with those who have been asking for summit meetings or anti-nuclear measures or disarmament as such, kind of joining the bandwagon, as I would say, of the Euro-American liberal, which Mr. Nehru and all his successors have done. I would have said, "The world is suffering from a disease whose Afro-Asian side is poverty and Euro-American side is armament. These are two sides of the same coin." And so, I would right from the beginning have put forward the ideal and the policy of combined dispoverty and disarmament. I suppose these examples should suffice, you know, because they would put in only a little thing, you know. And then in regard to national frontiers, you know, my position is clear. I mean, I am what I would call, what in American parlance would go as a hawk in regard to my skin, my own skin, that is, as long as there is not a single world. And, China should not have been permitted to romp over Tibet in the manner that she did. I don't know why Americans aren't, who are so anti-Chinese, aren't grappling with this idea that the Chinese are probably

suffering from, from insanity, of doctrine, you know. Insanity of doctrine in this sense that Marxism is a doctrine of removal of inequalities. Whereas in actuality Marxism may up to a point remove inequality internally, that is, within the nation, but among nations it is unable to remove inequality. So I don't think the Chinese is very concerned or, shall I say, very unhappy about economic inequality with the Americans, but he is thoroughly mad when he finds that he is unequal with his Marxist brother, the Russian and that is what is making him mad. Because this angle has not been put forward, as far as I know, anywhere, and they just don't wish to. I suppose they all combine in suppressing this angle. And then like a mad dog whose teeth are hurt or get knocked out if he bites hard flesh, like ~~Que~~oy and Matsu or, or even Hong Kong, the Chinese turn to soft flesh in the Himalayas. That is my analysis.

/Newsweek will love this. .../

No, it won't print it. Not that Marxism part of it. You will see.

/That dog one, though./

That dog one, they might. But then, the Marxism part of it. And you must tell them, look, and that they should not be unjust because if they print the dog one, they should print the, the, well, it's a very little space on inequality of, this examination of inequality and the Marxist doctrine, hmm?

/Newsweek man: Your first is water, second is frontier, third is?/

Not frontier, I mean, it's a combined thing, you know. Idealism with regard to world affairs and realism with regard to frontiers -- neighbors, you might say, frontiers and neighbors, close immediate neighbors.

/So you're more concerned about China than Pakistan./

|Pakistan I want a confederation. I want a confederation because Pakistan and India have been one throughout the ages and I don't see why they should remain separate, you know.

/Newsweek man: That's why they are afraid one day India may swallow her,.../

Well, I would say, I would put it the other way, let Pakistan swallow India, let either swallow the other, let's become one anyway and let us be ready to adjust and compromise on this to the best of our ability. But, of course, adjust and compromise is not a one-way traffic. It's a two-way traffic. And there again I must say Americans and Russians have been following a very bad policy. I'll give you a story. I don't know whether Newsweek will have any use for it, but then Sidney Hilsman, who was secretary of state, assistant secretary of state in Kennedy's administration, and is now a professor I think in the Columbia University, came to see me some weeks ago. And we talked about that, that delegation which Kennedy had sent out after China's invasion of India. And Hilsman told me that that was a chance which India missed because in that heat of the moment, Pakistan and India could have got together.

/Newsweek man:.../

That is all a matter of detail, you know, that Kashmir thing. Averell Harriman, I think, was the leader of the delegation, and Hilsman was one of the delegates, and so Hilsman told me that we wanted Nehru to somehow solve the Kashmir problem so that India and Pakistan could combine against China or, at any rate, Pakistan would not interfere in any way. I mean Pakistan of course did not interfere militarily or materially in any way, at least not openly. But then it would have been a kind of coming closer together. So, after he had finished -- and then he said, "Yes, about Nehru being old and tired and incapable of striking out in new directions, which is true." But then I said that while I accepted Hilsman's analysis or policy in part, I would ascribe the major part of the blame to the Americans for trying to treat the Kashmir problem in isolation from the Indo-Pakistan problem. If the Americans had ever tried to achieve some kind of a reunion of India and Pakistan, there might have been a leadership in this country bold enough to say, "It just doesn't matter, let Kashmir go hang, whether Kashmir stays part of India or part of Pakistan or a separate unit, but then we are a single federation, with these various units." Then Hilsman maybe wanted to, not to annoy me, "Yes, there you have a point, perhaps you are right, perhaps you are right." So you've got the whole story? I don't know whether, Newsweek won't have any use for it.

/Newsweek man: So the Kashmir problem is one of the problems after independence.../

Yes, but not in isolation. As I said, it's a part of the Indo-Pakistan problem. And only fools have been trying to isolate it from the general problem. And you can't. I mean there are certain diseases which you just can't treat in isolated patches. Certain others perhaps yes. You have to treat the disease as a whole. And I understand that Stalin was more perspicacious. If this man Menon, K. P. S. Menon, is not telling a lie, Stalin was very angry with him for talking about Korea and Vietnam -- Vietnam wasn't there in those days -- Korea and Germany and this and that. You know, that is what I mean, being idealistic about world affairs and realistic. Said, "Why the hell don't you talk about your own India and Pakistan? Why don't you two try to come together, talk about that, and what can we do there?" Now, there I think Stalin was far more understanding.

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...to the third thing, I don't know, now there is this problem of language, the problem of caste, the problem of economic inequality, and you make it very difficult for me to choose among these three -- language, caste, and economic inequality. Now, or shall I say economic poverty? Because I believe in equality through prosperity and prosperity through equality. That is the only thing that can cure India of her present ills. When I say equality, I mean comparative equality, not total and full equality. ... Now what I mean is a moratorium on modernized expenditure for the next fifteen or twenty years. Please emphasize that -- next fifteen or twenty years. Although I have my own opinion on what should be done after the period of twenty years, but then I would leave that period open for discussion. If India wishes to turn capitalist, well India does so. But then for the next fifteen or twenty years, no modernized expenditure. You know what I mean.

/Refrigerators, air-conditioners, automobiles./

All kinds of things. I mean amenities. We are a civilization of amenities and perquisites par excellence -- no expense accounts. And a law, if nothing succeeds, on expenditures. And tackling the problem at the source. Say, for instance, all fancy schools close down, for primary school children, all fancy schools. That is, everybody shall have to go to the same school without having to pay any fee. I am talking about children between five and ten. I'm not daring to talk about the secondary or the university stage. That is, the president's son, the prime minister's son, and the street sweeper's son must go to the same institution with the same kind of expenditure. So there you don't require policemen to keep a watch on expenditure. You cut the possibility of expending right at the source, you know. Similarly, I would cut the possibility of expending right at the source through prohibiting the use of private automobiles. Buses -- yesterday we had a very lovely discussion there.

/I saw in the paper./

But then the papers don't report one-tenth of what, you know, one Congressman said, "Most people don't use their own cars in New York, that has become troublesome, but they have fine bus services." To that, the answer is, you can have fine bus services in this country once you make the rich people use the bus. You see, after all, how do you get there? Once you make the prime minister's son attend these primary schools, obviously the standard will go on improving rapidly because she will be concerned about it in her own physical way, personal way. So the president, so everybody else. You see my point. So, cut this kind of expenditure at the source and then, if we share scarcity up to a point -- I mean I am not outlining a scheme of total sharing of scarcity -- but share scarcity and if we can make the people realize or feel that people at the top are also suffering privations, then it may be possible for us to summon them to a huge national effort, even of voluntary labor for irrigation -- that water policy I suggested -- and various other purposes. It may be possible for us to persuade surplus government personnel, you know, and there is lots of it, from pen-pushing into, into this kind of productive pursuits. So you have more than what, but really, tell me Ramanujan, you can't possible, I mean, your Newsweek won't make use of more than one-tenth of what I have already said.

/Newsweek man: Not, not, I sent 15 pages after interviewing 10 people -- one paragraph./

Ah, so there you are. So why are you wasting your time?

/When you become prime minister, they will pull this out and right away they'll have a cover story./

/Newsweek man: I will tell you one instance. I went to Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao when he was the vice-chancellor of Delhi University. He cancelled his Council meeting, all the meetings, and then of course he sat with me for three hours, and a whole book, that copy book completely exhausted. He sympathized with me and brought some more papers and..., about three hours, and then he said, "After this interview comes out, will you please contact me?" Not one word!.../

He's a fool if he thinks that that can be done. Nowhere in the world, least of all in America. Nowhere in the world.

/Newsweek man: So, since then I'm avoiding him. I don't see him at all./

That kind of a thing would be absurd. But what I've already told you, one-tenth of it is possible.

/Well, you've got some good phrases there./

/Newsweek man: Yes, yes, yes./

Insanity of doctrine, you know, that is a phrase which...

/That will definitely come in./

It won't, but it should because I was myself a little pleased after I, I hadn't used this phrase ever before. [Laughter.]

/Newsweek man: What are your views on our country's future?/

Our country's, [you mean] America?

/Newsweek man: No, no, I mean India. (Laughter)/

Well, we are going down the slope in everything except one respect, and that is what matters to me. Our people are steadily growing less fearful, and that gives me hope -- but then very slowly, you know, steadily but very slowly growing less fearful. When I say that, I mean everything, fearful of their own officers, fearful of the police constable, fearful of the foe outside, you know. Their fear is very slowly, but steadily diminishing. And, as a people grows less fearful, I think it's bound to grow. And, I sometimes get this feeling that every generation thinks that it's own time was the best in the world. So there is nothing wrong with our youth, you know. They are sometimes, well we were impertinent too in our younger days. I still am, up to a point. /Newsweek man:.../ No, there are certain things which I don't like. Say, for instance, this, this craze for fashions and wasteful and conspicuous expenditure, you know. At least, I expect young men and women to be different. They are probably also not as truthful as they ought to be. But then, they're not to blame because their elders, at least in parliament whatever I've known of ministers, I don't know of any single minister who doesn't tell lies, at least one lie a day -- not a single minister, not one.

/Newsweek man: Who tells a lie./

Who does not tell one lie a day. Because, you see, that ties up with our culture. I mean, I don't want to run my own country down. In fact, I am rather proud of my country, well at least on paper.

* /Interruption for Dr. Lohia to take a whole handful of pills, including pills for high blood pressure. He also told me that he took two tranquilizers a day./

/Newsweek man: So, there is not one minister who does not tell one lie a day./

So, therefore, I mean, I, naturally, I'm very much mortified, no mortified is too strong a word to use, I'm upset about young men and women telling lies. But then I have to say this for their defense -- and also our culture -- on paper, our ancestors at any rate tried to overcome morality through spirituality, but then that is going into a dissertation, you know, which Newsweek won't have space for, you know. We are not religious of the book. Did I tell you this?

/Mm./

So, it's just this. Now, this fearlessness, if Gandhi did nothing else, he at least did this, fearlessness. It's not yet complete. If it were complete, of course, then the situation will be different. But I hope we're nearing a stage when we will be, and nearing that stage pretty soon -- what shall I say? -- when, when we shall have more courage than fear, kind of, you know, compara[tively?].

/Newsweek man: Where were you born?/

Albarpur. It has two names -- Albarpur Sahjadpur.

/Newsweek man: In U. P.??/

In Uttar Pradesh, yes.

/Newsweek man: In which year were you in Germany, 19..?/

1929 to '33.

/Newsweek man: ... what subject?/

Staatswissenschaften, (folk?) ^(p-e-e?) fortswirtschaft. Write that down... The sciences of the state. That is the general faculty, under which people's economy.

/Newsweek man: And about underground movement, I want ... very momentous, ... how you scaled wall, how you escaped the bullets, how you..?/

That is Nepal.

/Newsweek man: Which year..?/

Nepal, Nepal is 1943.

/Newsweek man: Following Gandhiji's Quit India movement.../

That's right, that's right. And we had a hideout in Nepal, not very far from our frontier, and.../interruption/.

/Newsweek man: Hideout means just in the jungles or mountains or?/

No, we were near the jungles, but then you know it was a village, very sparsely inhabited, low density of population, and so there we were.

/Newsweek man: The name of the village?/

That I don't remember, that -- ah, not a village so much, I think, it's the district of Saptari and the thana..., you know, they call the fellow bara hakim, governor, or collector. ...

/Newsweek man: I met Jayaprakash Narain yesterday and he was very modest. I don't want to think of the past. That was all...he was saying./

Why didn't you take...?

/Newsweek man: No, because../

He refused.

/Newsweek man: He doesn't talk over the past... I just wanted him to say something about his underground movement and all those things. "I don't want to talk about the past, but I want to think about the future." So, what exactly Newsweek wanted, some sort of a, what leaders did during the underground movement./

Ah, but then we have been talking about the future -- so far at any rate, huh? The future, as based upon the past. At any rate, it's only now that we have, but then that too might have something to do with the future. Rather unfortunate. You should have made him talk.

/I would like to hear some history./

'42.

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

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./

/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./

...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, 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...

/Where was this escape from?/

Nepal, Hanuamannagar..

/And what were you doing in Nepal then?/

This Azad, Freedom Bands.

/For Nepal? No, you were operating.../

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.

/And where were you working at this time?

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 Meghnath Sahi, 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 -- Meghnath Sahi 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, 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.

/Newsweek man: And then she got arrested. And she opened the door and got arrested./

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].

May, forty...

/Vidya Nivas Misra: three./

Na, no.

/VNM: Once you were arrested in '43./

'44. Huh?

/VNM: Once you were arrested in '43 and then.../

Then we were released from prison, you know, these...

/VNM: Yes, yes, ... the first time you were arrested, it was in '43, I believe./

That is the Nepal arrest.

/VNM: Yes. And the second time you were arrested in 1944./
'44.

/VNM: As far as I remember./

And it was actually the anniversary. A more superstitious person would think there is some astrological -- same date. And I told Achyut, you know -- on that occasion, Achyut and I were together -- I said, "Now, Achyut, today something is going to happen." He said, "Let's get away." He got away. I said, "No, let me stay here."

/Newsweek man: It was in Calcutta./

No, I got arrested in Bombay. And then something or the other happened. A friend came from somewhere. And then I went visiting that friend and there the police were there waiting.

/VNM: From Allahabad. Somebody from Allahabad. Actually, they followed that person from Allahabad./

Yes, apparently.

/VNM: That's what I have heard/

/Newsweek man: And then they got you in the process./

Yes, that was. But the same day, the same day. I think it was the 23rd of May, because I got a whodo or voodoo, what is it...

/Voodoo, ya./

Yes, about the 23rd of months. I mean, not, 23rd is the release, you know, when we got released from this Nepal thing. And we were nabbed on the 20th of May. So the 20th, now of course I've gradually got rid of it, but as the 20th comes around. ... Ah, then, one thing, ... and then you finish now Ramenujan, nothing more, this is the last story. Just to tell you that the British did not leave of their own accord, apart from the Azad Hind Fauj of Netaji Bose or world situation or Chiang Kai Shek or Roosevelt, these were, I wouldn't say minor affairs, but then, well, there's something bigger than that, and this '42 movement, then the post-'46 movement, and then something which I am going to relate to you right now. Right here in this city, we had three persons visiting us on different occasions -- one from the armed forces. Forget the other ones, you know, because they did not make an impression on me, this from the army, land army, somehow or other I found him fidgety, although of course he did assure us support and all that kind of thing but anyhow forget him, but this one from the armed forces, he is dead, therefore I can disclose his name, Majumdar.

/What was his rank?/

He was the topmost officer, Indian. Among the Indians, he was the topmost officer. And with what relaxed manner, you know. He sat with us for two hours, completely forgetting that we were outlaws, relaxed, and a tall, hefty man, you know. Said, "We are very sorry that when this August rebellion took place, we knew nothing about it, we could do nothing with you, but please next time, such a mass movement takes place, inform us beforehand and the help of the air force, Indian section of the air force will be there. They will be with you."

/VNM: And, you will remember, doctor, the ratings (?) rebellion./
Wah to bad meN hua.

/VNM: But that followed. That was an indication./

That was '46.

/VNM: Yes, that was '46, yes./

I'm talking of '42. This took place in September or October, 1942, that is, immediately after August.

/This talk with Majumdar?/

This talk with Majumdar.

/Newsweek man: In Delhi./

HaN. This is something very different. This is an assurance that the Indian section of the air force would participate in the rebellion against British authority should a peoples' rebellion again take place. I forget his first name. We used to call him, you know, Jogo... Majumdar. I mean that endearment name, you know. And he was a wing commander, yes, wing commander. topmost officer in the army. That was a real good courage, and I kind of cross-examined him, "How are you so sure about your other officers? I mean, after all, there is such a large Indian section." He smiled and said, "Well I can talk to you on behalf of my comrades. They will all be with you. But give a little notice." So that finishes this interview.

/Newsweek man: So where were you at the time in Delhi, from which place?/

Several places, not one, several. Right here in New Delhi!

/Newsweek man: You were moving from place to place every day.../

Not every day, not...

/Newsweek man: ... were you changing addresses at that time? Sometimes as woman, sometimes as...?/

No, not me, no, for heaven's sake, although I wish I were a woman because I understand women have it easier in life. And women say it's the other way about. No, not a woman, no.

/Why don't you continue the narrative? I'd like to hear your narration of the socialist movement and your role in it since '46./

So this is finished.

/Newsweek man: Yes, yes. In which year were you born?.../

1910. Incidentally, not only...

/Newsweek man: You are not married./

No, not only this armed force man. The chief of the civilian air services, that is, you know these airlines, he once took me from Delhi to Calcutta on plane. /Interruption./ ... any fault of his own. Perhaps it was all inside him, but because people didn't know how to use him, Biju Patnaik.

/Newsweek man: Yes, yes, he's a most frustrated politician./

But I would ascribe the blame for all this as much to the politicians of this country, Nehru included, and please don't mention Aruna and the rest of them, ... Jayaprakash...

/Newsweek: But he's got a very good organizing capacity./

That and courage. When he took me from Delhi to Calcutta on a plane that had been chartered by the chief of the Europeans', you know, European business community, a charter plane, I said, "Biju, what happens?" He said, "Relax, don't you realize that you are at the moment one of those bara sahibs in your gabardines and this kind of thing, you know, corduroys, gabardines, and this and that? Just relax, nobody will ask you a question."

/Newsweek ~~plane~~ ^{man}: You were on the plane at that time./

... on the plane. And it was much easier travel than any bus or taxi or railway travel. And the British sentries, you know, gave us salutes, you know, when they found that he was the chief pilot of the Indian Airlines. But then if you mention this, you must also mention that he has turned rancid.

/He was head of the civilian airlines in '46./

... '42.

/'42./

'42. That is the British. I mean, you must think in terms of British rule in those days.

/This is Patnaik./

Patnaik, yes. And he has turned rancid perhaps as much due to his own,... the fault of the, what do you call them, dramatis personae, I mean the, his own faults as due to the politicians.

/Newsweek man: So you had that gabardine suit and all those things, so you looked like an Englishman./

Except for my color.

/Interruption for departure of Newsweek man./

/So, let's have the narrative on the socialist movement./

What went wrong with it? But then I, you see,... I will answer your question, but I go philosophical because you will have to think in terms of India of a thousand years, an India without backbone, an India that adjusts and compromises. I'll have to give you a historical parallel. You know, there were two persons in the times of Akbar -- a fellow called Man Singh, who was his first man; another Pratap. Now, much depends on how you evaluate history. But then all that I wish to tell you is this. He was the adjustor, the compromiser, but a patriot. I wouldn't say that he was not a patriot.

/Man Singh./

Man Singh was a patriot, but patriot by way of adjustment and compromise. And this was a patriot by way of dominance of will, struggle, fight it through.

/Pratap./

Pratap.

/So you are Pratap?/

Now wait a minute, wait a minute. What has happened to our people is this, that while a Man Singh lives, the people or the larger section of it, like him, praise him for his being practical. When he dies, immediately after or sometime after, they begin calling him a traitor. And while a Pratap lives, they call him stubborn, obstinate, foolish. And when he dies, either immediately after or sometime after, they begin calling him a god or a demi-god. So this is, has been a characteristic of our people. And I think it still is -- not perhaps to the same degree as it used to be, let's say a hundred years ago or two hundred years ago. So that is one point that I would like to put across. Your estimate of what is the necessary thing to do, the right thing to do at any particular moment, would depend very much

upon what you have inside you. If you lack courage, your solutions would also lack courage. You can give a call for strikes and when the moment for striking actually comes, you withdraw. Or you may decide upon abolition of language, you know, this English language from public use and declare it from housetops and get votes on it, but when the time for actually putting it into practice arrives, you begin developing cold feet of some kind or the other. Similarly caste. Similarly this business of removal of economic inequality. So you have to apply all that. But anyhow, during the, I'm not talking of the immediate present. You wanted me to talk about 1946 to, let's say, 1960. From '46 to '60, I think this disease was there in abundant measure, abundant measure. The leadership of the socialist movement was of two minds about the government, whether to adjust with it or to fight it. And I think they indulged in both practices, which again was very impolitic. I mean impolitic not in that, in that minor sense of the term, bad policy. I'd much rather have had them go whole hog, like Man Singh, into adjustment and compromise or else go whole hog the other direction. I think the Communist party would never have become so strong as now if, after 1946, we had adopted a militant position.

/But your position until recently was equidistant, not../

Militant. It has all along been militant. Incidentally, don't say equidistant. I have never used that word. It was your, it was your egghead, Schlesinger, with whom I had a debate in Ba College. I don't know whether he had used that word earlier. I had used the word "equal irrelevance." And then he kind of tried to make fun of the, you know, geometry and arithmetic of it. I have never used that word. And Schlesinger's example was followed by Mr. Ashok Mehta. They all have been making fun of the arithmetical distance of this and that. I never used that word. I used the word "equal irrelevance" -- And mind you not about Communism and the Congress party, not about Communist Party of India and the Congress party of India. These are minor matters. This was a theory of equal irrelevance, as between Russia and America. As the creators of the new civilization, they are both equally good or equally bad. That was my position. And, in fact, the kind of thing that people are talking now, I said as far back as 15 or 20 years ago that I did not see much difference between Henry Ford and Stalin. You find it in my Pachmarhi speech in 1953, I think. ... '52. Oh no, that is the, you see, that is the bigger thing, bigger complex of equal irrelevance between, shall I say the western democ, Atlantic democracies, and the Soviet Communists in the building up of the new civilization. That is not to say that we, I, I, I... maintain that we should keep away from either, only that we should not prefer one to the other. In fact, I remember, yes, to distinguish is not to prefer. We may distinguish between the two on this or that issue, as for instance on the issue of democracy. We distinguish between the Atlantics and the Soviets and the Atlantics are certainly preferable. But then, on the issue of let us say the democratic effort, in regard to, to poor peoples' houses and rents and such like, we distinguish between the Soviets and the Atlantics and the Soviets are preferable -- although what I heard yesterday, if half of what is true, if 1/10th of what is true, a businessman who is having dealings with Russia, I mean, if I were a younger man, my whole world would have toppled. I don't wish to relate that to you because your own idealism might suffer. Or perhaps you know that already. If he was telling me the truth, then it is a very, very serious matter. I mean, I would have to revise all my

opinions about human nature and concur with Rajaji, well, men are men and they will be men all the world over, and women. And diamonds after all are a girl's best friend, whether in America or in Russia. Funny stories, you, you just can't believe them. So, and then, mind you, in '46, we were kind of crown princes. We'd come out as national heroes. Gandhiji was still alive. He looked upon some of us as, you know, if I were to use family terms, if Nehru-Patel were his sons, we were his grandsons. And I remember sometimes I used to wonder why he was ^{more} affectionate towards me than towards any of them. I thought to myself that perhaps it is a grandson-son conflict, you know. And the people also came to us in large numbers. We also used to get money, subscriptions. I remember how, on one occasion, a man came alone with, nothing, you know, well let's say 5,000 dollars, and was so courteous and graceful, didn't kind of pass that on to me, you know. That would be discourtesy. He put it on a table, oh, some kind of a, you know, some kind of a princeling, ... not princeling, ... some kind of a rana [from Nepal]. He bowed waist downwards and said, "Please use it for any public purpose that you..." There were also others, I mean, this kind of chap, you know, I had only two -- one an Indian and the other this because I took part in that rana, that Nepal struggle also. And that went to, I wouldn't say our head, it didn't go to my head, but then it went to the heads of quite a few of them. Why it didn't go to my head, I don't know. Perhaps I was discerning enough to see that part of the glory was, at any rate, due to the fact that we belonged to the Congress and the people looked upon us as crown princes. And if we strayed away from the Congress, we would no longer be crown princes. And, another thing, there was a very great keenness on the part of our rank and file, or at least a large section of it, to leave the Congress, even before the British had been driven out of the country. And some of these leaders were going along with them. My position was, rather, very moderate on this because I had decided for myself that I wouldn't leave the Congress until the British had left the country -- and, you know, for obvious reasons because I felt that the freedom fight would be imperilled, and second, Mahatma Gandhi. That is why, after the death of Mahatma Gandhi, and the departure of the British, I just lost all interest in this question of whether to leave the Congress or not. They all decided. I said, "All right, we're all out of it." But then, once out of it, then out of it, then no more looking back and nostalgia. And I have a feeling that the 1952 results knocked them out, my friends, you know, completely knocked them out. They had high hopes about obtaining 5, 6, 7 states. They obtained none. And I have sometimes used this simile of clothes that have been laundered but not ironed, you know. So, most of the socialist leadership looked like clothes that had been washed but not ironed. This was '52. And then this curious ambivalence was all the time there with them, you know. To be or not to be. To be a separate socialist party or to work in association with the government. How to combine both the things. And Mr. Nehru was quite a charmer. But why he should have been able to charm them beyond '46, I do not understand. I mean, I have known his charm. He was really very charming in talk, in his behavior. When I was his guest, for instance, and for a whole three-four months, he quite frequently saw to it that my mosquito net was properly tucked.

/When was this?/

You know, we were in neighboring rooms in his house.

/When was this?/

This was '36. Towels, and things like that, one wouldn't expect a man of that kind to do this, but then he used to do that. And, apart from this, other ways of charming. The manner he talked to you, the, also something in the voice. He could make his voice so sweet and charming when he so desired, you know, really sugared voice. And I've often wondered whether it was all manners or also morals and have now come to the conclusion that even as manners this is good, very good, and we could have a little more of [that sort of thing] in our lives. I very much doubt whether this was morals. It was manners. And, well I suppose he realized pretty soon that with me this by itself won't do, and he will have to go ~~on~~ along up to a point in the sphere of policies, you know, whereas, with the others, I suppose it was, maybe they were more right, I mean I won't be able to give you a very, very firm answer. It's all a question of hypothesis. Assuming that the other policy would have been followed, of associating with him, of getting along with him, perhaps we might have achieved at least a substance of what we had in mind. And then after he died, we might have inherited him. This was precisely the argument of Keshav Deo Malaviya, who is now supposed to be a Congress left, you know.

/I notice you used the word "supposed.".../

What else? When I got elected to the Lok Sabha, which was very late, you know, because, for one reason or another, the first elections, it was a hangover from the past, you know, that the Lok Sabha is yet not big enough for us, then an insensate kind of pride because, after all I have to run in the whole country for all my candidates and not for myself alone. So the first election that I fought was just four days' campaigning, and the other two months I spent in other peoples' constituencies. In fact, this time I had almost lost, part of the reason being this. After all, I mean, you don't campaign, and my constituency was in this sense very cruel to me. It should know that after all I had to campaign in the whole country and I can't get stuck there. So anyway when I came to the Lok Sabha, Keshav came to me and he put forward this argument that, after all, how long would the old man live? Why don't you understand that? Try to get together all the leftist forces and inherit him. And just to tell you that, inspite of all my stubbornness, I'm not stubborn to the extent of Pratap who refused to dine with Man Singh when he came visiting. I think he made a mistake there. I said, "All right, Keshav, I'm agreeable. I shall not talk about the past, nothing about the past." Well, that is what they were worried about.

/What do you mean?/

When I got elected to parliament, they had fright like hell. What would he talk about? How much? In ~~what~~ possible directions? What effect that would have on the country, on the Congress, on Mr. Nehru and his health? So whatever were in Keshav's mind -- and several others came to me with this

proposition. "Can't you at least keep Nehru out of your speeches?" I said, "All right, I shall keep the past out of my speeches, if that is what you mean, provided I get something in return." And then, I said -- they asked me what -- I said, any two out of six things that I'm outlining to you. One was abolition of land revenue. Second was abolition of public use of English. Third was 60% preferential opportunity for the backward castes and, you know Harijans and Adiyasis and women. And, like that, there were a few others, you know, economic inequality, a fourth thing. Yes, fifth thing was perhaps prices, parity between agricultural [and] industrial prices. And...

/VNM: One as to ten./

Yes, one to ten. That is, ~~income~~ ranges, expenditure ranges. So, I said, "Give any two of these six things." Oh, well, none of them expected me to ask anything more. So, but I remember, yes, Malaviya's answer was, in a way, revealing. He said, "You know that old man better than any of us. You think you can deal with him through such ultimatums? You're not at all concerned about his image?" You know, nowadays, you may have noticed that Indians use this word image very much. Perhaps they have learned it from you.

/American word, yes./

Yes, so there it is. Image. All the time, this word pops up in our conversation, no matter which. Even socialists have started using it. Image, image. So, I said, "Keshav, if he has an image, don't I have an image? What would the people think of me? I have combatted this man and his policies for a whole 18 years." Now, '47 to -- I got into parliament in '63, how many?

/16./

Sixteen, 17 years, "And I suddenly stop talking about him. What would the people think of me? You're not worried about my image." So there the matter ended. And you can easily imagine what would have happened to me if I had stopped talking about him. Everybody would just have dismissed me as a fake.

/What were your feelings towards Nehru? You know, some people have criticized you in very harsh terms for your attitude toward Nehru. One man, as a matter of fact, has said you had a pathological hatred of Nehru./

Nonsense, sheer nonsense. That man must have had a pathological hatred against me, either on the issue of the English language -- and I really don't understand why Americans can't understand that -- or on the issue of equal irrelevance between Russia and America. I know some of these American liberals, like Dissent and, you know, that kind of type.

/...They're rather conservative./

And, I don't know what they are and why they, they just don't know anything about me. They've never cared to find out. I mean, because they pick up some news item like he goes about smearing English signboards with tar and then come to the conclusion that he has a pathological hatred against the English people or the American people, which would be thoroughly unjustified. I love the English language, but in England or in America, not in India. I love it in my home, but surely for public use [sic], so there you are.

/What about the remarks you made after Nehru's death. I've forgotten what they were, but people said that you were unjust./

Nonsense. Again nonsense. I think the best tribute that was given to him was by me. That is, before 1946, the sensitive charm with which he led us before 1946. I remember the phrase because I used it in your city of Jackson, Mississippi. You see, what happened was that the AP, Associated Press, man pestered me about a statement on Nehru's death in Jackson. Surely he wouldn't have known about my existence. He must have been pestered by his Washington bureau and from India, to which I said, "Now look, I'm in the midst of combatting an injustice. I have nothing to say today, but when this fight is over, if I'm still there, you can have that statement." So, the second day when I was released from that paddy wagon, you know, I gave the statement to AP. But, something or the other happened. Either the, no I'm sure because he was so insistent, the Mississippi, Jackson man must have sent it to Washington or New York, wherever is the headquarters, and they must have sent it to Delhi. But Delhi probably killed it because, you know, it was before 1946. And...

/But I think there was some statement in which you were quoted as indicating that you were happy that Nehru was dead./

Nonsense. Nonsense.

/I've forgotten exactly what it was./

Nonsense. Totally untrue. And then what happened was that after my, you know, first there were these interviews and televisions in Jackson, then at the New York airport where I must say there's, I mean, the, the mayor should have come himself, but he sent his man, you know, and then there was a press conference. And, well don't ask me who the fellows were. There was an American girl and an Indian newspaperman. The two of them sent out despatches which were thoroughly unfair to me, the kind of, the kind of juxtaposing and combining, you know. Someone had asked me what would you do if you became the government. What do you think is wrong with this government? And something about Nehru. They insisted. I said, "Now look, the man has died only two days ago. I wouldn't like to talk about him." Then, they still insisted. I said, "Well, all right, if you wish to, I have no desire." And I repeated that thing about his having led us with sensitive charm before 1946." "Whatever it was," I added, "whether it was only the manner or the substance, I cannot at the present moment say. But, as a prime minister, I see no good in him." That is all. That is all. But then this statement coupled with what were the government, as you know, the fellow catapulted, juxtaposed, combined, this and that, and created the impression as though what I had said about the government I'd said about Nehru and then.

/I see./

No, I think it is the, that rather, rather very distasteful kind of liberal in America, you know, who has some very, very small stock of ideas, very small stock of ideas and never cares to find out what the fellow. I remember once somebody showed me a piece by somebody that, as I am not fixed in any place and I go knocking all over the country wiping out English signboards, he couldn't meet me and so on and so forth. Well, it's not my fault if I go [and] he couldn't meet me. But he mentioned that. Some Laski, might have been Laski..

/Oh, yes, yes, the CIA fellow./

Then apparently the CIA has something against me.

/Was it he or Spender who was the one that knew about the CIA? One of them.../

And why the CIA should have something against me I just don't understand. If the CIA means business, you know, means business, say, with regard to China, the CIA shouldn't be at me. That I am against -- oh, yes, there may be some reason for it, I probably don't let their parties grow in this country as fast as they might want them to. No. And I don't know how, I mean, one can't talk of one's, oneself because there is no, no guarantee that one is talking the truth. So all these questions beyond a certain point become meaningless. But then I hope at least you would understand me that I haven't the slightest emotional attitude towards Nehru or his family. I mean, for instance, when I bring up this question of necklace or this or that, people think as though I have some kind of a hangover from the old animosity. Nothing of the kind, I'm doing just my duty to my country. And whoever is the priest or priestess of an organization that you consider evil, naturally you have to attack, that is, the fountainhead.

/Well, what is your purpose in bringing up things like the necklace?/

That this is a corrupt organization. That this can't run the country well. That this whole pack of people are eating up our national produce. While they are rolling in, wallowing in luxury, while the people are dying of hunger. I mean, you or perhaps, I mean, not you, some of these fellows might say foreigners, as also maybe Communists and leftists and others of other varieties, that you stop at the fountainhead. Why should I?

/Stop at the water's edge. .../

Why should I? I mean that means there is something wrong with you if you stop there. I mean, you hit at a poor fellow like Patil or, shall I say, Manubhai Shah or... Charan Singh, no, Charan Singh no longer, C. B. Gupta, hm? Or Prafulla Ghosh. Or Kairon. But you stop there and don't go, proceed further. After all, the source of evil, if I, I may be wrong there, but if I come to the conclusion that the source of evil that is in Kairon or C. B. Gupta or Subaramaniam or S. K. Patil is in Nehru or Indira, that is, the prime minister, does it not become my duty also to expose them? And I have not been doing anything beyond that. And I have spent very little time on these exposures. Much more time...

/Of course, these are the ones that get the attention./

Ah, so, you understand that.

/But let me ask you a blunt question. By raising these issues, are you seeking attention or is it misinterpretation of your views to only focus on these? Are you seeking dramatic effect with, by raising something like the necklace?/

Now, that is nonsense. I have attention enough of the people. And as far as newspapers go, I mean, I don't say that I have become divine or godlike and not at all affected, but after all you must realize that I'm known now to, well if, at least a hundred million people.

/But, you know, I'll tell you frankly, sometimes I wonder about these charges -- not the necklace, let's leave you out of it, but take the Birla supplement, which I discussed with Raj Narain. Before you raise a charge, shouldn't you have the Birla supplement in your hand?/

Ah, we know it from the source. I mean, when I say the source...

/But shouldn't you have the evidence?/

We should have it. But then, when I say the source, please don't misunderstand me, I don't mean the Birlas themselves or Mrs. Indira Gandhi, but then something similar, something similar. Ah, and when you are absolutely convinced about it, that is why, you see, I have been, I personally have been a little slow about that supplement. I wanted to have it in my hands.

/Well, if I can get hold of it, it'll be September, I'll send it to you./

But then, as a parliamentarian, you have sometimes to run risks. Not every time can you have full proofs. Now, for instance, I'll give you an ex..

/But you have to have a case..../

Case is there. It's perfectly clear. Well I'm convinced about the fact that Birlas spent four to five lakh rupees, bringing out that supplement for Indira Gandhi.

/But weren't they just capitalizing on a visit to the United States to promote their own, their own industry./

All right. That's precisely what I'm trying to show, this tie-up between the...

/But suppose Johnson comes to India, which he will never do [end of tape].