

WARNINGS OF HISTORY
TRENDS IN MODERN INDIA

by
K. M. MUNSHI



FORUM OF FREE ENTERPRISE

SOHRAB HOUSE, 235, D. NAOROJI ROAD, BOMBAY. I

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"People must come to accept private enterprise not as a necessary evil, but as an affirmative good."

—Eugene Black
President, World Bank

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INTRODUCTION

One of the principal reasons for the formation of the Forum of Free Enterprise was to alert the public of this country to the dangers of ideological measures leading to a slow diminution of the democratic way of life. It can be claimed modestly that in the last three years the Forum of Free Enterprise has succeeded to some measure in arousing the public to the dangers inherent in the pursuit of ideological measures leading to State Capitalism.

In this context, it gives us great pleasure to place before the public a **collection** of essays by a veteran Congressman who is well known to the public of India. Analysing the trends in modern India, Mr. K. M. Munshi points out the warnings of history. At a time when the onslaught of collectivism and statism, coupled with **emotion-mongering** of politicians wedded to totalitarian ideologies, is weakening the faith of individuals in democratic institutions, it is refreshing to read a realistic appraisal of proposals like co-operative farming and of **basic** democratic institutions like the Rule of Law.

We are thankful to the Bhavan for kindly permitting us to bring all these articles in one book.

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I

WARNINGS OF HISTORY

In our anxiety to attain economic self-sufficiency we often forget the warnings of history. Impatient souls are apt to do it ; in fact, they delight to do it, or obsessed by slogans they have no eyes to see and no ears to hear them.

We have won freedom ; we have so far a stable government. This is therefore just the time to pause and heed the warnings.

What are the forces which lead to the rise or fall of nations? How do nations rise and fall? That implies another enquiry : What are the factors which go to make a virile nation? When do they run amuck?

These factors, though often derived from geographical compactness or the unity of language, are not necessarily dependent on them. Men living in the same geographical area do not necessarily make a nation. Men speaking the same language or following the same religion do not always make a nation. Switzerland and Canada are multilingual nations. U.K. and U.S.A., India and Pakistan, though speaking the same language, are different nations.

Three such factors are invariably found in virile nations : common memory of achievements, will to unity, and habitual urge to collective action.

First, the people constituting a nation have a common memory of great heroes and exploits, of great adventures and triumphs in the past. Japan, perhaps, represents the

finest example of ancient memories, tenaciously preserved. The same could be said of Hindus, but I wonder whether the same would be said about them two decades hence.

Historic forces often have not given a common memory to communities living in a single country ; they often look upon their past from **different** angles, and, in consequence, cannot form a nation. Hindus looked up to Rana Pratap and Shivaji as their heroes; the Muslims admired Mahamud Ghazni and Aurangazeb; in this antagonistic outlook lay the seed of Pakistan. The common memory, though limited, which we now share in **India** is that of mutual influence in the past, and of freedom struggled for and won in the present.

The British and the French in Canada, and the French, the Germans and the Italians in Switzerland, have short but living memories of common adventures and triumphs sufficiently vital to make them a nation.

The U.S.A. has solved the problem in a characteristic way. Every year foreign emigrants **pour** into the country, fleeing from oppression or seeking wealth. However, due to its educational system, in the third generation if not **in** the second, their descendants acquire, as if they were their own, the memories of Washington and Abraham Lincoln and of the colossal achievements for which U.S.A. stands.

In India, eleven years have been wasted by a sterile educational policy. Many things could have been done in this interval to give to young men and women a common memory of our struggle. But it was not done. A generation has now grown up which takes freedom for granted but draws no inspiration from the way it was won.

The second factor which plays a great part in the birth and growth of a nation is the will to national unity in a people. Nationalism implies a sustained effort on the part of the people to **will** themselves into a nation.

But who are the people? In all collective affairs of men, we should **remember**, it is what Toynbee calls the dominant minority which speaks, creates and leads that counts. The masses are passive, following its lead or submitting to its influence or coercive power. When I speak of the will to unity, therefore, it is primarily the will of the dominant minority that I mean.

The will to national unity is hard to develop, but easy to be dissipated. Generally it is dissipated under certain conditions :

First, if the dominant minority has no **sense** of mission as regards the future of the nation ;

Secondly, if its will to unity is fragmented by contradictory loyalties ;

Thirdly, if it becomes psychologically alien to the masses.

All nations which have risen to greatness have been characterised by a sense of mission.

In Japan we found a deep sense of mission. Its people cannot think of themselves as a lost people; they have **faith** in their culture and destiny; they have no regrets and no frustration.

The dominant minority in U.S.A. has also a sense of mission to spread its free way of life throughout the world, to combat totalitarianism and to be in the forefront of material achievements. It is this Pillar of Fire which leads them on and leaves them no rest.

This sense of mission we found very highly developed in Germany. In course of three decades the land twice came under the heels of foreign armies and its people were desiccated as never before in history. And yet their sense of destiny never dimmed; they reconstructed their life long before their conquerors could repair the ravages inflicted by victory.

The strength of Communism is not in the validity of dialectical materialism, not in its armies and collectives, not even in Sputniks. It lies in its intellectuals who, intensively indoctrinated for two generations, have but one mission in life : to fulfil what they consider to be the pre-destined role of Soviet Russia in communising the world and dominating it. The fundamental problem of the world therefore is whether what is called the 'Free World' can produce a **matching** sense of mission.

The Arabs under President Nasser seem to have developed a sense of mission. Does it arise out of just xenophobia or are its roots imbedded in the Arab Collective **Unconscious** remains to be seen.

This sense is perhaps at its white heat in little Israel. Men and women come there from different parts of the world. Often they do not know any common language. Israel itself is suspended precariously over the mouth of a volcano—Arab hatred. And yet they are convinced that this little patch of a desert is their 'Promised Land'; that their race is pre-destined to an honoured place among the nations. Their passionate faith in the Jewish nation therefore is a burning flame welding them together. It drives them to perform the superhuman task of making ancient **Hebrew** a modern bond of unity and face the potential disasters with the indomitable calmness of a God-inspired mystic.

During the last hundred years when we were struggling for freedom, the dominant minority of India had developed a sense of mission. We believed in our right to be true to our own culture; in our duty to suffer and, if need be, die for freedom; in our destiny to be free in order that, with the aid of our spiritual heritage, we could redeem mankind.

If our sense of mission wealens,—as it has been of **late**—that is, if we cease to be true to ourselves and our culture; if we lose confidence that we have a great role to play in history; if we come to look upon ourselves as a miserable, weak and poor people with no pride in our past and no

faith in our future—our outlook will cease to be positive. Frustration, disappointment or despair will seize us. Disintegration will follow.

However, the Indian mind through the ages had a deep sense of mission, and sooner than we realize, the younger generation will recapture it.

Take the second condition. If a large section of the dominant minority prefers caste, region, **linguism** or religion as the object of paramount loyalty, the will to unity will be fragmented. In all countries, most people who constitute the dominant minority have a variety of loyalties: loyalty to one's family, to one's caste or class, to one's region or language, to one's religion and to one's nation. In a properly inter-related scheme of loyalties, the loyalty to the nation should dominate all other loyalties. That has been so in Germany and Japan, and that is the cause of their rise even after their catastrophic collapse in World War **II**.

In U.S.A., as in India, a large number of cultural groups seek their own life. There is also a very strong state loyalty. But all claim to live the American way of life. Cultural diversity only adds to its richness of life but does not undermine the sense of national unity. Even the acute difference between the South and the North and between the Whites and the Negroes, though often bitter, never affects their loyalty to the Union, nor makes them less proud of what they call the American way of **life**.

The process going on in our country for the moment deserves serious attention. In the past, the Hindus had a superior loyalty to their religion, to Aryavarta—the **Karma** Bhoomi—in which they were born. But this group loyalty is being displaced by Indian nationalism and almost in the hour of victory, it, as well as the new nationalism, are being undermined by loyalty to the caste or the region. Prophets of disintegration are talking about nationalities in India, not the Indian nation. In search of regional selfishness we are also apt to forget our paramount loyalty to the country as a whole.

If my loyalty to my caste or to the Gujarati-speaking group or Gujarat is more paramount than my loyalty to India, the springs of national vitality would be poisoned.

A pessimist would think that we are reverting to the pre-Akbar period, when region warred with region and all of them opened the gates to slavery. However, this is a passing phase; but it will pass only if the fundamental devotion of the average Indian to the Motherland is so strengthened that it will sweep away the caste or regional loyalties. We will have to go through distressing trials if this does not happen in the immediate future.

The third condition arises from an impact of a conquering culture upon another. It raises no problem in U.S.A. and the countries of Europe, for there basically the outlook of the dominating minority and the masses is the same, for the leaders have drawn inspiration from the soil.

In India and in several countries in Asia, however, the outlook of the dominant minority which has **grown** up under the influence of an alien culture tends to differ from that of the masses. As a result, the minority is no longer emotionally responsive to the urges which characterise them, as it speaks, thinks and acts under the **influence** of an alien outlook; the masses also do not feel a sense of identity with it. Once this situation arises, the dominant minority, however active, is looked upon as alien and the will to unity becomes weak.

In the pre-Gandhian period, to take our own case, the English-educated minority was Westernized in thought and outlook and the leaders often found it difficult to think in terms of the urges of the masses. Gandhiji could establish a complete identity between the **minority** and the people, because in his fundamental outlook he was one with them. He was to them not a Westernized political leader, but the sage, the saint and the saviour, of whom they had dreamt throughout the ages.

It was expected that after freedom, our dominant minority, following the Gandhian lead, would maintain this sense

of identity with the **Indian** masses. Unfortunately, a new **class** has sprung up which again speaks in Western **terms**—I include Soviet countries in the West—and seeks to force Western experiments on our people. While this class complains that the masses do not respond to its call, it does not see that the fault is its own. It has not learnt to reflect the mind of the masses. It does not know the idiom of their life. It is too deeply engrossed in leading, directing and **organising** from a higher pedestal. It does not **realise** that the aliens, though they may not be in blood and religion but only in feeling and thought, could only enforce a change, they could never inspire it.

That is why the ruling class in many countries finds the Communist technique of coercing the masses to their way **of** living so handy.

The last factor of great importance which goes to make a vigorous nation is the capacity of the people for collective action.

The will to national unity is sustained only when the people are led, time and again, by **the** dominant minority to act with a common motive. The will when **untranslated** into action is only a morbid sentiment. Lurid examples of such sentiment having dominated **us** in the past can be easily found in our history.

In the past, for instance, **we** dreamt of an **Aryavarta** and a Vikramaditya for centuries but it did not generate **power** to take collective action. When Prithviraj **Chauhan** fought **Mahamed** Ghori on the North-West Frontier, the rest of Hindu India looked on, and some of his Hindu **neighbours** nibbled at his home territory.

I have never seen such a spontaneous urge for collective activity as in U.S.A. Given a cause, however trivial, the people, even the children, **organise** themselves for collective effort. Even forward planning in industries is done by voluntarily **organised** groups or universities. Members of the Bar, generally the most individualistic of professions,

arc collectively working for constructive work. They neither look for initiative nor help to the Government. Herein lies the greatest strength of American democracy.

If any man knew the secret of inspiring collective action, it was **Gandhiji**. Not only he gave us a sense of mission but led us to spin in a mass, to learn Hindi and to invite **Harijans** into our temples, to break laws and go and herd ourselves in jails.

In recent years, the dominant minority in India, with its sense of mission weakened, has failed to inspire us to collective action. At one time I thought that tree planting would become a spontaneous national movement as in Japan; our officers, too superior to care for mass reaction, saw to it that it just lapsed back into a forest department activity.

Shramdan again, looked upon in U.P., for sometime at any rate, as a new religion had the seed of a dynamic collective action to reconstruct rural life. It inspired the will to work together for a time. But our development projects, in spite of their high potential for releasing collective action, are just official activities imposed from above; they have allowed **Shramdan** to peter off.

You will see from what I have stated that common memories of achievements, will to unity and urge to collective action, play a great part in the rise of nations. If **these** factors do not exist, there is no nation. If they are weak, the nation is weak too. If they are fragmented, the nation tends to disintegrate. It is equally true that if they run amuck, nationalism explodes through sheer exuberance.

When these factors become very powerfully inspired by an active sense of mission, they often lead to expansionism as in the case of Hitlerite Germany, or to exhausting wars as in the case of the wars which **Napoleon** and Aurangzeb waged. They may also lead to an inflated ambition to dominate the world or to **enrich** themselves at the cost of others as in the case of the Colonial Powers of the recent past.

The process appears to be something like this: When nationalism runs riot, it acquires great strength and collects enormous wealth. Then material prosperity and **hunger** for power obsess its dominant minority to the exclusion of higher values. Once this phase sets in, national resurgence passes its zenith and begins to decline.

Several dangers then face a prosperous and powerful nation. It may invite the wrath or jealousy of rival nations and go down before them in disastrous wars. It may also play up to its reputation and embark on suicidal conflicts, as in the case of the late Empire of Austria.

Another danger, though insidious, is more potent. With great material prosperity and unlimited power, a nation loses its capacity for distinguishing between the true and the false, the right and the wrong, the beautiful and the ugly. The sense of mission disappears and men sink into **sensual** and material beings stripped of a sense of divinity. At this stage they lose their sense of imperishable spiritual values.

The dominant minorities in several countries which are prosperous and powerful today seem to be developing symptoms of decay. They have come to look upon all values as biological, economic or materialistic. This has been leading to the growth of unscrupulous factions and pressure groups. Force and fraud have become the arbiter between all values. Human dignity no longer commands respect. Governments have become or are becoming tyrannical or callous. Quantitative greatness is substituted for qualitative greatness. Family life has begun to disintegrate, men and women wallowing in 'good time.'

I observed a very curious phenomenon in U.S.A. Superficially it looked as if all values have become materialistic and the family life is all but dissolving. At the same time, there are large sections which, with a rare sense of mission and powerful collective urge, combine to combat it. The law of polarisation is operating, and if these forces of the spirit win, U.S.A. will be saved.

Curiously enough, the world having shrunk, the **in-**fective influence of nations is destroying the fibre of weaker nations or nations in the making. We see the dominant minorities of such **struggling** nations **hankering** after glittering externals.

Herein lies the peril. **When** struggling nations set material prosperity as their supreme goal, they become obsessed with the greed to secure higher and still higher standards of living. Not having the will or the means in **sufficient** measure, nor the length of time to achieve them, they become restive, angry and frustrated. Out of sheer frustration, they then lose their sense of mission and in consequence, their will to work. Then follows the collapse of the higher values which made them tenacious and self-respecting even in poverty and weakness.

There is, however, a **difference** between the fortunes of powerful nations and those of struggling nations when they are **attacked** by this **malaise**. The powerful nations may for a time struggle on in spite of decaying **values** and have a chance to recapture **them**. On the other hand, the weaker nations, having lost the tenacity which abiding values give them, disintegrate, and soon invite misery, anarchy and foreign domination.

It is, therefore, essential that struggling nations like India, when embarking on a programme of material advance, should maintain their inner strength which their spiritual outlook has given them. For, spirituality is a necessary element in every creative culture, without which no nation can grow.

Spirituality is not an antithesis of material advance; it **only** negatives the materialistic outlook which hungers for the 'good **things** of life' which higher standards of living provide, as the end of existence.

When **we** claim a spiritual heritage, it is not suggested **that** every Indian is spiritually-minded. Most of us do seek material gain. What is claimed is that the higher values of

spirituality--call it idealism, its pale version, if you are too arrogant to think of God--are looked upon by a very large number of members of the dominant minority in India as an essential element in our existence.

Some amongst us, who **want** us to worship at the shrine of higher standards of living, scoff at spirituality. 'Are we spiritual?' they ask. In other words, they imply that spirituality has no cash value for us. If Truth, Love and Beauty, that is God, are useful, they are good; if not, they are not. Conversely, whatever is useful, we will **accept** it as God; if not, we **will** reject Him.

If ever the dominant minority in this country comes to develop this attitude, its sense of identity with the masses, deeply imbued with a sense of values however crudely understood, will snap. If it cannot conceive of our future as inspired by self-restraint and austerity, by faith in unselfish work, and by aspiration to **realise** something above and beyond sense enjoyment, it will take the next step; it will adopt totalitarianism and coerce the masses to do its will with the aid of fear and coercion. But I know it will not, it dare not. Spirituality is woven into the pattern of our life, and the modern *Charvaks* will **fail** as their ancient **forerunners** did.

II

ARE WE FAILING GANDHIJI ?

Before we consider "What Gandhiji would have expected us to do to-day," we must clear our mind of one thing: Gandhiji's fundamental approach to all situations which **was** dictated by Truth, **Non-violence** and faith in God.

Such was Gandhiji's allegiance to Truth that once he wrote to me: "I once thought that God was Truth. Now I know that Truth is God." His faith in God also was unshakable. "I believe in God much more than I believe in the fact that you and I are alive and I am speaking to you," he once said.

At the same time, Gandhiji's was a fresh and receptive mind till the end. In his appraisal of a situation, he never allowed pre-conceptions to overshadow his judgment. Never did he deal with a situation except with great responsiveness. Again, never did he allow his reactions to swerve from the orbit of his fundamentals.

With this approach of Gandhiji as a starting point, let us try to discover how he would have reacted to the present situation; or rather how he would have dealt with the factors which pre dominate the present situation.

These factors, so far as I can see, are **two**: external and internal.

The external factor is a disquieting one. The world is being progressively overshadowed by dictatorships. All our frontiers have come to be dominated by dictators, by whatever name they are called. In so far as they are purely military dictatorships, they are a potential menace to our national existence and our infant democracy. In so far as they are totalitarian, **i.e.**, dictatorship based on a total **ideo-**

logy, they, in addition, threaten all the human values which **we** hold as sacred and the fundamentals for which Gandhiji lived.

If Gandhiji had been alive to-day, he would have expected each one of us to face this aspect of the situation with faith in freedom, with determination to live by, and if need be, to die for it. He would have expected us to join in a movement of the spirit which would give us a new vigour to combat the forces like **linguism**, regionalism, communalism and group conflicts which disintegrate our national unity. For, these forces weaken our will to resist dictatorship.

In Gandhiji's scheme of things, individual initiative and the free moral development of individual life had always a primary place. He would, therefore, have expected us to resist every bureaucratic or governmental dictate as to how we live and what we are to do. However, the fact is patent that increasing control over many individual and most social activities is passing under governmental control or direction: over universities, over the press, over literary, educational and even religious bodies. Popular leaders strike an air of infallibility and, not to be outdone, we accept the assumption and rush forward to burn incense.

The very basis of freedom is a multi-central life regulated by self-imposed discipline. If we want freedom, most sections of life must function independently of Government; if freedom is not to destroy stability—so essential for freedom itself—it must be tempered by self-restraint. But if freedom leads to mass **coercion** of individuals or authorities—may be by miscalling it as Satyagraha—national existence will be in jeopardy, and to preserve it, Governments will be forced to play an increasingly authoritarian role.

In this hour of potential danger, therefore, Gandhiji would have expected us to sink our differences and, above all things, preserve national stability. If we don't, the situation, like a Greek tragedy, would unfold itself to a catastrophic end.

I now come to the next factor of the situation, what I call the internal one. It can be shortly described as deterioration in the quality of our individual and social life. During the last hundred years of our struggle for freedom since 1857, our great leaders have emphasised the supreme importance of the moral and spiritual values of our heritage to maintain the quality of our individual and social life. They emphasised in us a sense of mission to dedicate ourselves to **secure** the freedom of our **country** and to make Free India not only great but **spiritually** armed to redeem mankind.

Has the class which sets the pace of public thinking any **sense** of mission left? I am afraid not, in any appreciable degree anyhow. On the contrary, we are insistently thinking in negative terms of poverty, unemployment, frustration, complaints and failures. We live in dreams of greed which, as a great political thinker once described, masquerade in these days as 'the cult of a higher standard of living.' We are a poor country. We will never reach the level of material comforts of the West. And yet we are losing, if we have not already lost, the capacity to admire, appreciate or lead an austere life.

We sometimes live in sentiments, sometimes in dreams, sometimes on promises. We have lost the courage to face unpleasant truths ; to take but a few instances, like large-scale illicit distillation in this city with an ostensible facade of prohibition, like the flamboyant feasts and parties in **Delhi**, Bombay and Calcutta when Parliament rings with cries of food scarcity ; like **indiscipline** in educational institutions and the mad scramble for power in public life.

Why have we thus lost faith in the values which are inherent in our culture and which Gandhiji insisted upon? Because we have been divorcing spirituality from **politics** and economics, which **Gandhiji** would have never dreamt of doing. **Gandhiji's** deep spirituality influenced all around him. Why? Because **his** was a religious attitude on life. "My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from religion," he once **said**. His first demand on us was to

'beautify our **mind**' and 'purify ourselves.' He **laid** the greatest stress on the purity of means "above everything **else**." He emphasised the futility of "external activity" and the need for "intensive internal development." He wanted the Congress to become "primarily a self-purification association designed to achieve its goal by developing internal strength."

What do we find around us? I do not say this in a spirit of criticism ; I say it with grief.

We are told all about the **Bhakra** Dams and the steel mills. We have yet to hear Truth and **Non-violence** referred to as of equal importance.

We hear of higher and still higher wages. No one tells us that, for a poor country like **ours**, we cannot afford to give **up** the austere way of **life**.

We make plans with vast physical targets. We have yet to develop any collective effort to infuse an enthusiastic **will** to work, work hard. Is it not a fact that by all standards we are the laziest, most holiday-ridden country in the world?

We found new universities. So far so good. But we have yet to develop a spiritual revolution which would inspire our students to study hard and lead a disciplined life and prevent them from growing up as materialistic barbarians.

We read in the morning papers, of higher incomes, higher production, higher tax collection, higher expenditure on our projects. We have yet to hear what we are to do about rooting out corruption whose pestilential breath poisons our business, official and political life. We have yet to think of heightening our religious **fervour** for a dedicated life of simplicity and hard work.

Why are we not able to do so? Why? Because we are taught to pitch our faith on the new gospel: "Change the externals and men will change." Let more police pursue

bootleggers and people will give up the habit of drinking. Pass laws to curb urban income and people will cease to be greedy. Increase penalties and men would become incorruptible. Provide higher wages and salaries ; raise hopes of higher standard of living ; and men will, by the miracle of money, become truthful and honest, incorruptible and hard-working, living dedicated lives.

We want to follow in the footsteps of those nations to whom materialism—successful, theoretical or dialectical—is the only reality, which have for their goal the improving of external conditions without regard for the spiritual transformation of the human personality. Is there any wonder that the sense of God-given mission which filled our hearts during the last century has begun to fade even from the hearts of those who once had it ?

We are blind to the fact that the people who have hitched their wagon to external change may be rich in material comforts. They are not happy ; they have no faith in man or his destiny. Frightened by the prospects of destruction, they are craving for life, peace and love. They want to survive, but know not how. That is why the sane amongst them expect that something in the nature of redemption will come out of India's heritage of spiritual values.

But what do we do ? When we go abroad, we talk of our spiritual heritage, we publicise the heritage which Gandhiji left behind us. But at home we keep them in a frigidaire, possibly as a dollar-earning exportable commodity.

The false prophets of the modern world have been promising paradise through democracy, through science, through economics, through total social changes, through Communism, through scientific materialism and in doing so, have destroyed faith in human values. All their promises have been belied. All their plans for changing men and life have been failing and will fail. Selfishness has not been eliminated and destruction has not been averted. Egoism has entrenched itself in all spheres of life, in politics, in religion, in educational system, in family life.

Yet with the means of mass propaganda in their hands, these false prophets continue their call to untruth. They invite us to follow every new promise of a paradise, but without leading us to love and to have faith in God.

If Gandhiji had been amongst us, he would have demanded that the spiritual strength of Truth, Love and Faith be replanted not only in individuals but in social and institutional life ; that selfish urges should be progressively eliminated from every sphere of life ; that religion should be transformed into a living spiritual force, translating truth and beauty in daily conduct.

Gandhiji would have expected us not to follow the false prophets, not to give up humility, nor to disregard the paramountcy of spiritual values in life. I know that what I am saying now would sound heresy to some of you. But I confess I am no secularist—I do not want to be one, if by secularism is meant forswearing spiritual values and running away from godliness. For, I know Gandhiji would have expected us to harken to great modern thinkers like Toynbee and Sorokin, who see no salvation for humanity unless spiritual motives in life are resurrected. And in any situation, I would do what I would be expected to do only in the light of what was taught us by Buddha and Jesus among the ancients and Sri Ramakrishna and Gandhiji among the moderns.

III

DESPOTISM—OLD AND NEW

We are in a curious age ; human dignity, and freedom **in** which it can only be maintained, are challenged, **undermined**, encroached upon, or sought to be crushed in several parts of the world not only by the course of events but by human beings themselves. We in India are in a happy position ; we still stand for it ; we, I hope, are ready to defend it. However, in view of the world situation and the situation which prevails in some countries surrounding India, we have to study the forces and the ways in which it is being circumvented.

The greatest danger to human dignity, and therefore to freedom, comes through not knowing its value and not knowing the disguise under which the danger appears. Its greatest enemy today is modern despotism which is creeping over the world under different names and different guises.

Everyone knows what despotism is. It implies the concentration of complete coercive power in the hands of a despot, who may be an individual, a party or a group. The coercive power may be physical, monetary, social or psychological, that is, over the thought and belief of the people. It derives and accepts no authority other than the will and convenience of the despot.

The types of old despotism are found from the Egypt of the Ptolemys and Peru of the Incas to the Austria under Maria Theresa and France under Napoleon.

None of these despotisms were absolute. Their power of physical coercion was restrained by the military and the feudal chiefs and the religious heads. They could not exercise unlimited power of monetary coercion. A **despot**

could loot, expropriate, tax, even extract money by torture ; but, he could never annihilate the monetary resources of all **the** feudal chiefs, the **financiers**, the trading houses, the **monasteries**, the shrines and the farmers.

The old despot had no power whatsoever to control the thoughts and beliefs of his subjects. Nor could he indoctrinate his subjects in any way he liked. The thinkers, the **saints**, the religious leaders, the homes of learning which **radiated** ideas had the control of the thoughts and **beliefs** of men. He **could only** induce men by court patronage, corruption or coercion, to accept his views ostensibly. He had no mass media of communication at his disposal to **hypnotise** people by manipulating the pressure of public **opinion**.

The old despot had very limited power of social coercion. He could cut people to pieces ; he could convert them to his religion and absorb them in the ruling society at the point of the sword. But the large masses of men continued to follow their scriptural or customary ways and could successfully offer social resistance. The whole stiffening process of the caste system during our medieval period was the result of a challenge given by the people to the murderous or **proselytising** zeal of foreign conquerors.

In Hindu India, **despotism** had a very limited scope. **Dharma** was the universal law ; the kings were no more than its protectors. **Danda** (Sovereignty), as prescribed by the **Shastras**, was superior to kingly power. The shrines, the monasteries, the universities and men of learning who followed scriptural authorities or ancient customs, were the depositaries, the instruments and the interpreters of **Dharma**. Personal law, though changing in its nature, derived sanction from the **Dharma Shastras**. A Brahman could bend his knee to the despot or could be bought by presents, but his authority was derived from a higher source. The moral sanctions came from the **Shastras** and their interpreters **were** pundits, **sadhus** and family priests.

The power of monetary coercion could not also be exercised by the despot except in a restricted manner. **The**

Vaishya **Mahajans** were autonomous guilds. They acquired wealth, often used it for charitable purposes, and when occasions arose could buy peace and autonomy from the worst of despots.

Even the power of physical coercion exercised by the kingly despot was limited. He could cut the throat of people on the battle-field, but outside it, he was restrained by the canons of Dharma, as also by the opinion of the pundits who expounded it, and his own kshatriya feudatories who also looked to the pundits for scriptural sanction. The castes were social, moral and psychological fortresses in themselves ; **Hindu** despots, pledged to Vamashrama Dharma, simply could not think of over-riding it. The Muslim despots found it impossible to break its walls.

In this way, in the past, even under the worst of despots life was multi-central. However great was his power, he had to make terms with independent centres of power in society arising from learning, money, popular goodwill, and social and economic organizations.

Modern despotism, which came into existence after World War I, is increasingly uni-central. It flourishes on destroying all bases of multicentral life ; it is totalitarian inasmuch as it seeks total power. Under it, **all** essential fields of life are prescribed by the rulers : What kind of occupation an individual may enter ; what, where, and when to work ; where to live, what to eat, to wear, to use ; what to believe ; what rank or position to hold ; what to think and to say ; what to approve or disapprove ; what to learn ; whether to marry or not, and if to marry, whom, where, and at what age ; how many children to have ; which of these children to allow to live and which to expose to death.

Briefly, the network of the state system is so closely woven that an individual can hardly take any step without touching it and bringing it into action. This form of despotism has been exemplified in Communist State systems, in pre-war Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. As we know from

experience, it recognises no law, human or divine, higher than its will.

The modern despotism exercises the power of physical coercion through military and police action unrestricted by the rights of the individual or the Rule of Law. Its power of monetary coercion is equally unrestricted because it assumes **control** over **production, distribution and consumption** of wealth. Its power of social coercion controls families, marriages and **family** relations. It exercises the power of **psychological** coercion by manipulating and **regimenting** education and recreation : by controlling the **Dress** and other media of mass education. It stifles **religious** activities by propagating the supremacy of materialistic aims and by taking away independent monetary resources from the people through taxation, so that religious charities might be crippled.

The totalitarian State, being unicentral in its ambition, thus permits no authority which functions independently of it. Many and various are the slogans, like nationalisation and planned economy which are intended completely to annihilate private property, trade, enterprise and initiative.

Its psychological control over the masses depends upon suppressing, directly or indirectly, every belief or expression which goes contrary to its own ideology. Therefore, by lavish patronage, it harnesses literary men and men of learning to its chariot wheel, rendering freedom of thought and expression almost treasonable. In the name of secularism, it tries to kill religion ; it wants no deity above its will ; it hampers religious freedom by favouring those **who** are irreligious and by frowning on those who exercise it. It assumes control of the economic life by octopus devices like controls and ration cards. And once the State obtains complete control of services, jobs, benefactions and opportunities, few, perhaps not a single sector of life, can withstand its dictates.

The basic theory which it directly or indirectly favours is that the people are the **owners** of all wealth. **Ownership**

being the right of disposal, distribution and **accumulation**, in practice, it means the State ; the State belongs to those who run it ; and those who run it through such wealth acquire such power as to be able to **extinguish** all independent initiative and resources.

Independent judiciary also becomes a hindrance to the **exercise** of 'popular will.' Fundamental Rights therefore do not count, nor human dignity. The rule of law is a myth. A new doctrine of legality justifies suppression of all opponents. With the army and police and a vast army of officials and bureaucrats, the despotic State system holds the whole society in its grip.

This despotism is the complete antithesis of the *laissez-faire* State ; in fact it is a revulsion from the laissez-faire statism, which, as it developed in **Europe** in the 20th century, became individualistic, utilitarian and hedonistic.

Under such a State everything had to be enjoyable and to give 'good time,' family, marriage, religious **service**, even executions and murders. To be rich and to have all that money could buy became the only absolute value. Naturally, successful money-makers became the prophets of the age. Free enterprise was no longer the little empire of an individual trader or farmer ; it came to mean the concentration of colossal money power in the hands of a few through joint-stock companies and combines. **Such** a laissez-faire statism is simply played out in this generation.

Most of the States in modern times, fluctuate between quasi-laissez-faire and quasi-totalitarian statism. Even Soviet Russia has failed to become completely totalitarian, in spite of its best efforts to destroy the religion and the family. China had recently to give up its policy of establishing communes ; it could not destroy the family, the basic centre of multi-central life.

Between the two extremes, parliamentary democracy provides a **safe** compromise. It leaves the life **multi-central**, while giving to the State the power to enlarge **unicentral**

activities just **sufficient** to make the State invulnerable to disruptive forces.

But with the best of intentions, parliamentary **democracies** are exposed to the necessity of using the powers of the police State under the pressure of the **cold war** and **external** aggression, as well as internal sabotage and **coercive** demonstrations. Not a few of them have been swinging towards all-embracing planned economy, progressive elimination of private property and trade, and coercive **co-operativism**, if not collectivism. Education in most of them has been losing its spontaneous vitality through **governmental** regimentation on the one hand and materialistic and communistic thinking on the other. Contractual relations, even between subjects and subjects, are slowly being replaced by compulsory relationships enforced by the State. Moral standards have been decaying. Family **is** again under **fire** from two sides ; companionate marriages and teen-age crimes on the one hand and the pressure of social atomization through government action on the other.

The old despot claimed to derive his power from God or the Divine Right of Kings. The new despot derives his authority from 'the will of the people,' 'secularism,' 'welfare statism,' 'proletarian dictates,' which in substance is **nothing** but the will of the State, which again is no more than the will of the junta which has the State in their hands.

When the old despot claimed to derive his power from God, there was some chance of a man of God claiming to know better. Under the new dispensation, the despot's **will** only gives content and form to the so-called will of the people and to welfare, and the mass media of communication in **his** hands gives it the power to paralyse independent **thinking**.

Parliamentary democracy is also facing an internal danger. Democratic elections on a large scale mean money. This necessarily implies a regimented party in and out of parliament to face oppositions or win elections. This tends, in practice, to give concentrated power in the **hands** of a few individuals. They win the elections. They have

got the mass media at their disposal. They can keep the people **hypnotised**. By power and promises they can make the masses believe that what they say is the truth. They select the candidates for the parliament and appoint party agents. Without their favour, position, power and influence in public life become impossible.

In this way, individual initiative tends to be choked. Religious influences are undermined. Step by step, the multilateral set-up of society is transformed into a **uni-**central one. Totalitarianism follows.

Parliamentary democracy has the highest chance of survival in England. Its people, even the poorest, **have** a keen and effective sense of freedom. The leaders, by tradition, brook no superman, except during a war. The Judiciary, the Church, free universities and a free press are very well entrenched in sacred tradition. No one in England would dream of crippling the rule of law or starving out religion.

In U.S.A., individual enterprise, and therefore **multi-**centralism, is in the blood of the people. To run **organisa-**tions independent of the Government is a very highly-prized virtue. The universities are independent. The churches are powerful and well-organised. The press is free.

The third most important parliamentary democracy **is** ours. Today we have a free press, Fundamental Rights, Rule of Law, private property and industries, some tradition of free university life, a strong social group life, a deep tolerant religious sense and freely functioning religious orders and social organisation. But it would be foolish **to** ignore that the forces of new despotism are at work, often without our knowing it.

Coercive demonstrations are **breaking** down law and order, forcing the Government to rely on police power. The corruption among the richer classes makes us blind to the increasing bureaucratic control of our economy and its abuses. Private property is practically at the mercy of the

Government. In the name of secularism, which though in India is not intended to mean anti-religiosity, we are helping **to** eliminate religious influence from education and starving religious **organisations** by levying a gift tax on benefaction.

Our elections are getting very costly ; our political parties are well regimented. More and more politicians lean upon towering leaders, earning dividends on docility.

All democratic countries, not excluding ourselves, should therefore be vigilant, lest despotism enter our life on padded feet. We must guard against plans and programmes which, by their very nature, create conditions in which it might become inevitable. The recent Congress resolution on co-operative farming is likely to be one such.

First, the programme, without substantial modifications, **simply** cannot be carried out successfully. We have not enough resources, or trained personnel. Most of the societies are credit societies, financed largely by the State Bank ; the members are putting in scarcely 1/10th of the money. We cannot turn landless labour into **skilful** farmers either by resolutions or by legislative enactments. And to expect the programme to be worked out smoothly is to raise idle hopes which are sure to lead to frustration, paving the way for a demand for drastic action by those who do not relish democracy.

Secondly, co-operative farming has failed in India ; it was tried, if I mistake not, in Madras, **Punjab** and several other places but had to be given up. The Governor of U.P. even could not get the ex-soldier colonies, financed by **the** Ex-Soldiers' Fund, to undertake it. Every farmer holds his little patch of land dearer than life ; he will not pool it of his free will.

Thirdly, if increased agricultural production is the aim, attempts at co-operative farming will be disastrous. No-where in the world has co-operative farming stimulated production. The only two countries which in recent **years** phenomenally increased production are Japan and Israel.

There the success has been due to individual farming, profit incentive and abundant facilities of fertilisers, improved seeds, storage and marketing provided by the co-operatives. And in a poor country like ours, for a long time to come, the family unit working for all it is worth will remain the most economic agency for accelerating the rate of production. And growing more food regardless of slogans and ideological devices is the demand of the hour, if the country wants to avoid the totalitarian devices of food controls and ration cards.

Co-operative farming introduced in Yugoslavia by coercion collapsed. The production was reduced by **15 to 20** per cent under the **1930-40** level. It had to go back to 'general' co-operatives which mainly provide **fertilisers**, marketing and other **services**.

I visited a Yugoslav village in which there was one general (service) co-operative and another what they **call** 'a work co-operative,' to which lands were voluntarily leased by the owners. Out of **650** families in the village, **45** landowners—mostly old or absentee persons,—had leased out their lands to this co-operative for a period **upto** three years, and **45** families of landless farmers had joined. The rest of the village was left to individual farming, with such service aid from the general co-operative **as** was found necessary.

In Russia and **China**, collectivism has **been** introduced at an **enormous** cost of human life and complete destruction of **human** values. The object of it was to break the backbone of the peasantry. It was part of the totalitarian programme.

The Planning Commission **has** accepted the 'anomaly of compulsory co-operation.' The Prime Minister and other leaders have equally rejected compulsion in matters of farming co-operatives. If this pledge is observed, farming co-operatives on any appreciable scale will not be possible. If the legislatures, the ministers, the politicians and the bureaucrats, in their zeal to be 'more royal than the King himself,' go back on the pledge, **we** would **have** broken **the**

back of our farm structure which has stabilised the country for centuries. **If** farmers owning economic holding are kept out of the **co-operatives**, as appears to be the intention, instead of the spirit of harmony we would have introduced the element of class conflict between those with land and those without it. We would then have set in motion processes which will lead us, through hatred and violence, to naked totalitarianism.

Let us be vigilant while our tradition of freedom is unimpaired and **our** faith in multical life well-founded, while our free constitution stands firm and our free press is unmuzzled. It is only by avoiding any drift towards coercive organisation of life, and by refusing to join a race to secure 'Get-rich-quick Welfare' by totalitarian methods that we can maintain our freedom and successfully arrest the progress of modern despotism.

APPENDIX*

It is scarcely a pleasure for any one, much less for me, to enter into a controversy with so eminent a man and so valued and esteemed a leader and friend as the Prime Minister. However, in his Martyrdom Day speech, he has so pointedly referred to what I said about farming co-operatives in my address before the Delhi Historical Society that I am constrained to say that in his remarks he has either missed the points which I made or made no attempt to meet them.

These points are : First, co-operative farming, wherever tried in India, has failed ; this is a question of fact and requires an objective and dispassionate enquiry by experts before the contrary is accepted.

Secondly, nowhere in the world has co-operative farming on a voluntary basis worked. Even when coercion has been used, as in the case of collective farming in totalitarian

*This was issued as a press statement in reply to the Prime Minister's criticism of the speech on "Despotism, Old & New".

countries, food production has not increased. This again is a matter for objective study and not for polemics.

Thirdly, in the absence of adequate and enforceable safeguards, which have not so far been authoritatively foreshadowed, zealous legislators, ministers and bureaucrats, impelled by vague slogans, are sure to drive farmers into joining farming co-operatives against their will. This is nothing new ; every politician is or should be familiar with this tendency on the part of party and bureaucratic machines.

One need not necessarily be a pessimist if he cannot take the assurance of the Prime Minister at its face value that the food problem of India would be solved within two years. It is not a human possibility. Even a substantial advance towards that goal cannot be achieved by methods which have succeeded nowhere, but by taking steps, first to eliminate departmental fragmentation of responsibility in the matter of increasing agricultural production now obtaining in the Centre and the States, and secondly, by vitalising the family farming by providing incentives and service facilities.

Again, it is an exaggeration to call 'enemies of land reform' all those who are of the view that, before any campaign for introducing collective farming is undertaken, the Government and the Congress should make an objective scrutiny of the problem and the conditions under which it can be solved, as also provide guarantees against any form of coercion.

The central problem is : Will the Congress and the Government use coercion in one form or the other against a farmer if he declines to give up his land and convert himself into a farm labourer ? If any such coercion is practised, it would be despotism by whatever name it is called or by whomsoever sponsored. It is therefore the bounden duty of every lover of freedom ready for 'sharfaroshi'—and the Prime Minister is the first and foremost of them—to see that such despotism does not creep into our life by the backdoor.

IV

CONGRESS OBJECTIVE AND CO-OPERATIVES

According to the Congress Objective we have to achieve a Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth by 'peaceful and legitimate means.' In a Commonwealth, power vests not in a group or class, but in the people as a whole, where all men are equal, and where equal opportunities are afforded to every one. This rules out class domination as much as class conflict.

The Commonwealth, however, has to be Co-operative, that is, the order in the body politic has to be built on the free collective activity of each member, in which every member helps, stimulates and heartens the others ; in which conflicts of interests are harmonised by merging the individual and group interests in the creative 'we', so that common comforts, joys and sorrows are shared by all as in a well-knit family. If it were not so, well-regimented soldiers of an army bent on war, the slaves building the Pyramids under the fear of the lash, or the farmers herded in collectives under pressure of the bullet or the slave camp, would constitute Co-operative Commonwealths.

This Commonwealth has to be achieved 'by peaceful and legitimate means.' The means employed must be morally, mentally and spiritually positive. If violence, compulsion or any form of coercion is resorted to, it would negate the Congress Objective. If the means disregard paramount considerations of human values, liberty, equality and fraternity and above all, human dignity, readiness to search and stand for truth, and a readiness to learn by and correct mistakes, the Congress Objective would have been equally denied. To be covered by the Congress Objective, co-operative activity has to be freely chosen and freely embarked upon. It is, therefore, the right and duty of every Congressman to speak freely and fearlessly, when he feels

that anything is likely to lead to a deviation from the Objective.

We have to judge the Nagpur Resolution from two points of view : First, whether it will substantially increase food production and secondly, whether co-operative farming will be introduced by peaceful and legitimate means.

One thing I must say about the Nagpur Resolution : it has been in a sense a sort of blessing. The major leaders of the country have been awakened to the need of fighting for our 'freedom from foreign food.' So long as we have to depend upon foreign food for our sustenance, no industrial advancement, no redistribution of poverty, no well-acclaimed welfare projects can save us from ultimate ruin.

Ours is a food grains economy. Agriculture accounts for about 50% of our national income. Food grains represents about 67% of our agricultural production and 50% of our wholesale trade in all commodities. Again, food represents 53 to 64 per cent. of the components of the working class cost of living index. Any major change in the economy affecting production or prices of food grains, therefore, will be transmitted to the entire national economy. If the proposed reforms do not lead to increase in food production, they would lead to disaster.

It would not be correct to say that there has not been a fair increase in food production since 1940. If official figures mean anything, about 8 million tons of additional cereals have been grown since, that is, an increase of about 16 per cent. It is equally undeniable that a number of large farms have been intensively developed by some well-to-do farmers during this period. And if the responsibility for food production had not been fragmented by being left to different Ministries and Departments, if minor irrigation had received greater attention in this period, if the development projects had not subordinated the agricultural production to other activities, if the Second Plan had not fixed too low a target for food production, we certainly would have made better progress.

Those who blame family farming as not capable of catching up with the needs of the country ignore the overwhelming expert opinion that family farming on small plots, given service aid, is more productive than co-operative farming on large plots.

Recent studies undertaken by the Institute of Agriculture at Anand establish that five-acre family farming has intense possibilities so far as increase of food production and greater volume in employment are concerned. The Government of India's studies in Meerut and Muzzafarpur farming prove the same thing. The prize competitions have also proved that, given incentive and aid in the shape of credit, seed, fertilizer and water, family farming can easily double the agricultural production.

During the Second Plan period, the so-called Japanese method of paddy cultivation will cover one-third of the total irrigated area under paddy cultivation, leading to an additional production of four million tons of paddy : if a greater effort is made, the whole area could be covered, bringing in additional twelve million tons.

Crop competition schemes, perfunctorily encouraged so far, have shown that wheat production, normally 5 to 10 maunds, can be raised to anything between 52 to 72 maunds ; paddy production, normally 15 to 16 maunds, can be raised from 73 to 136 maunds, and potato production, from 79 to 80 maunds, to 754 maunds. And yet, if I remember right, in 1955-56 the Ministry of Agriculture had no funds to organise crop competitions at the all-India level !

What is really wanted is—

First, agricultural production to be placed under one control and direction, with the Director of Agriculture in command at the State administrative level.

Secondly, the Development Projects to be spread all over the country, to be geared up for giving concentrated attention to food production with agricultural officers in direction.

Thirdly, minor irrigation to be concentrated upon on a swift, countrywide scale, by enlisting village co-operation.

Fourthly, prize competitions to be introduced in every village for higher production.

Fifthly, existing service co-operatives to be re-organised on an effective basis ; training personnel for service co-operatives to be taken on hand ; new and competently-managed ones to be set up.

Sixthly, ample credit, seeds and fertilisers to be placed within easy reach of the farmer.

This will look a drab alternative and may not appeal to the party men who want a programme for setting the Ganga on fire to enthuse them. But it is the only feasible one.

But if this programme is followed with enthusiasm, 6,00,00,000 acres of irrigated land at the end of the Second Plan period would be able to produce not less than an additional 2,00,000,00 tons of food without the uncertainty and tension which co-operative farming will involve.

According to the Year Book of Agricultural Co-operation (1943), Northern Europe has proved to the hilt that "the highest degree of technical excellence is entirely compatible with family farming, but only on two conditions ; first, that the land unit is the special subject of State guardianship, (i.e., by maintaining economic unit from 3.25 acres to 25 acres) ; and secondly, that individual efforts on land is supplemented by great effort in purchase, processing and sale."

The efficacy of service Co-operatives in producing this result has been proved all over the world—in Switzerland, Netherlands, Western Germany, Italy, Norway, Belgium and France, where an average arable holding varies from 7 to 16 acres.

In Japan, the land of small farms and intensive production, the average holding is roughly 2 acres. Farmers cultivating less than 1.25 acres represent 41 per cent ; those cultivating less than 2.50 acres represent 73 per cent. An average farm household in Japan is 6.0 while in India it is 5.1 and in U.S.A. only 4.5. There are no co-operative farming societies, and yet, according to the Patil Delegation, Japan has a highly co-operative structure in the field of credit, marketing and supply. What Japan can do, we can do as well.

Everyone in the country, so far as I know, wants the organisation of service co-operatives, though the recent propaganda that they are working well has to be taken with more than a pinch of salt. Steady groundwork will be needed to make efficient personnel and necessary resources available to existing service co-operatives. Shri Dhebarbhai, the former President of the Congress, envisaged 550,000 Service Co-operatives in three years, which means, establishing 550 co-operatives every day—a very grandiose idea ! Attempts substantially to implement this target will strain the energy and resources of the country. It will mean training over a few million of men to competently manage them : this itself is a colossal human problem which cannot be solved in a day. However, if we can do it, even during the Third Plan period, it would be one of the most wonderful achievements in history. Anyway, here the Nagpur Resolution fills a needed gap in our programme.

The valuable part of the Nagpur Resolution, however, is lost in the ideological attractions of co-operative farming which leave wide scope for political drum-beating.

We are told that the practicability of the co-operative farming programme has been considered in all its aspects by a very important group of people. An humble learner as I am, I would like to know something more about this authoritative source, for most of the public literature including Evaluation Report of the Planning Commission, the Reports of the Reserve Bank of India and of the Indian Delegation to China on Agricultural Co-operation, as well

as the State Ministers' conference at **Mussoorie**, have given a very cautious verdict on co-operative farming.

The great difficulty in the way of considering the proposal for co-operative farming is the faith evinced by its protagonists not only in the idea but in its being a panacea for all ills. We would all like to know the estimates on which this suddenly acquired faith is based.

To integrate fragmented units into farms of 200 to 300 acres, 100 or more farmers will have to be brought together. The organisational problem of achieving this without compulsion may involve the efforts of the administration for a generation if not more. The next step will have to be to find the necessary capital equipment and personnel with requisite technical knowledge to man the integrated farms. The capital requirements have been broadly placed at a **minimum** of **Rs. 100** per acre; they will be of the order of **Rs. 200 crores** in inferiorlands. It is just not possible for the Government to raise the aggregate capital resources required for the purpose. I would like the "very important group of people" to throw some light on this topic.

Again, I would like to know : Who would assign tasks among the members of village co-operative farms ? Who would ensure that the tasks so assigned are satisfactorily carried out ? Who again would decide on the methods of evaluating work done ? How are we to guarantee that the manager or the supervisor, who is elected by a majority vote, will not look to retaining his majority support at the cost of efficiency ?

And, if there is no collective evaluation, where is the guarantee against inefficiency and light work being overpaid ? If there is incorrect evaluation, how and by whom would the personal relations between individual members of the farming co-operative be adjusted ? How is the agricultural labour, thrown out of employment by mechanisation, to be absorbed ?

And, is it supposed that a family will work as enthusiastically over the ownership of a plot represented by a piece

of paper as when the family is in actual possession of it ? **And** if the government officers step in to solve this problem, what would be left of free co-operation, or for that matter, of freedom itself ?

These are serious difficulties. We cannot brush them aside lightly. And during the interval—which is bound to be fairly long—when these adjustments will have to be made by trial and error, what is to happen to food production ?

The Nagpur Resolution links Service Co-operatives as a 'first step' to Co-operative Farming ; that is, even within this period, joint cultivation could be started where farmers are 'generally agreed.' This would, to an ordinary mind, imply : first, that no choice would be left to the farmer not to take the next step ; secondly, that family farming will be discouraged ; lastly, that even within the three-year period, if there is 'general agreement' by legislative coercion, the minority will be coerced into joining farming co-operatives.

The words of the **Nagpur** Resolution, therefore, naturally create an impression that the States and the Congress will take every conceivable means—legitimate or otherwise—to implement the Resolution.

In my **Delhi** address I stressed that the Prime Minister and other leaders had rejected compulsion in matters of farming co-operatives. As I had anticipated, the Prime Minister has unequivocally fulfilled this expectation. This is what he has said :

(a) "For the next three years, we should concentrate on service co-operatives," and

(b) "Business of co-operative is in the nature of voluntary business. The spirit of co-operation must come from willing assent from the people concerned. There is no question of coercion, no question of new law of Parliament. It would be introduced with the approval and consent of the farmer."

No one ever doubted how the Prime Minister would react on the question of coercion. For him the means are as important as the goal.

But if this pledge is observed, farming co-operatives on any appreciable scale will not be possible. Dr. Otto Schiller, after a survey of co-operative farming in most lands, has said: "It is hardly possible to show any example that peasants in an existing old village have voluntarily given up their individual use of land and have pooled their land for joint utilisation. This seems to be true also for India."

However, what about those 'more royal than the king himself'? Will the freedom of choice assured by the Prime Minister be faithfully translated at all the lower levels? Will the farmers be free in choosing to join or not to join farm co-operatives? Will their freedom to choose **only** service co-operative or withdraw from farming co-operative remain? Would different experiments in co-operatives be permitted as in Israel?

And a question of all questions: while exercising the choice to keep to family farming, will the farmers get equal facilities to increase production or will they be discriminated against in the matter of facilities of **taccavi**, credits, seeds, fertilizer and water? And if discriminative economic coercion is used, will it be non-compulsion, will it be 'legitimate'?

Already some protagonists have discovered from hidden sources of knowledge that co-operative farming has succeeded in this country. Already the man who wants to learn about the validity of this claim is being treated as almost guilty of high treason. Will these leaders permit truth to be discussed and to prevail? Will they give real choice to the farmer?

In this sense, the Nagpur Resolution has been far from a blessing. It has kindled the **fire** of holy wrath in the hearts of some of its supporters; for, if this **fire** continues to scorch the search for truth, 'democratic centralism' will enter **our**

life, and 'legitimacy' will disappear from the means we employ. There is, therefore, much more involved in the Nagpur Resolution than what it says or what it is claimed to mean.

It is, therefore, the duty of every Congressman to see that at all stages the means employed to carry out the Nagpur Resolution are peaceful and legitimate; that the legislatures, ministers, politicians and bureaucrats in their zeal do not go back on the pledge of non-compulsion given by the Prime Minister, and that the back of our farm structure which has **stabilised** the country for centuries is not broken.

These results will surely follow if the Trojan **Horse** Co-operation proffered by the Communists is accepted; for, by their very creed, they are wedded to eliminating the free and independent farmer by violence to make way for their brand of despotism. To understand the dangers of a precipitate campaign for co-operative farming in the hands of those who set no store by peaceful and legitimate means, let us examine what has happened in Communist China.

The Communists came into power in China by the insurrectionary efforts of the peasants. The Constitution, given by the Common Programme of October 1, 1949, guaranteed protection of the property rights to the **peasants** through land reform. In the same way, we promised land to the tiller till the Nagpur Resolution.

In China, the Agrarian Law of June 1950 initiated land reforms through bloodshed and violence, liquidated the landlords, expropriated their property and deprived them of civic rights. The officers of the State took charge of the villages, 'granted' land to the tillers and enrolled them into organisations, which did not serve their interests but only the interests of the State. All peasants were registered; taxes were imposed and collected by terror. Soon the '**land-to-the-tiller**' slogan disappeared. Attempts were made to convert the State into a monopolistic proprietor of land,

From 1951 to 1955, the peasants resisted the attempts **of** the State to nullify their gains through so-called "**mutual aid**

teams" and "agricultural producers' co-operatives." In this way, co-operatives became the instrument of the State to coerce the peasants.

Strikes, sabotage and violence followed. Farmers fled to the cities. Agricultural production was impeded. Till 1954, according to *Jen-min jih-pao*: "In certain regions, the phenomenon of the blind afflux of peasants to the cities has continued without diminution. In numerous places the situation has even become very serious."

In the conflict which followed, at first the State ostensibly gave in. On February 15, 1953, the 'Decision on Agricultural Co-operatives' enjoined that the individual economy of the peasants must continue to exist and expand for a still longer period of time. The party cadres were admonished for their 'too great haste in the agricultural co-operativization movement' and were exhorted to 'explain to the peasants that their individual property will be protected.'

The State was only biding its time. In November 1953, the State decreed the complete control of the purchase and distribution of grains by the State. Whoever violated the decree was treated a counter-revolutionary. On December 16, party leaders were called upon to extend "agricultural producers' co-operatives" to all parts of the country.

However, by 1956, it was evident that, in spite of the party activity, agricultural co-operatives had failed to produce the crop output. In fact, the co-operative movement had failed. But Mao and his party would not confess failure; they had become prisoners of their own actions and policies. They decided to enforce forced labour on a nationwide scale and strengthen the State monopoly of the means of production and distribution.

The Party felt frustrated. The peasant remained unconverted to Communism. Everywhere, the bureaucracy, frightfully ponderous and inefficient, had a strangle-hold on the productive forces. Further, the farming co-operatives, organised apart from State administration, had developed

their own economic and administrative machinery, which was coming in conflict with the State.

Jen-min jih-pao declared: "Now that the majority of the peasants have joined the agricultural production co-operatives of the superior category, the local *kanpu* (village officers) have at their disposal not only political but also economic means to terrorize the people."

The State-inspired press started slogans to enforce more and more pressing work on the peasants. Once forced labour dominated the entire economy, it required a permanent militia to control it: this was organised. The obedient press waxed enthusiastic over this militia, which was no more nor less than the State's coercive agency to universalize forced labour.

Then the communes were organized and the administrative area of every one was placed under the absolute control of the party. Wages were paid only if the members of the communes satisfied the 'main requirements' dictated by the Party.

A party magazine triumphantly declared: "All the ties that bind the peasants are broken. The frames of individual families which had existed for thousands of years have been completely smashed. Individualism has absolutely no market here."

Now, in some of the advanced communes, children see their parents twice a month. Wives see their husbands only at their meal-times. Grand-parents are isolated in "Happiness Homes."

"We cannot even bury our dead," one refugee is reported to have said. "The party has ordered every one in our commune to participate in a fertilizer-collection campaign and bring in his monthly quota of ten pounds of human bones."

Now, men and women have no rights. There are no human values. There is complete universalization of forced labour.

All this points to one terrible lesson. Once the politicians go mad over co-operative farming and consider it the **be-all-and-end-all** of political existence, search for truth or human values becomes anti-social or anti-democratic in the eyes of those in power. Then the country begins to slide down an inclined plane to reach a position where there is no **common-wealth**, no co-operation, no freedom, no human rights, and where peaceful and legitimate means are forsworn.

Since the country is practically agreed on establishing service co-operatives in the country, let all Congressmen join to make this major issue a success. Let us keep our minds open. Let free discussion take place at every stage on the alternatives before us. Let us, above everything else, adhere to the sanctity of 'peaceful and legitimate means.'

In the three years we would have learnt that the best solution is that every type of co-operative freely chosen should stand side by side with family farming if we have to achieve the goal of doubling our food production without throwing human values overboard.

V

ROLE OF LEGAL ORDER IN A DEMOCRACY

Of late, legal education has come in for critical attention, and deservedly. In India, when started during the British regime, it was intended to provide training for the would-be practitioners; higher study and research in the theories and principles of law was and even at present is, possible only in foreign countries. Things have to change now. Free India has its own Constitution, its own courts, its own legal outlook and its own social needs which demand adjustment in law through research. Our judicial system, though largely based on the British and the American, is **different** in scope and function, and has to be related to our judicial and juristic experience. In the matter of legal studies, therefore, India cannot afford to be 'colonial' any longer.

This objective can be fulfilled only if the law schools, in point of accommodation and library, are adequately equipped and further, service conditions for law teachers are so altered as to attract the best talents in the Universities to that vocation and enable the law teacher, in comfort and security, to **specialise** in one or the other branches. In this case, the University Grants Commission can, I feel, render great assistance.

In this connection I may place before you certain problems, which deserve attention :

First, how to resist the urge to displace English from our Universities, which in a large measure has made imparting and receiving education in law **difficult**.

Secondly, how to prevent education imparted by part-time law teachers, whose main interest lies in the profession, from continuing to be perfunctory.

Thirdly, how to overcome the general impression that education and training in law is just a passport to start a practice and, unlike every other professional training, need not be thorough. This attitude is based on a curious confusion of thought that law studies need not be theoretical, for the aim is to practise, and they need not be practical, for that could only be done when one starts the practice.

Fourthly, how to prevent the best students of the Universities from being lured away from the law studies and the profession to highly-paid Government services which provide security of tenure and the certainty of promotion. As things are at present, by and large, the left-overs of the Universities only take to law studies for want of anything better to do.

Fifthly, how to change the teaching and the examination system, so as to ensure a thorough grounding in the principles of law and to develop the necessary capacity to apply them to facts sifted and ascertained according to the law of evidence. Prescribing large text-books and throwing immature minds in the arms of guide-makers is scarcely the right way to develop a grounding in law or legal skill.

A Bar Association for the whole of India is, in my opinion, necessary to give shape and direction to professional activities; to unify and maintain the ethics of the profession; to strengthen the independence of the bar and the judiciary; to educate the public as to the value of 'government under law'; and to contribute, as a group independent of the Government, its vitality to the free life of a democracy.

Besides this, there are other questions, viz., whether such an Association should be federal, or federal-cum-unitary, or unitary; what should be the nature and scope of its activities; and how are the resources necessary for setting up an effective machinery to be raised. The satisfactory solution to all these problems depends upon whether the lawyers in this country have developed an urgent need for unification and realised their role and mission as lawyers in our society.

Often enough we have heard diatribes against the lawyers and we will surely hear them in the future. Whether they

are justified or not will depend upon whether lawyers have a role to play and a mission to fulfil in the context of the modern world; or whether the sphere of law is no more than a market wherein the lawyer's brain is to be traded for money to secure monetary gain for some person or to save him from penalties.

In spite of the diatribes, lawyers are indispensable to civilised community, more so when it is free and democratic. Every change in the social and economic order, every scientific discovery, every movement of men and things and every act of Government involves the aid, guidance and the decision of a lawyer. So do all agencies of the government, all corporations, companies and institutions. All occupations also need the lawyer, for their members have to be licensed, protected and governed by law.

I realise that the work of the lawyers is scarcely appreciated, but those who fail to do so do not realise that if they were not there, we may have to revert to the days of Chinghis Khan when the will of the tyrant was the law of the slave.

Here I may refer to the fundamental concept of law which determines the role and the mission of the lawyers in a civilised society. In this concept, law is not the same as 'a law,' which may conceivably include the edict of an arbitrary power. As Dean Pound recently pointed out, when we talk of 'law,' it means 'legal order' (*rechtsordnung, ordre juridique*), which supports social control through legal institutions of justice. It is only in such an order that the individual citizen reaches an all-round development and the authorities function in well-regulated orbits. Of this 'law,' the lawyers are the guardians, interpreters and defenders.

This concept of 'law' is as old as the oldest system of jurisprudence. In the opinion of the ancient Hindu jurists, 'law'—which they call Dharma—is supreme in its own right. The sovereign—whoever or whatever is included in the term—is not its source, but its instrument. Its sanction arises from the fact that the moral order is ineluctable, that whoever conforms to it finds happiness and self-fulfilment and whoever

does not, cannot. It is in this sense that the Narayaniya Upanishad says: 'Law is the foundation of the society.' Brihadaranyaka asserts the same when it says: 'Law is the mightier than the mighty.' Manu is still more explicit when he says: 'God first created from his own lustre his son Dharma,' the same as Danda—the protector of all creatures.

Continental jurists took a similar view. Grotius, one of the greatest of them, says; 'Law is a rule of moral action obliging to do that which is right.'

Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, in its Austinian attitude, however, inculcated that 'law' is nothing but a rule issued by the sovereign and which attaches definite consequence to proved facts. This, as I said before, can conceivably be the instrument of arbitrary power.

This theory, though it clouded the real concept of law, did not do harm to the juristic and social thinking in England, for the English people had an abiding respect for law as distinct from 'laws.'

In the field of jurisprudence, Coke, the great authority on common law, supplied the appropriate corrective when he said: 'Reason is the life of the law, nay the common law itself is nothing else but reason.' As a result, derived from a nebulous concept of common law, we have in modern jurisprudence certain principles well accepted like the 'Rule of Law', 'the rules of natural justice,' 'equal protection of law' and 'Fundamental Rights'. These, with the juristic heritage of the French Revolution, have found a place in many Constitutions of the world and find a prominent place in the Preamble and Part III of our Constitution. They are all intended, as stated in the Preamble of our Constitution, to protect human dignity, or to use the words of the United Nations Charter, 'to protect the dignity and worth of the human person.'

The role and mission of the lawyer, therefore, is determined by a special responsibility to uphold this legal order and guard it against hostile inroads: for, such an order is the only

constructive alternative to the tyrannous misuse of power and the suppression of human dignity.

This responsibility becomes all the greater as life changes fast and with it the outlook and purpose of society. In these days, the government operates and regulates the economic system. It furthers the production of the material resources of the community; it also secures their wide distribution. Naturally, therefore, the interests of the community as a whole as understood by those in power, are considered as the supreme goal and the individual important only as an instrument of their will.

Another factor has been the increase of anti-social activities in intensity and scope on account of the advance in technical knowledge and an increasing neglect of moral and religious standards. Governments, therefore, often unwillingly, have to exercise their police power on a large scale.

Though, in view of both these factors, laws must change from time to time, to say that the legal order should also change with the social needs is to deprive it of its sanctity. On the contrary, the laws have to be framed, controlled and interpreted in the light of the legal order so as to contribute an element of stability and certainty to society. As our Constitution has wisely envisaged, it can be maintained only if its provisions are strictly maintained and liberally interpreted through justice administered by an independent judicial agency.

We must, however, recognise that we cannot rely merely on the lawyers, either in the profession or the judiciary, to guarantee free government. As Judge Learned Hand once said: "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it."

At the same time, if the lawyer loses his sense of mission and the Courts take a deferential attitude towards the legislature, the citizen will be left unprotected against the violations of human dignity and the government will cease to function 'under law.'

Apart from this consideration, if the lawyers are imbued with an active consciousness of their role and mission, even the process of studying, expounding and interpreting law would become a highly educative influence. For, it would encourage the average citizen to appreciate the heritage of freedom; to have greater regard for the protection of individual rights; to appreciate and strengthen the principles of a stable legal order; and to inculcate an active desire for a peaceful existence as members of a **civilised** society.

This is the great mission to which we are called. If it is fulfilled, it will not only bring about a passionate love of freedom and induce respect for law, but also maintain and develop our democratic institutions and, in a wider context, influence **international** relations which, if the human society is to exist in freedom, should look forward to a world ruled by law.

It would not be inappropriate for me to look back to trace how well and wisely the traditions of legal order have been built up in India. It is a most fascinating story highlighted by outstanding events.

The great lawyers and judges—both Indian and **foreign**—during the last century, created the great traditions of our bar and the bench. Step by step we absorbed the technique and traditions of constitutional **freedom** and the Rule of Law. The people learnt to assert their rights through courts of law. During the 'Quit India' movement, **when** several of us throughout the country went from Province to Province defending civil liberties, judges—again both Indian and foreign—vindicated them.

The Varadachari Committee in drawing from the best in Anglo-Saxon judicial tradition, which had found a root in the land, devised our system of integrated judiciary as the vital centre of our constitutional freedom. The fighters for Indian freedom enshrined a firm legal order in our Constitution.

The first Chief Justice of Free India, Shri Justice **Kania**—and I remember it with **pride**—**while** inaugurating the

Supreme Court, described in stirring words the independent role of the judiciary. Our Supreme Court in less than ten years has become the guardian of our constitutional **ark** and secured the respect and confidence of the country.

The Law Commission, through its findings, has recently passed mature judgment on the deficiencies of our legal system and pointed out ways and means to correct them. And if I may be permitted to **strike** a personal note—my old friend, the Attorney-General, has given us the shining example of forensic fearlessness, even while occupying an office under the Government.

All these form an accumulated heritage, of which we are all proud and of which the coming generations will reap the benefit in freedom and order.

VI

CRISIS IN DEMOCRACY*

I propose to speak on the new world phenomenon: the crisis through which democracy is passing. Freedom is faced with certain extinction unless democracies develop the eye to see the danger in its magnitude and the courage to face it with determination.

The danger to democracies everywhere arises through pressure from without and weakness from within. In France the strong arm of De Gaulle has saved it. In Germany it has escaped destruction because of the vigorous strength of the Christian Democratic Party and the anti-Communist unity of the people. In Italy it is in the balance.

In Malaya, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines, it is tottering. From Yugoslavia to Indonesia, circumstances, largely created by Communist pressure from without or within, have forced each government to assume a politically un-orthodox pattern to preserve national independence.

This is largely the result of the unrelenting campaign of the U.S.S.R. and China to extend the frontiers of their monolithic empires.

The policy adopted by the Communist monolithic empires has three aspects :

First, it has a double-faced attitude towards nationalism. Externally, it is favourable to nationalism wherever Western influence has to be undermined—to use Khrushchev's words, 'as an instrument of struggle against imperialism.' But if the nationalism, as in Japan, wants to preserve

*Speech delivered by Shri K. M. Munshi under the auspices of the Youngmen's Association, Lakshampuram, Madras, on Wednesday, June 24, 1959, at 6-30 p.m.

its own independence and integrity, 'nationalism', according to Pravda, 'is the well-trying weapon of people's enemies.' At the same time, within its monolithic empires, in the words of Stalin, nationalism should be 'stamped with hot irons.'

The pattern of expansion followed by the U.S.S.R. combines the features both of imperialism and colonialism. Imperialism took the shape of absorbing the republics of Georgia, Azerbezdyn, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In name and theory, these States are autonomous, but the police power, budget, the government and the party leadership, for all practical purposes, are with Kremlin. As a result of the colonial policy, white Russians and Ukrainians have been taking over Asian lands. The Tartars of Crimea and some of the Asian people of the Caucasus have been deported *en masse*, the Russians and Ukrainians taking their place. In Kazastan, the colonising Russians and Ukrainians are now in a majority.

Red China is not far behind. For instance, it has a State-sponsored movement to settle the Hans by race and language in the outlying parts of the Red China, displacing and expropriating non-Hans. The Mongols of Inner Mongolia, the Muslims of Kamsu and the Uighars of Sakiang, now incorporated in Szechwan, have lost their lands and autonomy, subjected as they are to organised Han migration from China proper. In most of these colonies there are revolts of non-Han peoples and 'liberation' campaigns, as in Tibet. The complete military subjugation of Tibet also appears a precursor to a planned settlement of Hans in Tibet. On the occasion of the Preparatory Committee for the Regional Autonomy of Tibet on April 26, 1956, the Chinese General Chang Kuo-hara is reported in Peking papers to have quoted Mao Tse-Tung as saying: 'In a few years the population of Tibet must be raised from two or three millions to over ten millions.' We now know from Dalai Lama that the colonisation of Tibet is an accomplished fact.

The second aspect of considerable efficacy is International Communism, whose sole guiding motive is to serve

the self-interest of the Communist State, either Russia or China. The foreign Communist parties, for instance, are no longer independent parties pledged to the Marxian world revolution per se. In fact, as we see in India, all of them have been integrated into an international Communist apparatus under the direct and exclusive control of the Kremlin.

These Communist instruments would not prove so dangerous in foreign democratic lands but for the stupidity of the democrats of the world. Was it not Lenin who called them 'useful idiots'? As world experience shows, nationalists of the democratic variety, compared with Communists, have little ideological tenacity. When the Communists are weak and search for opportunities to gather power, the democrats are foolish enough to think that they are small fries and do not matter and the risk involved in collaborating with them is negligible. They are unaware of the fact that the Communists, whatever the colour they assume, have a well-defined technique and aim, and in such collaboration they are only Trojan horses. When the balance of power is tipped in their favour, the democrats prefer a lingering death through co-operation with the Communists rather than risk extinction or victory by bold fight.

Why are the democrats so weak? Because the Communists have faith; the democrats' faith in their own aims and ideals is weak and wobbly. And the Communists, by verbal conjuring tricks, have been successful in undermining their faith in democracy.

The Communists create the impression that, if the Soviet technique of foreign trade monopoly, sweeping economic planning, break-neck industrial programmes and the elimination of private property and family farming is accepted, the democrats of the under-developed countries will catch up with the West. Devoid of faith in their own aims and ideals, the democrats, like us, are hypnotised into the belief that we can adopt this technique and yet remain free. We forget that each of these devices requires for its successful execution a totalitarian State, that is the apotheosis of the State at the expense of human dignity and human values; that demo-

cracies are inherently incapable of parting company with such dignity and values; that our attempts to take to Communist ways will only pave the way for the Communists to come and walk over our dead bodies.

If we, the democrats, lead dedicated lives and offer to the antagonists the resistance of higher ideals and aims at all risks to ourselves, then and then only will democracy live, not otherwise.

There are two States which still function as democracies: one is Japan and the other is India.

Parliamentary democracy continues to flourish in Japan because the people are staunch nationalists both by tradition and enlightened self-interest. They have preserved the family as well as the religious tradition which are the reservoirs of moral and spiritual strength. Family farming is maintained intact, enriched by service co-operatives. It is a most progressive, energetic and vigorous nation. It is dynamic in the real sense, not in the socialistic sense of the term.

Japan's national democratic structure is sought to be undermined in diverse ways. As the internal Communist strength is weak, external pressure is being brought on it to give up its friends and render it weak and helpless, so that it might be sucked into the Communist orbit. Red China is bringing economic pressure on Japan to coerce her into withdrawing recognition to Taiwan, with which it has a flourishing commercial intercourse. Even during the few days that we were in Japan, USSR also addressed angry, threatening and dictatorial notes to Japan insisting on its breaking off its alliance with the West, as if Japan was no better than a vassal State. It has forced Japan to accept this year only 85,000 tons haul of salmon fishery when it wanted very much more for its subsistence. And of course, there is the small but determined Communist party which plays the game for internal disruption.

In India, the crisis is of a different nature. We have a democratic Constitution, a tradition of freedom born during

our long struggle with the foreign rule and a fairly **powerful** party in power. Yet we are being hustled out of nationalism and democracy. I use the words advisedly ; for I **feel** distressed to have to confess that, year after year, month after month, we are being pushed out of the free and democratic set-up of our Constitution.

This crisis in India is created partly because our democracy is becoming weak on account of the verbal hypnotism of the Communists ; partly because of the moral decay amongst our thinking people.

For instance, every one seems to have been enamoured of 'socialism,' a Western concept uncongenial to our tradition, outlook and culture. It is forgotten that it covers a multitude of meanings. There is the socialism of **Gaitskell**, of **Mao**, of **Khrushchev** ; the socialism of Dange, Ajoy Ghosh ; of Nehru and Jayaprakash ; recently the one sponsored by Dhebarbhai at a Bombay meeting. We have **Gandhian** socialism too rooted in the soil.

The use of such a nebulous word is but a verbal trick to read into it any meaning which one wants to read into it. Its negative effect, however, is most dangerous. It destroys faith in democracy. It weakens the mind. It paves the way for the **infiltration** of ideas which run counter to the fundamental concept of freedom and democracy.

We are all familiar with the misuse of words by the Communists. The most authoritarian government in the world is a 'people's democracy.' Destruction of the liberties of nations like Hungary and Tibet is 'liberation.' Whoever opposes any Communist activity is a 'reactionary,' 'counter-revolutionary,' a 'stooge of an imperial power.' No party member has a right to discuss any imposed solution from above because of the sanctity of 'democratic centralism.' This jugglery creates a double hallucination: that everything is to be judged from the Communist point of view; that everything is all right with the Communist world so well screened by the veil of words.

The next step is easy to take, as we find in a recent case. The people of Kerala say the Communists have no right to demand that the State Government should be a democratic one because those who resist are Roman Catholics or **Nairs**, as if in a democracy, religious or social **communities** have no right to lead a free life. It is equally maintained that democratically installed government cannot be displaced even if it is driving a nail in the **coffin** of democracy !

The crisis of democracy in India is principally created by semantic jugglery. Take an instance. Suddenly, **co-operative** farming universally to be enforced has become the last word in economic success, political wisdom and democratic triumph. Those who doubt its wisdom, its success or its possibility, or see in it an encroachment on democracy, are 'cheats ; they are 'unthinking ; they are 'incorrigible,' 'anti-social' and 'anti-democratic'; they 'represent vested interests'; they 'lack quality' ! These phrases have been coined to hypnotise or frighten independent thinking into submission. The underlying assumption, highly undemocratic, is that co-operative farming is a self-authoritative doctrine—a doctrine which, in fact, spells death to the **farm**, the family and the Indian social structure, as also universal bureaucratic control of **life**.

It is only when we get rid of this hypnotic **influence** that we can see the true nature of what is happening in **India**. Unicentricity or totalitarianism is being forced on India, by the Government taking over sectors of life which so far have been run and **financed** by private individuals ; by its depriving the society of all independent sources of money to allow organizations to be free of government control ; by its assuming control over the means of production and distribution ; by its undermining the sanctity of private property ; by expropriation being rendered **unjustifiable**; by its undermining the independence of the judiciary, if necessary, even by dubbing ex-Judges of the Supreme Court as 'lacking in thinking.' The octopus control of a self-increasing and self-generating bureaucracy is being

increased over every sphere of life. The self-interest of the State and the bureaucracy at the cost of human dignity and freedom is being held up as the only good.

If the paper, sponsored by Dhebarbhai, drawn up by some one who was floating in the upper ether of **Marxian** verbiage and placed before a small gathering in Bombay, reflects even a little of the minds of some leaders of the Congress, the society is to be levelled down, regimented and coerced into submission ; education is to be 'socialised'; human dignity is to be crushed ; regimentation and indoctrination has to become the foundation of Indian **life!** How so wise and dedicated a person as Dhebarbhai, with his Gandhian background, could sponsor it, has been a mystery to me. To say that I am shocked is to say too little.

If I may revert again to the theme of co-operative farming, it would mean the complete destruction of democracy in this country. When we liquidated zamindari, minister after minister went round the country pledging the Congress that the farmer would for ever own the land he cultivated. The **intermediaries** are now gone. Now his farm is to be substituted by a piece of paper ; in reality, he will be converted into a wage-earner.

The same thing has happened in China where, step by step, totalitarianism has established its ruthless control over the rural area. The landlords were liquidated in the name of the farmer. Later, the farmer was eliminated in the name of production co-operatives. Then the paper ownership was **liquidated**. The rural structure was destroyed. Through the communes, rural China has been placed under the bureaucrats.

The **editorial** in the *Jen-min jih-pao* has borne testimony to the complete extinction of individuality in China :

“ Before collectivization, while the peasants were still working independently, the tyranny of the **kanpu** could only be exercised by means of political pressure. Now that the majority of the peasants have joined the

agricultural production co-operatives of the superior category, the local **kanpu** have at their disposal not only political but also economic means to terrorize the people. They say, “ Since the land belongs to the co-operatives, we have the peasants by the throat and they will do what we want them to.” He who disobeys the **kanpu** has his wages cut or his right to work suspended. They employ this double method of pressure during meetings and even during cultural gatherings.”

Imagine what will happen to the poor, helpless Indian farmer under the new gospel of co-operative farming ! He is already under the thumb of the revenue official. However, he has a little farm he calls his own ; his bullocks and his cows, his little home, his right to treat his land as he likes, his pride and dignity as a free man. All these will have to go, because a few leaders have fallen in love with co-operative farming. And what about the cows and bullocks which in their millions are integral parts of the farm family and which will become superfluous? Perhaps the socialists might show them the way to the slaughter house!

I know of a case which illustrates the dangers of co-operative farming. Some time ago, a man with the foolish faith in co-operative farming, induced some farmers to give up their land and under his guidance formed a farming co-operative. Money was borrowed from the banks. However, not enough was produced on the land, for **the** farmers felt that it was somebody else's business to do the farming. The banks foreclosed the farm for non-payment of money, and the farmers, who cultivated their own farms as owners, are now wage-earners of the banks. I have little doubt that soon the **government** officials will replace the bank clerks.

This whole co-operative farming business is a vast make-believe. In order to secure more and more government aid, some families or some people have set up nominal co-operative farming, a motive which even the Planning Commission has disapproved.

If the Congress goes about setting farm co-operatives to please the leaders, the make-believe will grow into country-wide dimensions, and ultimately new and totalitarian methods will have to be adopted to rescue the reputation of the leaders.

We are, however, told that democracy will still remain with us, that the Congress will use 'peaceful and legitimate means' and that no coercion is going to be used. We know what is happening now. Already by several Acts of legislatures, the minority of the farmers in a village are being coerced into co-operative farming. Ministers and politicians are busy showing their faith in the new gospel at the cost of the poor farmers.

Some leaders of the Congress disclaim that they are going to use coercion, but the Prime Minister has stated in clear words that economic discrimination is going to be used against the farmer if he refuses to give up his family farming. It means that the State engine will use economic discrimination to coerce the farmer into joining the co-operatives. If these are 'peaceful and legitimate means' to which we, Congressmen, are pledged, what will be left of freedom and democracy and of Gandhism?

The fact of the matter is, let us confess, that the democrats in this country have no clarity of mind to resist this semantic hypnotism. And if Congressmen have lost their prestige in the country, it is because they have lost courage to stand up for the principles enshrined in the Constitution.

I had discussions with several leading Congress friends, including highly-placed ones, on co-operative farming. Some of them say that they are in office only to help the Prime Minister and will do as he wants. Some say that at this critical hour they do not want to differ from the Prime Minister. Some others say: why worry, the thing is not going to succeed. I have met some who have never had any contact with farming or co-operative society, never studied their working and are full of rosy illusions. Of course,

there are some who feel that, if they disagree with the Prime Minister, they may not get an election ticket. That is how totalitarianism enters on padded feet.

I would still beg of the great leaders of the Congress to consider this question: Do you want democracy or totalitarianism? If **you** want democracy, leave the farmer the freedom to join or not to join the co-operatives, as in Israel and Yugoslavia and in democratic countries. If once he joins a co-operative, let him be free to withdraw from it. Leave him the freedom to choose. Let him, if he likes, remain independent. Do not use coercion—physical, legislative, executive or economic coercion, nor let him be subjected to economic discrimination. Concentrate on food production at all costs. The world's experience proves that it is only in family farming, duly serviced and financed, that food production goes up. It is the family farming that has raised our output from about 48 million tons in **1950-51** to **73** million tons in **1958-59**. And it is only in an independent peasantry that you will **find** the greatest reservoir of strength for a free and democratic society.

Socialism, Capitalism, and Communism are slogans. There is only one forthright question. Do we want freedom and human dignity, individual initiative and the rule of law, or do we want to be cogs in an all-powerful State machine run by despots?

The views expressed in this booklet do not necessarily represent the views of the Forum of Free Enterprise.

**Free Enterprise was born with man
and shall survive as long as man
survives.**

—A. D. Shroff

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