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*Selections*

*from*

**'THE INDIAN LIBERTARIAN'**

Founded by : R. B. LOTWALA

Editor : D. M. KULKARNI

Part III

(Miscellaneous Articles)

Editor & Compiler : D. M. KULKARNI

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## Selections From 'The Indian Libertarian' Part III

Part III of these Selections completes this series of Articles mainly on 'Libertarian Ideology' as applied to Indian conditions. The motive behind the Publication of this Series was to maintain a historically authentic record in brief of the singlehanded pioneering work put forth by R. B. Lotwala through the columns of his journal, 'The Indian Libertarian' in defending Basic Rights of Man to Life, Liberty, Property and Fruits of Labour, against the inroads made into them by Nehruvian Socialist Pattern, and after Nehru, by full-fledged Statism of One 'Woman's Rule' of 'Indira Gandhi'. The Prime - Minister of India 'Rajiv Gandhi' who has inherited this legacy of Statism, it can be hoped, could no longer remain unaware of the Liberal trends reflected in their recent approaches made towards political economic and Social problems of the day, by the Powers that be, in U. S. and U. S. S. R., which are the need of the hour in India too.

In fine, the Editor and Compiler of this Series may be permitted to express his sense of a Sort of holy Satisfaction that, with the full and valuable co - operation of Miss Kusum R. Lotwala who is the only surviving member of Lotwala family, he has been enabled to fulfil the word given by him to Shri R. B. Lotwala, The founder of the Journal 'The Indian Libertarian' that he would continue to bring out issues of the said Journal so long as finances and Editor's age and health would/permit. The Editor and Compiler is now in 81st year of his age.

March, 24th 1988.

D. M. Kulkarni  
Editor and Compiler.

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## RAJAJI : THE LONE FIGHTER

PHIROZE J. SHROFF

Two thousand years ago, lord Jesus Christ said : "Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden and I will give ye rest." And men and women, young and old, diasesed and hale, rich and poor, wise and not so wise, all flocked round Him to imbibe His message of love, peace and goodwill to all mankind.

Today, when our dear Motherland is facing the grim prospect of being overwhelmed by evil forces of hatred and class-war, growing squalor and degradation, totalitarian tyranny and foreign aggression, Rajaji may well say to his countrymen. "Listen to me all ye who are weary and hungry, all ye who are oppressed and downtrodden, and I will show the path of deliverance from all that is weighing you down." From out of his anguished heart Rajaji has been saying words, which would bring happiness, peace, progress and strength to the people, if only they listened to what he has to say,

True, he has not much to say which is new. His greatness lies in this that he constantly reminds people of the Eternal Verities and exhorts them to live their life in harmony with these Verities. He warns people against the mirage of totalitarian planning and slogan-mongering. He brings all that is happening and all that is proposed to be done, to the crucible of reason and the accumulated and well-tested store of human experience.

Gandhiji in his time led the fight against alien domination. He exorted the people to follow the path of truth and non-violence and dedicate themselves to the service of the country in a spirit of self-secrifice and brotherhood. The common men in their millions in all parts of the country heard his message and followed him till victory was won.

But the breath of freedom which the people inhaled was short-lived. A new and vicious

tyranay was fastened on the people by some of Gandhijis' closest followers. Many people found the new cult of Nehruism not only fashionable but very lucrative. Nehru in his visionary dreams did not have much use for spiritual values. He had become enamoured of totalitarian ideology which stems from rank materialism. Nehruism with its lengthy tentacles worked havoc in the moral standards of God-fearing people of India.

Rajaji was amongst the first to see the malaise which was rapidly taking a hold over the people. He diagnosed the disease with his clear and analytical mind and indicated the remedy which would restore health to the body politic and economic. Like other great teachers of humanity he was reviled and made to carry his cross. But Rajaji, who derives his strength from higher sources, has worn his crown of thorns without a murmur.

His fight against the totalitarian forces in the country has been, in a sense, more difficult than that of Gandhiji against foreign domination. In the historic fight against foreigners, the nation remained more or less united, which is not the case when Rajaji is leading the fight against home-bred tespotism, masquerading under the banner of socialism. moreover, Gandhiji was able to gather round him a sizable band of brilliant and truly dedicated people.

It would be a hyperbole to say that Rajaji has been equally fortunate in this respect. The vote-catching brown-skin politicians have found the Nehru cult very profitable and with direct as well as indirect control over the media of mass communications and lavish use of patronage, they have been able to give deeper roots to their domination. This makes Rajaji's task a very difficult one.

Rajaji rightly says that this task could be simplified if the intellectuals and the business

community properly understand and fulfil the role that they have to play at the present crucial juncture. However, this is a big if". Constant educative efforts are necessary to bring home to all classes of the people in the country the message of Rajaji.

Rajaji was not slow to see that the economic serfdom to which the country has been subjected has brought about the erosion of the fundamental rights as well as the lowering of ethical standards amongst the people. He has, therefore, campaigned for the safeguarding of the fundamental rights, whatever action, though, he may have taken in the early post-Independence years.

Like Gandhiji, Rajaji does not hesitate to admit his errors. This is, indeed, another proof of his greatness. He is simple and unassuming to a fault. Some months ago, Rajaji told the present writer that he (Rajaji) always says what he means and means what he says, and never uses any word of eulogy unless he means every word of what he says. There is no doubt that he uses the written as well as the spoken word with great care. The outstanding humanist that he is, he has great desire to help everyone to the best extent possible.

In spite of his very busy schedule, he is mindful of the comfort and well-being of those who have occasion to come in contact with him. Most of his friends have gone to the Great Beyond, but he cherishes their memory with love and respect. Physically he is frail and fragile, but when questions of principle are concerned, he is firm as a rock. Today, Rajaji constitutes a genuine one-man Opposition in the country. He is a very shrewd judge of persons and events, but is at the same time tolerant and considerate.

He is a true Karmayogi, He has now reached the stage when he does what he considers to be right without being attached to the fruit of his actions. Because of the grace of God which has descended on him, he continues to give the

benefit of his advice and guidance to India and indeed to the whole world. May he live for many more years to guide the nation.

—Mysindia

I. L. October 1, 1971.

### The Rule of Law

THE END of the law is, not to abolish or restrain but to preserve and enlarge freedom. For in all the states of created beings capable of laws, where there is no law there is no freedom. For liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others : which cannot be where there is no law : and is not, as we are told, a liberty for every man to do what he lists (For who could be free when every other man's humour might domineer over him ?) But a liberty to dispose, and order as he lists, his person, action, possessions, and his whole property, within the allowance of those laws under which he is, and therein not to be the subject of the arbitrary will of another, but freely follows his one.

—John Locke,

## Closure Of American Cultural Centres

Some Political and economic consequences

By

A. Ranganathan

Whether it be due to a new turn of the kaleidoscope of Indian affairs or to the temporal coincidences of events in 1969, or merely to the whim of the overseer of the Indian external affairs department, the new policy of the Government of India in not allowing cultural centres run by the U. S. Government to function anywhere except at places where it has consulates, betrays greater bankruptcy of mind than has been customary in the past. A brief assessment of the political and economic consequences of this new policy viewed against the background of India's dialogue with the liberal West is necessary to understand the problem in depth.

It is unfortunate that this problem has been complicated by two misconceptions that have been sedulously fostered by the Government of India. The first is that the Government of India is trying to establish some kind of parity between the United States and Soviet Russia. Yet it is obvious that the Soviet Government is not affected by this new policy because it has not established a cultural centre (except for the abortive attempt at Trivandrum) at any place where it does not have a consulate. Indeed, as things stand now, the American cultural centres at Lucknow, Hyderabad, Patna, Bangalore and Trivandrum would have to be closed down by May 18, leaving only four centres at New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras where there are American consulates. The second misconception is based on New Delhi's statement that the decision was taken because of improper activities carried out by them. Surely the Indian Government need not have waited for 18 years to make this irresponsible charge. In this emotional upheaval little attention has been paid to the moral aspect of the problem. For America has always exhibited a deep 'concern' in the Quaker sense of the term with the problems of developing countries. President Lyndon B. Johnson

observed\* in 1964 that "Friendly cynics and fierce enemies alike often underestimate or ignore the strong threat of moral purpose which runs through the fabric of American history. Of course, our security and welfare shape our policies. But much of the energy of our efforts has come from moral purposes. It is right that the strong should help the weak defend their freedom. It is right that the wealthy should help the poor emerge from their hunger." Here it is relevant to quote from Mr. S. Narayanaswamy, a leading industrialist who voices opinion of the sophisticated sections of a recipient country like India: ".....to believe that 20 years of dependence for financial, foodgrain and developmental assistance on the U. S. has not sold us down the Potomac River but a few American books and magazines made available in elegantly furnished halls of American cultural centers would very effectively do so is indeed dumbfounding logic that may provoke yet another Parkinsonian law." (The Hindu, March 19, 1970).

It is well to note the contrasting patterns of behaviour revealed by the American Embassy and the Soviet Government over the years. Here it may be recalled that the American Embassy was not allowed by New Delhi to establish a cultural centre at Bhubaneswar despite the favourable response of the Government of Orissa. This is not the place to explore the reason behind this decision. But the point worth stressing is that the American Embassy followed the correct procedure in applying to New Delhi for permission to set up a cultural centre. However New Delhi came to know about the Soviet Cultural Centre when a roof beam of the hurriedly built reinforced concrete structure collapsed sometime during December killing nine people and seriously injuring at least twenty workers. In fact New Delhi was not aware of the fact that the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society had begun constructing the Soviet

Cultural Centre in October! It is possible that green signal for this project might have been given by the Namboodripad Government of Kerala. And the Soviet Cultural Centre might well have been completed but for the accident which resulted in a public outcry. Yet Mr. Dinesh Singh, the Indian Foreign Minister, penalized the United States for the diplomatic faux pas committed by the Soviet Government. For Mr. Dinesh Singh has ordered the closure of the American and French cultural centres in those cities where they do not have consulates. Incidentally Mr. Dinesh Singh has not obviously realized that his action is not only arbitrary but also constitutes a breach of the agreements which were worked out during Mr. Nehru's time. Small wonder that this decision was endorsed by Tass. According to the P.T.I. (March 7, 1970) the Tass Report entitled 'Americans shown the door' interpreted the Indian decision as basically anti-American. And characteristically it made no reference to the collapse of the unfinished Soviet structure at Trivandrum that sparked off the controversy involving cultural centres in India.

But it is not as the striking of an attitude, that such a comment by Tass is disturbing. Its importance lies in the sinister significance for the future. For this new policy not only reverses the process of the Indo-American by dialogue initiated Elihu Yale, Ram Mohan Roy and Emerson, but also raises the issue of sustaining a free society in an ambience of modern scientific and cultural endeavour.

Yale University is probably as known to Indians as any college or university in the United States. Very few Indians, however, are aware that but for India this famous institution of higher learning might never have existed. Elihu Yale, born in Boston in 1649, migrated to England and after some years was appointed Governor of Madras. While serving in this office, Mr. Yale took active interest in the welfare of a struggling young college at New Haven, Connecticut, not far from his birthplace. The Governor of Madras collected a cargo

of Indian books and pictures for presentation to the New Haven school. The sale of this cargo realized nearly five hundred and sixty pounds—a considerable sum of money in the seventeenth century—enough to put Yale University on a sound financial footing. And it was peculiarly appropriate that Mr. Chester Bowles, an alumnus of Yale University and the erstwhile American Ambassador to India dedicated the new American Consulate General building at Madras on January 3 1969. Mr. Bowles rightly stressed that it was "one more high point in the continuing friendship and close relations between India and the United States." One of the many manifestations of this dialogue in the economic sphere is the chain of Indo-American co-operative ventures in the South such as Madras Fertilizer, Madras Refinery, Cochin Refinery, Mysore Lamp Works in Bangalore, the Coromandal Fertilizer project in Andhra Pradesh, the huge hydroelectric and irrigation projects at Sharavati Sabaragiri and Nagarjunasagar which were once referred to by Mr. Nehru as the "new temple" of India and the agricultural university at Bangalore and Hyderabad which are partly staffed by expert teams from the universities of Tennessee and Kansas.

Emerson, the great American philosopher, noted for his appreciation of varied cultures was greatly influenced by Indian thought. Here it is interesting to note that William Adam, a contemporary of Emerson delivered a lecture on the life and labour of Raja Ram Mohan Roy as early as 1845. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the Father of Modern India, heralded the dawn of modern civilization. It is clear that during the time of Emerson a deep interest in India's cultural heritage was formed in the minds of many Americans the harvest of which was to be garnered by succeeding generations.

From the time of Emerson until a few decades ago, the exchange of men and ideas between the two countries that today represent the two largest democracies in the world was limited. The primary reason for this lack of cultural exchange—although the phenomenon of Dinesh Singh did not arise at that time! was

America's pre-occupation with nation-building. The great Westward movement from the east to the west coast of the country (a distance of 3000 miles) so occupied the thoughts and energies of Americans between 1790 and 1850 that little was left them for contemplation of the outside world. The westward movement was followed immediately by the great Civil War and its tragic aftermath. However, the dialogue was resumed in the wake of India's freedom—the fields of education, science, technology, agricultural development, industrial growth, and the fine arts have been fruitful sources of shared experiences over the years.

As the Indian economy is one of shortages, the question of priorities is one of vital significance. For the current emphasis seems to be on steel plants and small cars rather than on schools and clinics. It is precisely due to this scale of priorities, that the present writer is inclined to believe that the most abiding contribution that the United States has made to India is in the realm of education. And it is the Indian middle class that will be affected by this decision. For students and professors of science and technology—they simply cannot afford to buy them—will

not have access to the latest scientific and technological text books, treatises and periodicals. Similarly the students of the humanities will also suffer as a result of this decision. Again the average citizen has also a right to keep himself or herself abreast of the times—indeed a collection of poems by a Ransom or a volume of criticism by a Trilling can open up unexpected possibilities of a continuing cultural dialogue with the liberal West. Surely Mr. Dinesh Singh does not want the Indian middle class to float in intellectual backwaters. Indeed the natural backwaters of India—the backwaters of Kerala for example—are lovely, but the idea of floating in intellectual bankwaters even to please Mr. Dinesh Singh is not exactly a lovely thought!

The arbitrary closure of the American cultural centres cannot be regarded as a mere administrative decision. For it is linked with the issue of freedom in the ultimate analysis. Indeed the future of our democracy will depend on the choice we make between a free society and an authoritarian society. The most important question to be faced is whether our democracy which is based on a free society can be subverted to contribute to an authoritarian society.

I. L. April 15, 1970



# The Impact Of British Liberalism On Indian Thought

by

A. Ranganathan

"If the Indian liberals, who at one time led the Congress had maintained their hold, if men like Gokhale, Chintamani or Tej Bahadur Sapru had gone on to fashion independence, the whole of Indian constitutional development would have looked rather like the consentient process in Australia or Canada or even in Ceylon" observed Hugh Tinker in an address delivered at Chatham House. Actually the liberal tradition in Indian politics is much older than the formation of the Indian Liberal party.. whose members lived in a state of splendid isolation. Indeed the political philosophy of the Indian Liberals was based on a kind of 'animated moderation' (to borrow Walter Bagehot's famous phrase which he used in his 'Physics and Politics'). In the final analysis, it is possible to speak of Liberalism as an attitude, a pragmatic approach to political and social problems and not as a particular school of thought or a set of political programmes. The beginnings of British Liberalism can be traced in the seventeenth-century struggle of parliament against the authority of the king. But the word 'Liberal' as a party label gained currency in British politics as a result of the sympathy felt by the Whigs for the Spanish "Liberals" And many of the liberal movements which developed in England in one or two centuries were compressed into a few decades in India in a different setting. To cite an example, Lord Macaulay pleaded for religious liberty in a debate on the civil disabilities of the Jews in a famous speech in the House of Commons. In India (where religious liberty was no problem at any time) Raja Ram Mohan Roy had to launch a Campaign against such customs as 'suttee'. The abolition of 'sutty' initiated a process of social change through the decades so that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar could quote Burke's Statement that "those who want to conserve must be ready to repair" while moving the Hindu Code Bill in the parliament, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's

sympathy for Naples which was attacked by the Austrian Government and his opposition to Spanish Imperialism in South America were inspired by the British Liberal Party's attitude towards the rational movements in Italy, Greece and South America. And the Raja's contributions to the freedom of the press flowed from Milton's Areopagatia, the fountain head of English Liberalism. Thus, the principle of civil liberty, the rule of law and the freedom of the press constituted the background of the first phase of Liberalism in Modern India.

The growth of Indian Liberalism was a direct result of the system of liberal education which the British had introduced in our universities. Along with the classics of English literature the nineteenth century Indian studies political treatises such as Locke's Self Government and Mill's 'On Liberty'. Some Indians were also influenced by the ideals of Cavour and Mazzini who had drawn most of their political ideas from English Liberalism. And the desire to have a truly national government based on the parliamentary form was strengthened by two factors the enactment of legislative measures on the social plane and the steady development of a spirit of nationalism on the political plane. Paradoxical as it may seem, England herself was doubly responsible for the liberal movement in India. While the policy of the British Colonial administration in India had intensified the struggle for freedom, it was the teaching of great British intellectuals like Burke, Action, G. B. S. and Russell that had inspired the love of freedom

A. O. Hume, who saw the need for a nationalist movement to act in the nature of a safety-valve issued an historic appeal in the year 1885 asking for fifty graduates to join the movement—"If

you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation cannot scoring personal case and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a mere impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends are wrong and our adversaries right; then are Long Ripon's noble aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary; then at present, at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she now enjoys." This appeal resulted in the formation of the India National Congress: And in the same year the 'Kesari' of Poona with which Tilak was associated wrote: "The birth of patriotism among us is due to British rule and English education. English education has imparted to us knowledge of ancient and modern history: it enabled us to know the fruits of patriotism among the Ancient Greeks and Romans." In spite of his opposition to British rule in India, Tilak was one who would recognize a temple if he saw it. And he told the people not to forget "that it is the connection with England and the education she gave that have given rise to the ambitions that fill your hearts today." During this period, the British political scene was humming with the ideas of liberal politicians like Gladstone, Cobden, Bright and the theories of thinkers such as Herbert Spencer, Mill and Carlyle. Sir Surendranath Bannerji, a liberal politician, struck a personal note when he remarked, "My professional work greatly helped me in my public speeches as I had to teach the classics of the English language. Among them were the speeches and writings of Burke, Froude, Lord, Morley and others. I thus lived in constant association with the great masters of the English language and in close familiarity with their vocabulary and methods of thought and to none do I owe a greater debt than Edmund Burke, whose political philosophy has so largely moulded my own views about government and society".

The British connection with India has been

the subject of many famous presidential addresses. The goal of India's political evolution as an equal partner in the Commonwealth and not as 'a trustee dependent' was set forth in the presidential address of Sir Henry Cotton at Bombay in 1904. The political accents of Sir Henry Cotton's voice were echoed by Gokhale at Banaras in 1905, preached by Dadhabhai Naoroji at Calcutta in 1906, restated by C. R. Das in 1925 and challenged by Nehru in 1929 when he enunciated the concept of "purna Swaraj" (complete independence). And yet it was Mr. Nehru who observed in a broadcast talk on May 10th, 1949 that a nation does not "lose its independence by an alliance with another country" and pleaded for that "fateful and historic decision" which made India a member of the Commonwealth. Mr. Nehru's solution of India remaining a member of the Commonwealth in spite of her republican status reconciled the concept of 'purna swaraj' and the flexible goal of the Commonwealth in a unique way and can be considered as a fitting climax to a long period of Indo-British political relations. Macaulay once hoped that Indians might "in some future age demand European institutions... and that if such a day ever came about.....it would be the proudest day in English history." Whether we agree with Macaulay that August 15th 1947 is the proudest day in English history or not, (it can be left to British historians to debate on this point) there can be no doubt that the 16th of May 1949 can be considered as the proudest day in the history of India-British relations. It was on that day that Mr. Nehru made a speech moving a resolution for the ratification of the Commonwealth advocating "continued membership of India in the Commonwealth of Nations as set out in the official statement issued at the conclusion of the Conference of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers at London on April 27th, 1949".

In order to understand the Indian liberal approach to problems, it is necessary to view the Indian political movement as a series of continually shifting perspectives. To begin with,

Gokhale was the patron saint of Indian Liberalism in the accepted sense of the term. To Gokhale and his followers John Morley's "On Compromise" provided a brilliant solution to the Indian problem which enabled "the wise conservative to accept the small change, lest a worse thing befall him and the wise innovator to seize the chance of a small improvement while incessantly working in the direction of great ones." But soon a change took place. The change in the political assumptions of Liberalism was due to the new temper in political thought. In 1926, Keynes reflected that Liberalism would "never again be a great party machine in the way in which Conservatism and Labour are great party machines", except for importing a "certain coolness of temper". The essence of liberalism lies in the frank discussion of the political problems of the day. Although Gokhale was styled as a 'moderate' politician, he told the Welby Commission in 1897 that "a kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the present system" resulting in the loss of that moral elevation felt by every

self-governing people. The British satrap Sir James Westland who was annoyed by Sir Pherozshah Mehta's 'liberal' voice in the Imperial Legislative Council complained of the "new spirit" introduced into the Council. Coming to our own time Mr. C. Rajagopalachari has argued that concepts like "socialistic pattern" and the "socialistic State" have been accepted without any known public or private discussions, owing to the "parrot culture that has seized the country" in a recent essay on the "Collapse of Independent Thinking". He has illustrated his thesis with a statement of Burke who compared the role of responsible critics with that of the midnight fire-bell. In the words of Burke "the fire-bell at midnight might disturb your sleep but it keeps you from being burned in your bed". It is possible to conclude, therefore, that the impact of British Liberalism on Indian thought resulted in a scale of values, which in its infinite gradations can be seen in the entire spectrum, from the "liberal" to the "extremist", from the "conservative" right to the "secular" left.

I. L. October 15, 1971.

## DEVALUATION OF INDIAN POLITICS

By  
K. Kumara Sekhar

Formerly, we were concerned about the devaluation of the Indian Rupee. But now we see the spectacle of the "devaluation of Indian politics", what with our leaders openly struggling to retain power each for himself. They are becoming the laughing stock of Indian citizens by their unscrupulous antics, publicly criticising each other for one thing or other, till when yesterday they were all silent on these very issues. Members of one faction try to topple ministries run by the other. Ex-ministers try to topple ruling chiefs: those in power try to keep at bay those who aspire to stage a come back to office. One wonders how those in office who had hitherto hardly any time or energy to spare even to visit their constituencies, should now find such zest and leisure to throw themselves heart and soul into the infightings within their party. It is obvious that administrative efficiency would suffer in the process.

For quite some time there were many amongst us who know that our politicians and politics were being "overvalued" for intrinsically they were of a lower value than their face value. So "devaluation" was inevitable, imminent and inescapable. The politicians undertook the devaluation now of their own accord. The politician in the present crisis has been exposed as an "office seeker", and patriotism has been disassociated from him. The behaviour of our politicians who seem to have lost all sense of of etiquette in the conduct of national affairs, would certainly speak ill of our standards of public behaviour, with the result that their value has doubtless undergone a steep fall in foreign circles. Otherwise why would some have the cheek to speak in Britain, of the need to impose "Beneficent imperialism" on India. None of our politicians seem to care that the means they adopt to solve immediate issues should not in the least tarnish our image abroad. At home they might stop to satisfy the small man: violate, contracts to please him, threaten to nationalize this and that and everything without rhyme or reason, topple a ministry that does not seem to

fall in line. But does all this not reflect on our honour and "prestige abroad", which is a major casualty in the process.

The Frontier Gandhi had in his recent speeches pinpointed the one thing that has been the bane of our country, namely the palpable craze for office of our politicians. This indeed requires unusual frankness and a great deal of courage on his part, for it involves indicting the very persons who were playing host to him and providing him with all the facilities during his present nation-wide tours. God has revealed to him who his real hosts were, namely the Indian people to whom his real loyalty must be.

That a man like Badshah Khan, who has come from abroad, has diagnosed the ills of our country in this fashion, must redound to its undeniable "objectivity". This is no complaint of "cynics at home" or the disgruntled members of the journalist class. It is clear that the image of our politicians has been much too tarnished by their acts and utterances, which we hitherto regarded as motivated purely by selfless patriotism. Now we realize that whatever sacrifices they make, it is impelled by an irresistible desire to command the heights of our national scene, gain access to the peaks of power, and have a say in the course of our economy.

The urge to dominate the masses is there in every demagogue. But the successful ones effectively screen it by a barrage of eloquence, and a series of acts of self denial. However it is apparent our politicians are neglecting the latter tricks of their trade, to their detriment.

Today, it is in vogue for the politicians to blame opposition parties, for the deteriorating law and order situation, from the gheraos of labour to land seizures and bank robberies: however they would be well-advised to estimate how much their own "un-principled infights" have contributed to the "demoralization" of those elements of society who hang on the verge of disaster, and have little else to steer them in their lives, but the guide-lines laid by the behaviour of our public men, whom they take for the "stars on the firmament".

I. L. May 15, 1970.



## INDIANISATION OF THE MINORITIES

The problem of minorities has been engaging the attention of our leaders since Gandhian times. The majority community which in India is constituted by the Hindus, naturally has impressed its stamp on the cultural and social pattern of the country. The minorities on their part, are expected to fall in line with this main stream of the country's life and at the same time enrich it by their own individual contributions. Most of the members of the largest minority community of Muslims in India have undoubtedly done so, and despite the religious zeal for word Islamic solidarity, they together with the members of the majority community have been rightly known in foreign countries as 'Hindus'. The Hindu way of life is considered by all western scholars as peculiarly Indian. the late Dr. Annie Besant went to the length of saying that if Hinduism dies, then India will cease to exist.

But in the case of the Muslims, the sense of pride in their being once the rulers of the major portion of India, comes in their way of complete acceptance of the Indian way of life, despite their innate Indianness which cannot be hidden from the view of impartial foreign observers. If the Britishers had settled in appreciable numbers in India even after they had ceased to be the rulers of the country, their condition would have been much the same as that of the Muslims. Some sections of the Christian Community and particularly Anglo-Indians have for the same reason, yet to Indianise themselves by forgetting the past glory of the Christian imperialists like the British, the French and the Portugese in India and by reminding themselves that as Indians they were as much of slaves as the Hindus even during the heyday of the Christian rule.

This is not to say that the Muslim, Christian and Portugese and French regimes in India have had no contribution to make to the totality of Indian National Culture. Foreign Muslim Rulers like the Moghuls gave us art and architecture.

The Portugese brought us their racial catholicism and the British and the French infused into us the spirit of modernism which was quite essential to the Indian Culture which was stagnating under the influence of Hindu orthodoxy. But it is equally true that the Indian culture incorporated some points good and bad of foreign culture into its own pattern without losing its soul and spirit.

It is this soul and spirit underlying the Indian way of life that constitutes Indianness. With its many religious cults and sects, Hinduism is more tolerant and liberal than other religions and the Hindu at times worships even at non Hindu shrines as devotedly as he would do at his own. 'Unity' in diversity is the breath of his life which is reflected not only in religious matters but also in dress, manners, customs and languages. In one word, as one foreign writer has rightly said peace and tolerance, are the alpha and omega of Indian life.

If Christian and Muslim could imbibe this spirit of seeking unity in diversity, they would become truly Indians and would have no occasion to look to Pakistan or Western Nations for aid or protection. They would therefore do well to shed off their superiority complex born of a consciousness of the past imperial glory and freely live at ease with Indian surroundings and conditions. Even if they could not look up to Rama and Krishna for religious inspiration as Hindus do, they could at least look upon them as legendary national heroes, as great as their community heroes like Clive and Hastings. Akbar and Aurangzeb. The Urdu speaking Muslims could similarly trace with pride the origin of their language to Sanskrit, the mother of all Northern Indian Languages, instead of to the Persian. They may also recall to their minds that the 'khyal' music developed by the Muslim musicians had its direct inspiration from the Bharathiya Music.

What is required of the minorities who have made India their home, is to cultivate a sense of

respect for the culture, language, social habits and manners of the Hindus who form the majority of the population and with whom for good or for evil, their lot is cast. India with her rich diversities, affords a good place of habitation to people belonging to different religions and faiths, provided they develop a sense of belonging to the Indian nation and emphasise in their daily life, the common virtues and even failings, they share in abundance with the majority community rather than their points of divergence and separatism.

This done, they will truly become Indians and receive all the blessings and good things of life in common with the Hindus, without having to lose the right to freedom of conscience and worship as Muslims and Christians. The Parsis in this respect have commendably shown how a minority could retain its own individuality and at the same time participate wholeheartedly

in the broad life of the nation and be an asset to it.

If Indianisation means this, then it should be welcomed by all citizens of India irrespective of class or creed to which they belong. The idea of Indianisation was very popular during the struggle for freedom. The Swadeshi spirit was born of it. The question of the pro-Pakistani Muslims would not have arisen at all, if India had remained a united country as before, and if a major portion of the Muslims living in India had not participated in Jinnah's movement for Pakistan.

It is therefore essential that any spirit of isolationism that still lingers among the minorities be transformed into that of patriotism, worthy of the sons of the soil, so that the minorities might consider themselves to be a part and parcel of the Bharathiya Community and nation.

I. L. 15-1-1970

# OWNERSHIP AND FREEDOM

By Dean Russell

Freedom is based on ownership. If it is possible for a person to own land and machines and buildings, it is also possible for him to have freedom of press, speech and religion. But if it is impossible for a person to buy and sell land and other resources, then it is impossible for him to have peaceful access to any effective means of disagreeing with the decisions of his government. Thus my contention is that, in the final analysis, human freedom stands or falls with the market economy of private ownership of the means of production and distribution.

True enough, freedom may be temporarily suppressed to some considerable extent by various forms of censorship under a system of private property: but, at least, there is still discussion about it (and even objection to it) in the privately owned newspapers. In contrast, my thesis is that the issue of censorship can't even arise in a society in which all the means of production and distribution are owned in common by all the people. Thus, "ownership" is the key to any discussions of freedom.

For example, no one disputes the fact that a slave is still not free even when he is permitted several legal "freedoms." The slave owns nothing that he can use to protest—neither a printing press nor a pulpit nor a speaking platform. Everyone understands that the slave's owner is still in charge, primarily because he can deprive his slave of all material possessions. But few people appear to understand the similar correlation between freedom of religion in general and the ownership of the church buildings. Yet it should be obvious that if all churches and seminaries are owned in common through the government, freedom of religion as we know it in the United States (and in France and similar countries) cannot exist.

True enough, various "freedoms" in this area may be permitted by the governmental owners,

sometimes referred to as the "managers of the people's property." And of course, it is always possible for anyone to be a secret believer. But freedom for a person to disagree completely and openly with the religious beliefs of all other people—and to announce and establish a new religion—is simply not possible in a society where all resources are owned in common, instead of by individuals or groups of individuals. An entire nation of "in common" owners simply will not permit their leaders to allocate scarce "food and housing" resources to the building of seminaries and churches for misguided individuals who believe that the best representation of God is a black woman, or that God is an omnipotent entity who directly interferes in the daily activities of persons who please or displease him. And under a system of governmental ownership of the means of production and distribution, surely it is obvious that there can be no seminaries and churches for those strange people who believe that "in common" or governmental ownership is contrary to the teaching of a Supreme Being who emphasizes individual responsibility, voluntary association, and personal salvation.

## CONDITIONS CONSISTENT WITH FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

If freedom of the press is to have any substance, it must include the following arrangement: Every person (if he is willing to pay a modest price) has easy access to a printing press, and the government itself protects his right to distribute his written messages of total disagreement with various governmental policies and officials. Surely, no one is foolish enough to imagine that this "free press" arrangement can exist when all of the printing machinery is owned in common by the people through their government.

No rational person has ever seriously suggested that Castro should promote an anti-Castro press in Cuba. But even if he were willing to tolerate the establishing of a privately owned "opposition newspaper" in Havana, there is simply no mechanism to procure the needed factors of production and distribution for a private company in a "command economy" i.e., an economy that is operated by the government for the benefit of all the people who own everything in common. Actually, when one tries to imagine a mechanism or system to permit the operation of a privately owned newspaper in an economy of common (governmental) ownership, he invariably visualizes some form of a market economy wherein individual owners determine what is to be printed and how it will be distributed. This, of course, supports my thesis that no freedom of the press is possible in an economy that is owned by everyone and is operated by the government for the benefit of all.

## PRIVATE OWNERSHIP THE KEY

My theory is that freedom of press, speech, and religion are likely to flourish wherever the means of production and distribution are owned by individuals and are operated for profit. (Note that detractors of the press in the United States don't deny that the owner is printing what he wants to print. These objectors merely disagree with what the owner chooses to print and why he does it). But in any nation where all the means of production and distribution are owned in common by the government, there is no possible way for writers, speakers, clergymen, and people in general to express peacefully and publicly their total disagreement with the governmental "managers."

Test this idea empirically by looking at the nations around the world with "command" economies of common ownership and the nations with some recognizable form of "market" economy wherein the Primary motivation for production

is the hope of profit. My "mere theory" of a necessary relationship between the free market economy of private ownership—and freedom of press, speech, and religion—will be empirically validated.

Does censorship of privately owned newspapers, e.g., in Spain and South Africa, invalidate my thesis on ownership and freedom? Well, the mechanism for peaceful dissent (private ownership) still exists in both nations. And thus dissent is at least possible—at a relatively high cost to the dissenter, of course. Even so there is still an encouraging amount of newspaper disagreement with governmental policies in Spain and South Africa. But, in contrast, in Russia where newspapers are owned in common by all of the people, the possibility of editorial dissent doesn't even exist. Since the managers of the people's economy are also the managers of the people's newspapers, obviously they are not going to denounce themselves and their political and economic decisions in their own press.

There should be nothing surprising about that fact: the publisher of *The New York Times* doesn't denounce himself in his own newspaper—any more than do the publishers of *Pravda*, i.e., the leaders of the Communist Party. The private owners of *The Washington Post* are free to advocate the abolition of private ownership, if they wish to do so. It is literally impossible, however, for the governmental owners of *Izvestia* to advocate that newspapers be turned over to private ownership in Russia: for there simply is no way to implement such a procedure. Nor does "who's on top" make any difference. Whatever for as long as the "common ownership" arrangement continues, the press must necessarily reflect the "in common" policies of the nation, whatever they may be.

## OWNERSHIP IN COMMON SETS STAGE FOR POLLUTION

Most people are usually impressed by their empirical comparisons of freedom of press,

speech, and religion in East and West Germany, in China and Japan, and in various other nations all around the world. They can readily see that, in practice and for whatever reasons, there does seem to be a positive relationship between freedom to dissent and the ownership of the Press and so on. And a few will finally acknowledge the fact that the owners of a newspaper in any country—Russia or the United States—simply cannot make a decision and, simultaneously, write an editorial denouncing themselves and their decision.

Even those few, however, are still prone to worry about the "pollution and slums and discrimination and fraud and false advertising that are caused by the free market economy."

It should be obvious, however, that "pollution" is not peculiar to the free market economy of private ownership. The same problem exists in a command economy of ownership in common: in fact pollution has now become an exceedingly serious problem in industrialized Russia with its huge hydro-dams and gigantic river diversions. Since this issue of pollution is clearly and necessarily an "in common" problem under any economic system, it must be solved through the "in common" government—whether it be a dictatorship or a democracy. For neither the Government-owned Tennessee Valley Authority nor the privately-owned Consolidated Edison Company should be permitted to continue practices which destroy the land and pollute the atmosphere.

#### PROBLEMS IN PARADISE

As for racial and religious discrimination, one of the most vicious examples of it exists in the Soviet Union. I am, of course, referring to the "Jewish people" in Communist Russia where the synagogues, as well as the steel mills, are owned in common by the people for the benefit of all. Under a system of ownership in common, it is usually even impossible for a person to leave the country! Discrimination against races and religions is not in any sense a "free market economy of private ownership of resources may well be the only arrangement that can possibly accommodate these historical and emotional issues in a workable manner over a significant period of time.

Slums and slum conditions exist, of course, in Moscow and other communist cities around the world. And even in Sweden—where there are no slums in the ordinary sense and where the government has assumed almost total responsibility for providing the people with places to live—the acute housing shortage is perhaps the most controversial issue in the nation.

"In common" ownership offers no solution stability in prices, for any upward pressure on prices would encroach upon private savings. Who did not know this simple fact?

Prospects of foreign aid are also highly uncertain. In 1969-70, the first year of the Fourth Plan, actual aid authorisations totalled barely Rs. 62 crores as against the needs totalling Rs. 825 crores assessed by the Aid India Consortium. It is rather doubtful whether external assistance on the scale (Rs. 2,614 crores net) expected by the Planning Commission will be forthcoming.

#### The French Example

The indicative Planning practised in France has been recommended by many experts as providing a compromise between the seemingly incompatible requirements of an overall direction of the economy and the scope for individual initiative in the words of M. Bloch-Laive, the concept of indicative Planning as practised in France is "a system in which the re-representatives of the state and the representatives of business and industry meet in an organised manner to exchange information, to compare their blue-prints for the future and to act together both in taking decisions and in establishing points of view on the intentions of the Government." As against this, in India one notices a growing distance between the Government and the business community, a sort of class conflict which, of late, has assumed serious proportions. Perhaps the first essential of successful economic planning in this country is an effort to establish the necessary dialogue and rapport between the Government and the business community, without which no economic planning can hope to succeed. This was suggested by no less a person than by Dr. Rustom C. Cooper.

#### Conclusion

We have swallowed lock, stock and barrel certain socialistic doctrines. We have tried to fit into our democratic frame-work these socialistic concepts, giving them agreeable phrases like "Socialistic pattern of society," "Social Control" and so on. If we are in an economic morass now, it is because of our doctrinaire economic policies, and the sooner we realize it the better for us. Development in our country will have to be fashioned to the tested needs of the people, tailored to resources available with the community of income earners and based on the agrarian actualities of India, if it is to be, meaningful, sensible and satisfying. Therefore, let us be wise.

—Mysindia

I. L. R. Jan 1980

## THE CONSTITUTION AND THE COMMON MAN

By

N. A. Palkhivala

Freedom is fragile and evanescent: man has known so little of it in his entire history. In the last 3,423 years of recorded history, less than one per cent of men have lived under the rule of law and civil liberty

Plato reduced political evolution to a sequence of monarchy, aristocracy democracy and dictatorship: and this has been broadly the pattern of history in the East as well as the West throughout the ages.

In India freedom is not more than one election. When an attempt to uphold the rule of law is called a manifestation of "vested interests", and when sanctity of the preservation of the Constitution is called the handiwork of "reactionary forces", it should be clear to any thinking mind that freedom is in peril.

The Indian Constitution is primarily a Constitution shaped and moulded for the common man. The essential purpose of the Constitution is to ensure the freedom of the individual and the dignity of man and to put the basic human rights above the reach of the State and of politicians in power whose naked juvenile chatter is covered with the figleaf of demagogic claptrap.

In the memorable words of justice Jackson, "the great purposes of the Constitution do not depend on the approval or convenience of those they restrain." The conviction underlying our Constitution is that protection of the citizen against all kinds of men in public affairs, none of whom can be trusted with unlimited power over others, lies not in their forbearance but in limitations on their power. Therefore the Constitution has wisely imposed restraints on the authority of all offices and institutions, the President and the Ministers, Legislatures and the Courts.

After the end of British rule, the only paramountcy which has survived in India is the para-

mounty of the Constitution. Our Constitution speaks the same language in stormy days as it does in moments of fair weather. Any talk of convening a Constituent Assembly or amending the Constitution to abridge liberty, is only tantamount to a confession of personal unfitness to work, what one supreme Court judge aptly called, "our sublime Constitution".

The real danger which India faces today is not from the Rulers who were recently de-recognised and judicially re-recognised and who rule nothing and nobody, but from the men who thirst and hunger for the power to rule and whom Milovan Djilas called "The New Class".

There is and need be no confrontation between the Executive and the judiciary. The judiciary is merely the guardian and custodian of the Constitution, and every time it protects the integrity of the Constitution, it vindicates the freedom of the common man.

The essence of Golak Nath's case was that men elected to Parliament for a five-year term will not be allowed to abridge the basic human rights and the living principles of the rule of law, which are termed the "Fundamental Rights".

The gist of the judgement in the Bank Nationalisation case was that no citizen can be deprived of his property without payment of what would be "compensation" in the eye of the law. All zamindari and agrarian reform laws are already exempted by our Constitution from the operation of this rule. The effect of the judgment in the Bank case was that hundreds of thousands of common men, many of whom have put their life's savings in shares or other assets, will not be deprived of the fruits of their lifetime's labour without a just equivalent, even when the Govern-

ment pursues a policy of nationalisation or other form of 19th Century socialism.

The significance of the Supreme Court in the Privy Purses case is not so much for the Ruler as for the ranker. The basic issues involved in the case were not concerned with Privileges and Privy Purses—with the booming of salute guns or the telling of our devalued currency, the basic issues centred round the sanctity of the Constitution and public morality. Could the Constitution be silenced and its mandate sacrificed at the altar of political expediency? If Privy Purses could be stopped by executive action, the most unsafe investment in the world would be the securities of the Indian Government. The funds of charities and trusts for widows and orphans, and provident funds of millions of workers, are invested in Government securities. If Privy Purses could be repudiated, so can the Government's obligation to pay the principal and interest in respect of Government securities, because the Constitution has used exactly the same words in guaranteeing Privy Purses as for guaranteeing the Government's obligation in respect of securities. What was at stake was nothing less than the nation's honour and its reputation for financial integrity in the eyes of the world.

Such is the grave peril facing the freedom of the common man even in well-regulated democracies, that Lord Justice Salmon, delivering the Haldane Memorial Lecture at the London University on 3rd December, 1970, advocated the enactment of a modern Bill of Rights (which would correspond to our Chapter on Fundamental Rights) to establish and preserve basic freedoms

in England. He envisaged the possibility of the tendency towards the Monolithic State taking the form of a law, years later, which would make it a criminal offence to criticise the Government in power. If such a law were passed, the judges would have no alternative other than to enforce it or resign, unless there was a Bill of Rights which could guarantee the basic liberties of the citizen. If this is the danger facing comparatively safe and secure democracies, one realises the desperate necessity of defending preserving and fighting for the sanctity and integrity of the Indian Constitution. 350 million out of our population of 550 million are illiterate, and the foremost duty of those who are blessed with the benefits of education is to ensure that the majority of our people who are not even aware of their fundamental rights are not deprived of them through the guile of power-grasping politicians.

In the same Haldane Memorial Lecture, Lord Justice Salmon further observed that liberty was threatened both by the unnecessary and increasing number of restrictions on what a citizen could do, and by a minute minority showing a tendency towards anarchy, which was the death of freedom: and he further added that Judges were the last bulwark of individual liberty. The pith and substance of our Constitution is to prevent such encroachments on the freedom of the individual and to ensure that the Judiciary shall always be, in the words of Rajaji, 'an impregnable bulwark for safeguarding justice and democracy against authoritarianism'. The Constitution provides for stability without stagnation, and change without destruction of human values.

● I. L. February 15, 1971.

## LABOUR DESTROYS INDUSTRY

By J. M. Lobo Prabhu

The focus these days is so completely on elections, that few people realise the dangers of the economic volcano on which we are sleeping. Some portent of this emerges in the speech of Ramkrishna Bajaj, before the Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce, and of Professor Lakdavalva, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, while delivering the Shriram Memorial Lectures in Delhi. The latter summed up the present crisis as one of "continued negative industrial growth caused largely by public sector failures in coal, power and steel". He could have gone one step further and found that even the areas of failure in coal power and steel are all due to one common cause, that of labour unrest. Mr. Bajaj did identify this factor and devoted a considerable part of his speech to some constructive measures for the eradication or even the reduction of labour unrest. But at least as reported, he did not use the occasion for the factual illustrations or statistics that hit the eye more than a wellreasoned but drab argument.

Just the gleanings from oneweek's newspapers can provide such a dramatic example of unionised labour which has gone berserk, creating the kind of situation envisaged by Ayn Rand in 'Atlas shrugged', when the world itself is paralysed as undisciplined unions bring the wheels of industry to a grinding halt. That this is no exaggeration can be seen in the examples quoted here.

In Bombay, the whole city is literally starving for bread, because 200 striking workmen staging a sit-in-strike have stopped production by Wallace Flour Mills, from which 80% of Bombay's requirements are met.

Today (15-12-79) the Economic Times reports that planes may be grounded, and cars and buses forced off the road, because there is no

solution in sight to a strike by the oil-unloading personnel on Buncher island. The upshot is that many foreign vessels are still upstream and those already berthed, stranded there, with demurrage payable in foreign exchange to the owners to say nothing of the exchange already spent by government to make on-the-spot purchases of crude at very high prices. A similar strike is reported in Calcutta.

In U. P., striking engineers have gone back to work after disrupting power supply at a critical time, when agriculturists suffering from failure of the monsoon could only have hoped to stave off its worst effects by a reasonably steady supply of current for their pump sets. What is worse, not only has government taken them back without any preconditions, but it has even reverted to their old positions, the few loyal engineers who kept the State's power supply running by doing their duty while their less principled colleagues blackmailed the people and the economy.

If their demands are not met within the next days, Bank officers, the highest-paid of all workers have threatened indefinite strike from December 26th. The list of horrors could be multiplied but these are sufficient to prove the point that whether it is in the powergeneration or other industries, labour is the principal cause of the debacle. The results unfortunately are not confined to the industry concerned, nor are they wiped out if and when the strike ends. In a modern industrial economy, no industry functions in isolation and which the industry is a basic one like steel, cement, power-generation or transportation a strike in one means a spectrum of a disastrous chain of consequential effects in related sectors. No deliveries of crude, for instance, mean no fertilisers for the farmer no medicines for the sick; no movement

of vital supplies—the chain is end less. Similarly, when the strike ends (generally by ad hoc concession at a later stage of demands resisted at great cost, earlier) the cost of the strike, of the concessions granted, and the scarcity value of disrupted supplies all take their toll in higher prices from the helpless consumer.

No government since Independence has ever dealt with labour in a rational manner, each government conceding all that was demanded first, because unionised labour though small, is a highly articulate presence, second, because to side labour is a politically profitable stance, even though favours to one section are unfair to the vastly larger number in the villages who have neither job security nor minimum wages, nor the fringe benefits available to the poorest mill worker in town, who is by comparison an aristocrat of the labour force. There was during the Emergency, a brief spell of industrial peace which was its single most positive gain. This was immediately reversed when George Fernandes began to play the Trade Unionist within the government, giving a field day for all agitators to hold the economy to ransom even on the most unreasonable demands, and in open defiance of the law.

Banning of strikes—a feature of the Socialist democracies we admire—has nowhere found a place in the manifestoes of political parties, though no measure was more necessary for the peace and progress of the country. Failing that, there should have been a commitment, that whenever a dispute arises, it will be referred to adjudication, so that the State then has the option to treat an illegal strike as a simple law and order

problem, capable of being dealt with, under the law. Nor has any Party mapped out a strategy for handling labour, though this is the need of the hour. It is necessary that in a firm, factory or an industry taken as whole, not more than one union is recognised, and this also, on the basis of majority membership as the existence of many units means that a settlement arrived at by one union may be foiled by demands from another union, each of them competing in being unreasonable. Often, too, most workers given the chance to express themselves would not resort to strike, which is thrust on them whether they like it or not. The decision whether or not to strike should be taken by secret ballot. Workers indulging in illegal strike should never on ANY account be reinstated, but forthwith replaced by substitutes from the vast army of the unemployed, or, if special skills are required, by requisitioning the services of retired persons (as in Banks) or by the armed forces (for running the trains) as the case may be. Above all, every effort should be made to extend the principle of productivity bonus, in respect of which the Railway under Mr. T. A. Pai has made a bold beginning. If work loads, especially those for technical jobs can be defined precisely, it would be salutary if the principle of productivity is extended to wages, as well.

Without such a strategy, and the political will to implement it, our whole industrial infrastructure built up at such cost, may, like the fairy castles envisaged by Prospero in 'The Tempest', dissolve, fade away, and leave not a wrack behind.

—INSIGHT

I. L. January 1980.

## M. N. ROY AND INDIAN SECULARISM

By

G. D. Parikh

WHILE the concept of 'Indian' secularism may be vague and nebulous, it is generally claimed that it has a predominantly political meaning; on the attainment of independence, the State which emerged in India is a secular State. The general agreement which this claim seems to evoke is mostly formal, for different groups and parties understand and interpret the term in different ways. We thus remain as divided among ourselves as ever.

The differences should be distinguished from those that may sometimes be found among the secularists themselves, for secularism does not demand conformity to any political creed or commitment to any political institution: they are differences about the meaning of secularism itself. The vagueness that has grown around the concept and the different meanings attributed to it are mostly a result of its political connotation. As M. N. Roy clearly indicated, the dividing line between the secular and non-secular state is seldom sharp or well-defined in our times.

Theocracy is rule of the priesthood. A State, on the other hand, is secular when it is not organically associated with a particular religion which relation persisted through centuries even after political power was wrested from the Priestcraft. Dethronement of the priest or the monk does not by itself mean a secular State. His enthronement on the other hand is no longer a practical proposition. This is obvious for the simple reason that religion can no longer provide answers to the manifold problems of life and conduct which it seeks to regulate. The solutions to the numerous complex problems of our social existence must be sought or devised in the light of secular forces and secular tests.

The widely prevalent belief among us that a secular State can be established or built up in

a non-secular society is in no sense a belief arising naturally from the conditions obtaining in the country. It was a product of an accidental combination of historical conditions and it spread rapidly largely because of the enormous prestige enjoyed by the nationalist leaders, particularly by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It came to be accepted as a matter of expediency in the immediate background of "brutal and barbarous conflicts that raged all over the country during the period of transition from one rule to another". The Hindu-Muslim conflicts in the late forties were no longer mere communal conflicts or those between two religious groups; they were the outcome of the challenge of the two-nation theory which sought to identify 'nation' with a religious group. Indian nationalism could only distinguish itself in the face of that challenge by claiming to be all-inclusive, to represent a force which transcended the limits of any particular religious group. The term 'secular' came to be used for describing that distinction. As the challenge of the two-nation theory became more and more formidable, the national movement decried the influence of religion in politics and got more and more wedded to this concept. But its difficulties in containing the mutually hostile reactions of the Hindus and the Muslims, produced by the intransigence of each other, went on continually increasing during that period.

Advocates of secularism, being most of them religious-minded, naturally sought to confine its meaning to the political sphere and to interpret it in a manner as would keep clear of the religious susceptibilities of the people. A secular State it was urged, is a State, neutral to different religions; it is tolerant and treats all religions alike; it guarantees the fullest religious freedom and does not interfere with any religion. This I believe remains to be the interpretation prevalent today.

One consequence of this position was that secularism came to mean not so much an indifference to religion as a greater regard for and sensitiveness to the religious susceptibilities, especially of the minorities. An equal treatment to all could easily and naturally be interpreted to mean a greater care of the Weak. Personal Law of the Hindus and the Muslims is a case in point. This attitude spoiled the minorities by an under pampering and annoyed the majority through neglect sometimes even of its legitimate claims. Thus in a cultural climate dominated by religion, what came to grow was a skepticism about secularism as a steady under current along with its apparent universal acceptance.

Secularism as an attribute of the new State appeared to be essentially modern and in keeping with the spirit of the times. It lent an air of legitimacy to the new regime, placing Pakistan at the same time in an unfavourable light as a religious State. The prevalent religious atmosphere, on the other hand led to a definition of this legitimising attribute which was essentially self-stultifying. It only encouraged more and more wedded to this concept. But its difficulties in containing the mutually hostile reaction was essentially self-stultifying. It only encouraged the non-secular, and even the anti-secular, forces to grow; the secular State, in so far as its secular character was concerned, remained weak and ineffectual. The continuing challenge of the antiseccular forces need not cause any surprise. Its persistent nature flows directly from the fact that an overwhelming majority of the rulers and those in opposition do not emotionally accept the idea of a secular State.

Arguing in this background, M. N. Roy maintained that even the regime in a country which claims to be the homeland of a group professing a particular religion does not thereby become a theocratic or a religious State. The issue between a religious and a secular State is now

an antiquated issue. All States in our times have to move in the direction of secularism. The inadequacies of religion in dealing with the problems of the modern world are now generally acknowledged and the universal prevalence of the trend, towards secularisation is recognised. But this by itself can hardly be regarded as satisfactory. As Professor Smith points out; "The forms of westernisation and modernisation at work in India are all on the side of the Secular State. Industrialisation, urbanisation and the break up of the joint family system greatly increased literacy and opportunities for higher education all tend to promote the general secularisation of both public and private life. The indifference to religion which characterises the contemporary western outlook has already made a powerful impact on certain sections of Indian society, and the process is a continuing one, whether good or bad in terms of the individual, this process tends to strengthen the secular State."

It was its neutrality to values which made Roy subject the concept of secular State to a further scrutiny. There was nothing very special about being a secular State, for all States were tending to be so. Roy was not prepared to concede that a secular State was in itself desirable. To determine its desirability, a further question had to be raised: "What type of secular State will it be; that is the real issue. Will it be democratic, socialist, totalitarian, corporative, so on and so forth? Hitler's National Socialist State was secular; so was Mussolini's Corporative State and proletarian dictatorship is also a type of secular State. Therefore, all this emphasis on secular state is pointless." It is obvious that Roy was not arguing against the secular State as such. He was critical of those who sought to claim a special virtue for it in terms of freedom and progress.

It may be that the secular State in the West signified a separation of the Church and the State. This was the result of the fact that Christianity is an organised religion and does not

seek to regulate the whole of man's life and conduct. Again, cultural life in the West had developed to a level at which cleavage between the Church and the State made the separation of their jurisdictions almost a formality. There are nevertheless cases in which such separation has not taken place; the State in such cases remains associated with a particular religion and is still marked by a secular approach in most of its activities. Roy therefore concludes that the fact of separation of the Church and the State is not so important as the development of the Cultural level of the people.

In the absence of such cultural development a secular State cannot be established or built. The main difficulty in its way consisted in the ignorance, the superstitions and the general cultural backwardness of the people. The effects of these had become obvious soon after the attainment of independence. The Constitution of the Indian Republic, it is true, created by and large a secular political organisation, although there were certain anomalies. It could be hoped that these would disappear in course of time as the Constitution begins to operate. Actual experience of its working, however, proved otherwise. Based on adult franchise, the new political structure led all parties to pay homage to the prevalent religious superstitions in their anxiety to win over the support of the people. Roy criticised the participation in religious ceremonies by the Head of the State, Ministers of Government and officers, and pointed out that the 'demonstrative religiosity' displayed through them was quite different from the private religious practices of the rulers, for example, in a country like the United States. He also noted that secularism does not provide any guarantee against the competition for political leadership degenerating into a scramble for power. That caste has been a powerful factor in elections is well known; voting has also been in many cases on religious communal lines; religious appeal has been used significantly to manipulate the ignorant masses. Thus the prejudices and superstitions of the

people, instead of being weakened, were actually getting reinforced, thanks to the techniques and methods adopted by all for mobilising electoral support. Roy maintained that the ruling party which asserted the secular character of the State carried a major responsibility in this respect.

This was in no sense a case of a passing aberration. Roy was aware of the overall trend towards secularisation. But he also knew that he himself that was insufficient for ensuring the freedom of the individual. The Constitution may be a secular document; what Roy was concerned about, however, was the actual political practice which was hardly conducive to the growth of democracy. Given the atmosphere of cultural backwardness and blind faith, Roy argued: "A state may be constitutionally secular, but actually it is more likely to be authoritarian than democratic. In that atmosphere, a virtual dictatorship can be established behind the facade of democracy... In this atmosphere, democracy is bound to be demagogic and whatever may be the written constitution, the government to be authoritarian. A people with an authoritarian mentality, with the tradition of an authoritarian culture, is willing to accept an authoritarian State. Religious mentality, the so-called spiritualist culture, is authoritarian because its cornerstone is faith in the absolute power and will of a Providence. Willing submission to a temporal overlord (or dictatorial State) is a psychological derivative of the faith in Providence."

Roy holds the view that the secular State must and can be a moral State, and to be so it has to be democratic not merely in a formal sense but substantially as the political organisation of a democratic society. One has therefore to look beyond the formal provisions in the Constitution to the actual political practice. The 'ugly realities' revealed by the latter necessitate efforts to build the requisite cultural guarantees through the activities of free, rational and moral men. It is hardly necessary that every citizen should be secular in outlook or

should subscribe to 'a restated view of materialism': what matters is whether the overall cultural atmosphere is conducive to the growth of secularism. Roy Stated that the secular State must afford its citizen not "the freedom to choose from among various religious doctrines but the freedom of the human spirit from the tyranny of them." Secularism is not a political institution, it is a cultural atmosphere which will render religious regulation of life and conduct both irrelevant and impractical. It is only then that it can be replaced by a rational democratic regulation consistent with modern cultural values.

A secular State is possible only as a part of a secular society. Secularism in culture is the precondition of a secular polity. Roy therefore pointed out that "what is necessary is not facile professions of secularism but a movement for the popularisation of modern cultural values. The process of secularisation, assuming that it

is desired by the Government, cannot be promoted by legislation or executive orders, But men at the helm of affairs could help, if they did not willingly swim with the contrary current, as they do as a rule."

M. N. Roy thus maintains that the pre-conditions of a secular State do not exist in India. The talk of a secular State leads us, therefore, to accept a situation in which many of us privately pursue something we publicly deny. While claiming, to owe allegiance to secularism, the politicians in their anxiety to manipulate public support invariably promote the growth of anti-secular forces. The state can be secular only in a secular society. Roy recognises the general trend in favour of secularism, cautions that a secular State in itself is not a moral State, but maintains that it should and it can be moral. In order to build it, it is essential to popularise modern democratic cultural values.

—Radical Humanist

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## THE LANGUAGE TRIANGLE

By P. KODANDA RAO

It is but natural that students all over India should be deeply concerned about the official languages of the Central and Provincial Governments and of the media in educational institutions, as it affects them most. In spite of the almost irresistible provocation offered by the violence of some Hindi students and politicians in the Hindi areas, which even led the gentle Mr. N G Ranga to warn in Parliament that violence might not long remain a one way phenomenon, the students in the non-Hindi areas have with rare exceptions and with commendable restraint refrained from violent retaliation in giving vent to their opposition to Hindi and other preference for English. The current violence by the Hindi friends hurts mostly the innocent people and inanimate property who are neither the cause nor the cure for their grievances. Injured people and damaged property have not only to suspend their economic service to the people but also involve extra expenditure to treat the injured people in hospitals and to repair the damaged property, mostly at the expense of the tax-payers most of whom are desperately poor. Such violence is most inhuman and wanton. Let the non-Hindi students set a better example, which might possibly shame Hindi violence

Disapproval of, and even resentment against, unwelcome politics like the denigration of English and its replacements by Hindi or the regional languages can be demonstrated by the adoption of non violent non-co-operation endorsed by Mahatma Gandhi, which is peaceful, dignified and not less effective if widely supported. For instance, students, who disapprove compulsory Hindi or regional languages as media may abstain from the particular classes and examinations. They may even abstain from University Convocations and seek their degrees in absentia.

For their part, the authorities should not ignore the wishes of the students and their parents in favour of English, and enforce Hindi and the regional languages, simply because of their peaceful and constitutional expression. It is pretty obvious that most students and parents in non-Hindi areas and even in Hindi areas prefer English. Innumerable eminent individuals as well as professional organizations have demanded continuation of English and opposition to Hindi and the regional languages. For instance, the previous Congress Government in Madras sought by the offer of a variety of inducements, to divert students from the English

to the Tamil medium in Colleges, but had to abandon the project. It was reliably reported that only three out of three thousand recent applicants for admission to the Madras Christian College opted for Tamil, while the rest opted for English. Polls taken by the Bangalore University and the Manipal Academy disclosed that the overwhelming majority of students opted for English. The latest and most influential instance was the Convention held in Madras in November last, which demanded English as the medium in colleges for all subjects

There is a similar demand for English in the high schools and even primary schools. It is, however, being denied by politicians in Governments. For instance, the Mysore Government prohibits most schools from having more than one section for the English medium. Given the choice, most students would opt for English medium as was admitted by Mr. S. R. Kanthi, when he was Minister of Education in Mysore. The head of a high school in Mysore asked the parents of his students to indicate their preference regarding the medium, and the almost unanimous response was for English. If the Government of India egged on by the Hindi zealots, are forcing Hindi, the authorities in the States are forcing the regional languages and Hindi on unwilling students.

Most non-Hindi students know, or should know, that they can never attain equal competence in Hindi with Hindi students, even as Hindi students can never attain equal competence in a non-Hindi language, say, Kannada or Tamil. They also know or should know, that Hindi endows the Hindi students with an unmerited advantage if Hindi is made the official language of the Government of India. Their support for Hindi is not motivated by concern for national integration, but extreme and unashamed selfishness to capture power at the Centre and lord it over the non-Hindi people of India! It is a dreadful prospect for non-Hindi people.

Both Hindi and non-Hindi students know, or should know, that regional languages, of which Hindi is one will severely limit their opportunities for modern and useful knowledge and worthwhile employment, while English will maximise both.

I. L. 15-1-1968

# HINDI AND THE CONSTITUTION

By p. Kodanda Rao

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari lamented that the 1965 was a "mournful new year for the South." The Dravida Munetra Kazhagam cursed January 26 as the "day of mourning" because on that day Hindi replaced English as the official language of the Government of India according to the terms of the Constitution.

On the other hand, the champions of Hindi hail the occasion as the day of deliverance from English. And they invoke the Indian Constitution, which unlike the American Constitution—which it follows in some other respects—provided for an official language for the Government of India, and named Hindi for it. They claim for the Indian Constitution, and for Hindi for an integral part of it, the high moral sanctity and legal finality accorded to the American Constitution by the Americans.

But the comparison is not on all fours. The Indian Constitution has no doubt, the same legal authority as the American, but it has not the same 'moral sanctity' because of several major differences in evolution. For one thing, the American Constitutional Convention, which was called into existence by the American people after they had, by their unilateral action, declared independence. On the other hand, the Indian Constitution was enacted by the Indian Constituent Assembly, or Consembody for short, which created by the British Government before it conceded Dominion status to India.

Unlike its American counterpart, the Indian Consembody was based on communal electorates and was conducted on party lines and acted both as a body to enact the Constitution and as Parliament to enact laws. The Indian National Congress acted as a political party with a majority in the Consembody, met separately and privately, took decisions, invoked party discipline, and secured the enactment of its

decisions. As a consequence, the Consembody was more a legislature than a Consembody. These, among other deviations and departures from the proprieties, denied to the Indian Consembody and the Indian Constitution the moral authority which their American counterparts rightly command.

## CASTING VOTE

The moral sanction for Hindi is very much less than for the Constitution. At the critical meeting of the Congress party, Hindi secured a majority of one vote at a second ballot! And that was the casting vote of the chairman, who in violation of all proprieties and well-established conventions, gave it in favour of "Change" to Hindi instead of the status quoante, that was English. The proceedings of the meetings of the party were private and have not been published. But Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, then the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Consembody, had access to the private meetings. In his book, *Thoughts On Linguistic States*, he said :

'There was no article which proved more controversial than Article 115 which deal with the (Hindi) question. No article produced more opposition. No article more heat. After prolonged discussion : when the question was put, the vote was 77 against 77. The tie could not be resolved. After a long time, the question was put to the meeting once more, the result was 77 against 78 for Hindi. Hindi won its Place as a national language by one vote.'

## BITTER CONFLICT

The sharp differences of opinion were voiced in the open meetings of the Consembody almost from its beginning. Some members like Seth Govind Das insisted that Hindi should first be declared as the "national" language

of India, and that the Constitution should be drafted, discussed and passed in that language. As there was strong opposition to it, discussion on the official language was postponed till September 12, 1948, the fag end of the Consembody, in the hope of securing an agreed solution. In the meanwhile the draft Constitution in English was discussed and passed.

The article to adopt Hindi as the official language of the Union was moved by Mr. N. Gopalswami Iyengar. The fact that he was from Madras has been exploited to assert that non-Hindi members welcomed Hindi. If this had been the case, there would not have been the prolonged and bitter conflict in the Congress party itself, and there should have been no occasion to vote on it. Mr. Gopalswami Iyengar's speech in proposing Hindi as the official language was not that of an enthusiastic supporter, as it would have been the case if Seth Govind Das had moved it.

Said Mr Iyengar : I for one did not easily reach the conclusion that was arrived at the end of the discussion because it involved our bidding goodbye to a language on which, I think, we built and achieved our freedom. Through I accepted the conclusion at end that the language should be given up in due course and in its place we should substitute a language of this country, it was not without a pang that I agreed to this decision."

As chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Ambedkar should have moved the proposition. In pressurising Mr. Iyengar to do so, the Hindi champions resorted to an astute diplomatic manocuvre or a mean and cruel trick. But their success was marred by the public confession of Mr. Iyengar of his real feelings and his efforts to salvage English for as long as possible.

The speeches of Mr. T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar and other non-Hindi members were more bitterly against Hindi than friendly to it. They resented the chauvinism of the Hindi champions so much so that Mr. Nehru was driven to admonish the latter. He said : In some of the speeches I have listened to here and

elsewhere, there is very much a tone of authoritarianism, very much a tone of Hindi-speaking areas being the centre of things in India, the centre of gravity, and others just the fringes of India. This is not only an incorrect approach, but it is a dangerous one.

## HOPES DASHED

Those who reluctantly acquiesced in Hindi as the official language sought comfort in the constitutional provision that English should continue for 15 years after the Constitution was passed, which would give them opportunities for reconsideration of the decision without precipitating an insuperable deadlock immediately. They also hoped that, since the Congress itself was pretty equally divided on the issue, the Congress Government of India would not take advantage of the proviso that Hindi might also be used during the first 15 years of the Constitution. But their hopes were dashed. The Government of India started pushing Hindi almost immediately and steadily and relentlessly.

Under power given by the Constitution, Parliament passed an Act in 1963 permitting the use also of English for another ten years, after which a parliamentary commission would decide its future.

Speaking in the Consembody on November 5, 1949, Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, who is now the Union Finance Minister, said that the English language was no longer hated in South India, that he refused to be compelled to learn Hindi to participate in parliament, and that he would not willingly learn Hindi because of the constraint put on him. To this day he has not spoken in Hindi in Parliament. He warned that "Hindi imperialism" would mean the "enslavement" of the non-Hindi people, and pointed to the movement in South India for separation because of Hindi imperialism." He ended by saying that it was for the Hindi champions to decide whether India would remain as a single unit, or suffer partition. "If we are left out, well, we will only curse our luck and hope for better times to come."

He hoped in vain. He has not so far publicly recanted his dreadful apprehensions. Whether he does or not, he never said anything truer than when he asserted that Hindi 'imperialism' would lead to the enslavement of India. No article in the Constitution is less worthy of respect and more worthy of repeal. Hindi has the same moral value as Shylock's bond.



# THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH ON MODERN INDIA

By A. Ranganathan

Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the eminent Indian philologist observed that "the thread of our common Indian culture which is a historic thing and which is expressed through Sanskrit, to hold the people of India together as one nation can be strengthened (and this as a matter of fact has been strengthened) by the liberalizing force of English thought and culture in the present age through the international language." The late Prime Minister Nehru also reinforced this historic observation: "English will continue as an associate language and I would not take it away till I was asked to take it away by the non-Hindi speaking areas." To understand the full significance of this unsolved problem, which affects us so vitally, we ought to view the problem in historical perspective as well as know something of the forces which led to the making of modern India.

It is seldom realized that language is not the only attribute of nationality despite several attempts to trace the so-called "essence of the nation" to its language. Weber wrote "In nothing does the national character, the imprint of the mental and spiritual power of a people express itself so clearly as in its language." Again Humboldt argued that the true homeland is really the language." an approach reflected in the writings of some European representatives of nationalistic ideas like Schleiermacher, Fichte, Jahn, Mazzini, Piscane, Niemojowsky and many others. But in reality such a state of affairs never existed. The Normans who settled in Northern France in the ninth and tenth centuries had forgotten their language and spoke only French. Similarly the Norman conquerors in England forgot their acquired French and took over the language of the acquired land. Although the native of Alsatia and the Corsican spoke German and Italian respectively, they belonged to the French nation. The people of Brazil speak the same language as the Portugese; the people of the South

American states use Spanish. The Negroes of Haiti speak a corrupt dialect of French. Arabic is the lingua franca of all the lands of North Africa and Asia Minor. The United States of America speaks the same language as England. In Canada, French and English are spoken. And in Switzerland, four languages are used—German, Italian, French and Romansch. Again Belgium speaks two languages, Flemish and French. And there are different linguistic groups in countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria and Hungary. All these examples clearly show that the language areas do not coincide with the geographical frontiers of nations. Indeed linguistic geography is not to be confused with the political geography of nations.

The impact of the English language on a less gifted people than the Indians might have resulted in a clash of cultures, but not so in the case of a people whose natural intellect had attained a high level of sensitivity and perception through the centuries. The English language has linked us with the developments in the various spheres of liberal arts, science and technology; it has also helped us to expand our intellectual horizons and unveiled the "magic casements" of the Western mind. It has not only contributed to a new freedom of thought and speech, but also resulted in a deliverance from traditional about a revolution of India's cultural heritage in terms of world thought. In his "Hinduism and the West", Dr. S. Radhakrishnan wrote that this Western influence generated by the English language has "widened the horizons of the Indian mind, opened up fresh channels and given it a more universal direction" English is no longer the exclusive language of the British Isles, but the language of a new world culture based on liberal and scientific values, the medium of a new civilization, which includes the intellectual idiom of Ram Raja Mohan Roy's India in its majesty and sweep. And Hindi (as

any other regional language) obviously lacks the advantage of English because it substitutes for the heroic age of modern civilization a small and narrow provincial dialect of its own chauvinistic and mediaeval way of life. Indeed even if Sankara were to be born again, he would have to expound the sublime dialect of Advaita in English.

Just as Sanskrit was the language of our traditional civilization which made us known in Kambuja, Champa, Java, Mongolia and Central Asia, the message of modern India has been heard the world over through English. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to India. The growth of a bi-lingual Graeco-Roman culture in the Mediterranean basin during the first three centuries of the Christian era is an instance in point. Again, Latin was used as a medium in mediaeval and post-Renaissance Europe to facilitate the commerce of ideas in multilingual Europe. Some of the greatest European savants like Huyghens and Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz, Bacon and Newton wrote their famous treatises in Latin. Viewed historically, English has taken the place of Latin as the medium of communication in the modern age. It is the inevitable approach in the highly developed society which has passed through the eras of the Industrial Revolution, the development of modern science and technology and the growth of parliamentary democracy in large areas of the world.

Gokhale, the great Indian statesman said at the Universal Races Conference in London in 1911 that "whereas the contact of the West with other countries had only been external, in India, the West had, so to say, entered into the very bone and marrow of the East. "However, this Western impact resulted in a creative synthesis of the best elements of the two civilizations. Tagore often said that he was inspired by the poetry of Shelley and Keats. The English language has certainly revitalized our languages. During the nineteenth century, men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade and Romesh Dutt laid the economic

foundations of our nationalism by writing books on various aspects of the Indian economy in English. Our political literature was compiled in English by such leaders as Gokhale, Sastri, Gandhiji, Nehru and Rajaji. The moving power of English oratory must be obvious to those who have heard the late Srinivasa Sastri and Sarojini Naidu, Radhakrishnan and Nehru. No student of modern Indian history can fail to note that English has been and is still the vehicle of our creative scholarship and scientific research—the historical writings of Sir Jadunath Sarkar and the epoch-making mathematical contributions of Ramanujan, Raman, Bose, Saha, Chandrasekhar and Bhabha. And many of our finest minds have found in the English language a choice medium for the expression of the Indian spirit—swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Raman and Nehru, Radhakrishnan and Gandhi. And some have gone further in using English creatively—Henry Derazio, Toru Dutt, Man Mohan Ghosh, Coomaraswamy, Dom Moraes, B. Rajan etc. The adoption of the English language did not symbolize a process of cultural enslavement, but heralded a new era of creative consciousness.

The spirit of freedom which inspired the Indian leaders flowed from the fountain-head of English literature. And the spirit of liberty as an emancipating force may be seen in Henry Derazio, the distinguished poet of the nineteenth century, whose poems "Indian's Youth", "The Heart of India" and "To India—My Native Land" written in the rich idiom of the romantic poets, voiced the earliest accents of Indian nationalist thought. It is also well to remember that the earlier generation of Indian nationalists, whether labelled as "extremist" or "moderate" were all convinced of the benefits of the English language. Even in 1916, Tilak exhorted his countrymen not to forget that "it is the connection between England and the education she gave that have given rise to the ambitions that fill your hearts today." Similarly, the liberal political thinker, Sir Surendranath Bannerji, had spoken of this indebtedness to such British thinkers as Burke, Froude, Lord Morley and others. In his own

words: "I thus lived in constant association with the greatest masters of the English language and in close familiarity with their vocabulary and methods of thought and to none do I owe a greater debt than Edmund Burke, whose political philosophy has so largely moulded by owe views on government and society." And the most beautiful phrase which Pandit Nehru ever coined was in English—"Khadi is the livery of our freedom." Again, Pandit Nehru made a memorable statement on the nature of liberty at the Institute of Public Relations in New York in October 1949: "Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral." And in his moving speech on the Red Chinese menace, Pandit Nehru observed that "we must gird up our loins and face this greatest menace that has come to us since we became independent." This speech expressed the aims and aspirations of the awakened Indian nation, as the 'Marseillaise' embodied the awakened ideal of France.

In his charming travelogue entitled, 'East to West,' Prof. Arnold Toynbee observed that 'India's god-given rivers enshrined in Indian myth and ritual have never been more important than they are in this secular-minded age, when they are tapped scientifically for irrigation.' The ancient

being Indian prayer symbolizing the watersmeet of the Ganga, Jumna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu a Cauvery transmutes itself into sublime poetry and reflects the cultural unity of India. It could also be secularized into an engineer's blue-print for a national river project policy which could link the rivers of India. If this blue-print for a national river project policy is worked out carefully, it might result in a confluence of ancient rivers and cultural traditions, and secular concepts of national integration and modern scientific progress. And this confluence can be sustained on a creative plane of understanding only if we continue to use and spread English.

English has been the language of our modern cultural renaissance and nationalism, scientific endeavour and academic scholarship, administration and diplomacy, courts and assemblies, the Common wealth and a possible new world order based on liberty, democracy and a new technological civilization. And the adoption of English by various nations of different cultural backgrounds (India and the newly emerging Asian and African members of the Commonwealth) is perhaps the most effective guarantee of international peace and understanding.

I. L. January 1, 1971

## VARNASHRAMA - THE DANGEROUS CONCEPT

By MUKUND

WHAT is actually implied by the varnashrama? It is easy to explain the varnas as the fourfold classification of society based on division of labour, and the ashrams as the four stages of individual life, visualised by the ancient Indian thinkers. With this academic approach, one can write volumes on the subject. There is no dearth of material. But that effort does not enable you to get any objective insight into the concept. What is the real nature of the varnashrama and what are its implications? How does it influence the Indian mind what are its consequences on our national behaviour? The issue needs to be examined critically from the psychological and behavioural points of view.

First of all, be it understood that the number four in this connection is immaterial. Whether the varnas were actually four as prescribed, and whether at any time in history the Indian society was really divided in the four groups, does not matter at all. It is a point of historical interest, not of consequence to us today. The number has significance, but of a psychological nature. It attaches sacredness to the theory and makes normative things look like objective ones. The numbering device was an invention of the orthodox that enabled them to impose an appearance of exactitude to something that was basically vague. Thereby, anything prescribed became easily sacred. It also enabled the believers to commit things to memory without using critical acumen.

Many examples of numerological illusions could be given: one ultimate Reality, two modalities, three gunas, four yugas, five mahabhutas, six vikaras, seven matrikas, eight digpalas, nine grahas, ten avataras, sahasra, namas and thirty-three crores of gods! In the light of science, these numbers have no significance. Most of them imply regimentation of mind and loss of originality. But such devices have a hold on the conformist mind that believes that

the ancient Indians have discovered ultimate solutions to all problems of human life for all times to come. The varnashrama theory, as it would be discussed here is the bedrock of this mentality.

It is always argued that the varnas are quite different from castes. There is a point in this argument that cannot be refuted. But it is the varna theory that gives religious sanction to the caste. The varnas are said to be divinely ordained, the Gita being its principal authority. The theory implies that the position of a person in society basically depends upon birth, and that the duties he has to perform are accordingly obligatory. It is said to be preferable to do the duty of one's own varna even at the cost of death than doing the duty of another varna in a better way. What is said of the varnas, in practice applies to castes: the former exist in ideology but the latter in reality. The offerings given to God always go to the agents of God. So the varna theory actually gives religious support to the caste. Hence from the behavioural point of view, varnas and castes are only different names that represent the same ideology.

For a superficial observer the castes appear to be breaking down, because freedom of profession exists and taboos have gone down. But so far as the basic mentality is concerned the position is quite contrary. Caste is still the major factor that puts limitations on the growth of individual personalities. They create collective egos and peculiar emotional needs which the members can satisfy only within the respective castes. This mentality is unconsciously emulated by the professional groups. They also show a tendency to surrender individualities in favour of set patterns, to form their own worlds, and be unconcerned about those who do not belong to the fold. The mentality that refuses to

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recognise those people as human beings, who do not within the chosen circle, seen everywhere to-day, is derived from caste parochialism. The subconscious belief in the varna theory is working at the back of this.

Now, what does the varna theory imply in actuality? It implies that the existing social order at any given time, based on whatever inequalities, is sacred and therefore cannot be radically challenged. It means that every body must find virtues in the establishment and reconcile to one's lot without a spirit of revolt. Well, one can criticise it, and the criticism is welcome, so far as the critic is only a reformer and a revivalist. One can condemn evils in the society on the grounds that they did not exist in the Vedic times. So the varna theory has made us confirmed conformists.

The theory upholds the existing social order. But what is that social order? The ideal of the society is quoted from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. But that was a mediaeval society based on the feudal values of life. It was a society based on exploitation-exploitation of woman by man, of son by the father, of younger brothers by the eldest one and pupils by the teacher, of servants by the master, of believers by the priests and of masses by the privileged classes. Power at all levels remained in the hands of the older generation and future changes in human life were never visualised. Virtues and ideals to sustain such a society were advocated for the convenience of the privileged, and the exploited ones were made to believe that their own interest lay in reconciling with their lot which was the result of their past deeds, carried forward from their previous births. So a theory that tries to uphold such a mediaeval social order cannot but be dangerous. It is incompatible with the ideal of the socialistic pattern of society.

Now, as regards the ashramas. It may appear that there are no grounds to find fault with

them at least, though you may, with the varnas. The four stages are well-known. Brahmacharya is the period of training, during grahasthya one is to enjoy family life and after having done that enter vanaprasthya, the period of retreat from personal interest, and finally take samnyasa, the stage of complete selflessness. In one sense, they imply a gradual development towards maturity, sagacity and detachment, in the individual as well as social interest. Even without ashrama theory, a wise man would do the same. That the Hindu thinkers thought of all this, in those ancient days, is of course, commendable.

But the ashrama theory has also its dangerous implications. It is connected with religious philosophy and indicates that life is a pilgrimage, through different stages, to an eternal life. All activities are supposed to be directed to the attaining of moksha the spiritual realisation, self-emancipation, "the fulfilment of the spirit in us in the heart of the eternal." The aim of the samnyasin is to attain the state of spiritual freedom, to take the wideness of the whole earth, dwell in love, and walk in righteousness." But what do all these pious words ultimately mean, and how do they guide our nation life?

The ideal of the samnyasin is eulogised beyond limits. His religious experience is declared to be of a self-certifying character. No proof is required. He is only expected to "justify his inmost convictions in a way that satisfies the thought of the age". That means what he needs is the art of controlling people at any given time. And people could be controlled only when they accept the dogmas as absolute truths and refuse to subject them to scientific tests in the light of advancing science. So the ashrama theory has in practice prescribed the ideal for the highest personal ambition of becoming a self-appointed, sacred VIP, looked after by others. This means an encouragement to ignorance, hypocrisy and exploitation.

True, very few individuals become the samnyasin type. But the whole community looks to them as their example. The ideal is cherished

by all, especially the intellectuals. That was what Edward Shils also found when he studied 500 intellectuals sometime in 1960. The theory has encouraged almost all our intellectuals to remain revivalists and conformists. They have, therefore, developed a marvellous faculty to rationalise the compatibility of science and Superstition, and failed to play their role in guiding the country towards the right direction.

Now, as regards the basic assumptions of the theory. They are mainly existence of the soul as a unit of life, a universal soul, and esoteric knowledge. The concept of spiritual realisation implies that there is some ultimate knowledge that comes from within. The rest of the superstructure is built on this foundation. But all these ideas belong to the pre-and proto-historic times when science was not advanced and when the psychic concepts of sub-conscious mind and auto-hypnosis were not objectively understood. Now with the advance made by science, there is no more mystery left about them. The concepts of soul, cosmic conscious-

ness, and inner knowledge etc. have lost their validity, except as strong myths regimenting minds and controlling behaviour to uphold the traditional order even at the cost of disaster. Since the very basic assumptions on which the aim of life was determined have been proved to be invalid, the entire life process remains directed towards an illusion.

So the varnas as well as ashramas need to be discarded as an ideology for modern India. Our interest in them should be only historical. There is nothing glorious nor innocuous about them. The varnashrama is Hinduism from the social, ideological and behavioural points of view, that sanctifies a feudal society and a mediaeval outlook. Nothing would change for the better unless the Indian mind is emancipated from the dangerous concept of varnashrama, and a valid new ideology that can renovate our life and culture takes its place.

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## THE FIVE EVILS

By S. Ramanathan

Rationalism as such has no politics. But there are political consequences flowing from the Rationalist attitude which no rationalist can resist. I am mentioning hereunder five points which embrace present day politics, but which nevertheless are not political. Under our Constitution, India has been declared a Secular State, that is a State which has no religion. Although individual citizens are free to profess their faith in any religion or in no religion, the State does not mind and does not encourage or discourage either, the profession of any religion. The State has no faith in any God or gods or goddesses. It is only the interference with religion by the State that has created the major problems that infest humanity to-day. For instance there would have been no trouble between Pakistan and India if India had remained true to the ideal of Secularism. Secularist India could not be divided into Pakistan and Hindustan on a religious basis. How much happier the people of India would have been if there were no Hindu-Muslim trouble, and no demand for a division of India on the basis of religion. But as ill luck would have it Pakistan professes Islam as the State religion and India although it declares itself under its Constitution as a Secular state, is nevertheless disloyal to the Secularist ideal, and allows religion to intrude itself into all matters pertaining to the State. It is well known that Ministers and high Officials of Secularist India not only violate the principles of Secularism by indulging in religious practices at official functions but openly explain away Secularism by alleging that it supports all religious instead of saying that Secularism does not support any religion. The method of throwing together all conflicting religions into one pot and making a soup out of them has been tried many times over in History notably by the late Mrs. Annie Beasant, and has ignominiously failed. The point of difference between Mrs. Beasant, and her collaborator Charles Bradlaugh was just this principle of Secularism which according to Bradlaugh means there is no truth

in any religion and according to Mrs. Beasant it means there is truth in all religions. Unless and until India and the World acknowledge that Bradlaugh was right and Mrs. Beasant was wrong there can be no scope for progress for humanity. Religion must be frankly recognised as evil No. 1 and combatted.

The second evil which rationalism pin points is caste. It relates to differences between individuals which are genetic in character. Varna or the colour problem is endemic in India but is world wide. The struggle of Negroes in America and the fight that the black peoples of America are putting up for independence, the problem of Jews in Europe and above all the caste problem of India are characteristic of a civilisation which has discarded reason and has adhered to passion. Many sacred books have been written to support the thesis that caste is supreme and that education and culture amount to nothing. The entire question is based on false biology, on false genetics. It is good for the world that Lysenko has been finally denigrated in Russia. He has been responsible for resuscitation of the theory of Lamarck that acquired characteristics which are heritable. It is on this theory that the disastrous campaign of growing of winter wheat in Siberia was conducted by Lysenko. It was on this principle that the distinction based on caste and colour are justified throughout the world. The Lamarck-Lysenko doctrine was called in to justify untouchability in India and segregation in America. But the fall of Lysenko does not mean the end of this evil. Ancient prejudices die hard. Often they support vested interests and play a political role. They must be consciously fought against and uprooted. Candidates at elections are chosen in India on a caste basis. So long as it is possible to do so the evil will not die.

The third evil that rationalism points at is prohibition. It masquerades as a philanthropic

and liberal force. It puts up claims as the saviour of the poor and as the champion of women and children. Sentimental people are easily misguided by these false claims. But the stark reality of prohibition is crimes. Prohibition goes hand in hand with illicit distillation which is a growing trade. This trade grows so fast that it soon out-grows all other trades. It is big capital that finances this trade. It cannot be run without corrupting the Police, the Magistrates and other high officials. The profits of this business are so large that the bribes offered to Officials are many times their salaries earned by them through the Government. These guardians of Law and Order who are fattening on the bribes they receive from the illicit liquor trade cannot be relied upon to maintain the legal Government. Law and Order becomes farce when it is left to be administered by these officials who derive their major income from the illicit trade. If we are to root out corruption from the Government, if we are to expect decency in public affairs, we ought to abolish this evil of prohibition.

The fourth evil which rationalism points out is the differentiation in the treatment accorded to languages. The fundamental fact about language is that it is not an end to itself. But it is a means of self expression. It is an aid to education. It is not important for a child what language he is studying. It may be Tamil, Telugu, Bengali, Hindi or English. What is important is the content of the knowledge that the child gets. Any number of years spent in educating the child will be only wasted if the child does not attain real knowledge. In the modern world real knowledge is obtained only through Science. In India the only convenient window we have to gain a look at Science is the English language. We must study other languages for sentimental reasons because they are our National languages. But to gain knowledge there is no other way but to study English. Again by the accident of history we have the good fortune in India of already possessing an intelligentsia which knows the English language. It would be so easy to transmit the modern knowledge of Science through that intelligentsia,

To do away with one intelligentsia of English and to create another which knows Hindi is a gigantic crime on a par with genocide. These elementary facts are well known to our Politicians who now propose a changeover to Hindi. But they seem to be wedded to that philosophy of selfishness which discards public welfare and looks only to the ballot box for guidance. In this atomic age of atomation to turn your back on English and to embrace Hindi or any other backward language is the highest act of treachery towards posterity.

The fifth evil which rationalism points out is Khadi. The logic of hand spinning is antagonism to machinery and civilisation based on Scientific progress. There is no use saying that Mahatma Gandhi advocated it. In his day, to meet a situation which he then encountered, Khadi might have been adequate. Bepin Chandra Pal said that Indians are so numerous compared with Englishmen, that it would be enough for the Indians to spit to drown all the Englishmen. The Khadi programme of Gandhi was couched in the same frame of mind as the spitting programme of Bepin Chandra Pal. Today in this atomic age sensible Indians to have recourse to the Charkha would be equivalent to our sitting on the pial and spitting at passing Englishmen. The Khadi programme has no use whatever in the post-Gandhian era. The symbolic spinning indulged in by the Khadi Department consuming crores of public money are a sheer waste. It is no wonder that there is such a lot of corruption in the Khadi administration. What have the Khadi administrators to do but to embezzle public funds? Their service is neither appreciated nor wanted by the public. Their salaries are met by the Government in order that they may serve the party in power during elections. At other times they can only misappropriate public funds. The sooner we have Khadi abolished the better for the country.

I have mentioned these five outstanding evils as examples of wrong thinking leading to serious consequences. I have not trespassed into politics although political issues are involved in every-one of these evils.

I. L. July 1, 1965.

## EGALITE ?— SHEER ILLUSION !

By W. A. Paton

THE VIEW that equality is a goal which the human race should strive to reach is widely accepted and supported, in one form or another; although this hazy concept has always been found wanting when subjected to careful scrutiny. Perhaps a few comments on the limitations of the egalitarian dream, in some of its current manifestations, are not inappropriate at this time.

To begin with I'll take note, briefly, of two fundamental obstacles to achieving complete equality among individuals or groups, large or small. One is the impossibility of providing each of the several billions of our present population with precisely the same endowment of the natural resources of benefit to man. Mother Earth's bounties are not uniformly distributed over the habitable surface of the globe, and there is literally no practical way by which each of us can be equally endowed with sunshine, rainfall, fertility, timber, mineral resources, and so on. Substantial mitigation of the impact of these differences would be possible in a condition of permanent peace plus expansion of international trade but to date the human race has failed to move decisively in this direction.

Even more inherent and insurmountable is the variation plainly in evidence in the native qualities of individuals and groups. Diversity is a commonplace in nature and we humans are not exempt. Aside from sex, individuals vary in height, weight, eye color, and a host of other physiological characteristics. And each of us arrives on the scene with a separate package of traits, tendencies, and intrinsic talents. Even among individuals with the same parents important variations in physical and mental qualities are not at all unusual.

What our progenitors were like millions of years back is somewhat conjectural, but we do know that today homo sapiens, "the only surviving species of the genus Homo", is not made up of a mass of homogeneous units.

### Ignoring Hereditary Influences

I want to pursue a bit further this matter of variation in native aptitudes and abilities. There seems to be a cult today of wishful thinkers who are pushing the fanciful notion that each of us is born with precisely the same potential, that we all start abreast, and that what happens from then on is entirely the result of environment, including how we are treated by our fellow men. This idea is manifestly absurd even if we rule out those who start life with major congenital mental or physical handicaps. True, the life course of the individual is often greatly influenced by environmental circumstances, but this doesn't mean that hereditary factors are generally of no consequence in shaping our careers.

And what an unimaginably drab world this would be if all individuals were identical in every particular and committed to identical life experiences! We can be thankful that this is not the case and not even a remote possibility. Perhaps the concept of a race in which all members are supermen is not beyond the realm of imagination, but who would want to find himself in such a situation! I might also note here that our complex modern economy, with its intricate network of facilities bringing a marvelous array of products to the ultimate consumer, includes a great range of functions and tasks. We can't all be top executives; somebody must work on the assembly line.

### Minimizing Economic Disparity

Right here the equality fan might well interpose a question: Even if we concede that it is not feasible for all individuals to be endowed with precisely the same cross section of climatic conditions and natural resources, and that people will continue to vary in their physical and mental equipment, isn't it desirable to foster programs designed to minimize differences in

standard of living and economic power generally?

This is an interesting question and deserves attention. To provide a partial answer let's reword the question more concretely: Are current reform and welfare movements and projects—consumer protection legislation, taxation that favours the people with low incomes, subsidized housing for poor, special assistance to the elderly and those with mental and physical handicaps, and so on—desirable and deserving of support? I believe a negative answer is justified.

There are two ways, as I see it, by which to reduce the disparities in personal incomes, in the amount of economic goods and services at the command of the individual. One is to harass and block the efforts of the hustlers the go-getters, the front runners, the innovators, until their pace is slowed to that of the less able, the less qualified and talented, the incompetent, the shiftless, the handicapped. The other is to provide an economic and governmental milieu that encourages, stimulates, the more capable and productives individual, that Provides incentive

for those among us with the most potential to do their best. Such a society, I submit, is actually the best way, indeed the only way, to reduce the inequalities so galling to our egalitarian friends. In such a society technology advances, output expands and per capita income rises. The laggards are not damaged. Instead they are given the opportunity to improve their own performances as they are carried along on the fastmoving coat-tails of the inherently superior.

It should hardly be necessary to add that in referring to the able, the talented, the productive, I am not including the destructive, or those who gain by preying on their fellows.

The socialist road we are now marching on is not the route to increased total productivity and increased per capita standard of living, and if we believe that these are desirable goals we should alter our course, and not dillydally in doing it. The relatively free competitive market, not a bewildering array of government agencies, operated by fumbling politicians and bureaucrats, remains the only proven road to widespread economic prosperity.

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## THE PROBLEM OF THE UNTOUCHABLES

The untouchables so-called, in India, present a problem which has so far defied any ready-made solution. Indian social reformers old and new have tried their hands at it. So have political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi who made it a plank in its political programme and stated even his life on it. Satyagrahas were led by him and new political slogans were invented to eradicate this admitted evil. For a time the Hindu society appeared to be moved by the emotional appeal made by the Mahatma and it made a show of throwing open the doors of the temples to these depressed castes. This vicious system is peculiar to Hindu social organisation and is to be found in no other. Anti-negro racism in America is sometimes compared to this ugly feature of the Hindu society. But the comparison is wide of the mark. As the late Mr. P. C. Roy of Bengal once observed that unlike the untouchables in India, the negro in America could at least be employed as a cook in a respectable family and the dishes prepared by him would be gladly relished by the family members if they answered to their tastes and likes. The Negro may be kept at a respectable distance from other Americans but he is neither 'untouchable' nor 'unapproachable' in the sense in which the untouchable is in India.

The Indian 'untouchable' is not only economically depressed but also a social outcaste altogether. Certain occupations like sweeping the public roads, shoe-making, latrine-cleansing are specifically allotted to this class by the Hindu law-givers. It will be a mistake to suppose that the untouchables so called are a homogenous class or caste. They are also infected by the disease of caste and are divided into innumerable castes on the basis of occupation, each one considering itself superior to the other in the same fashion in which the higher castes of Hindus are graded one above the other from the Brahmin down to the Shudra.

From this point of view, all these untouch-

able castes are also Hindu castes. It will thus be seen, as Dr. Ambedkar pointed out long back that untouchability is a part and parcel of Hindu casteism and it will last so long as caste system-survives.

The democratic political setup in India with its adult franchise has made this section of the Indian population conscious of its strength and position as a political and social entity. But casteism prevailing among these people militates against this newly found consciousness and considerably reduces their capacity for a combined assault on this vicious system.

The conclusion is therefore inescapable that abolition of castes is a pre-condition for properly rehabilitating the untouchables in the fold of Hindu society. The caste system has survived in all its vigour and strength till today and along with it untouchability also, despite the rapid industrialisation and democratisation of Indian's urban life, which are cutting across these barriers of caste differences both among the upper classes and those of depressed classes. The late Dr. Ambedkar and Jag Jivan Ram and a host of notable celebrities in our country hail from these classes and yet have been enabled by the India's democratic political system to play their part worthily in the public life of the country and to some extent in assuaging the sorrows of their community-brethren. The Parliament also is doing its bit in this direction. It has recently appointed a committee to keep a constant watch over the manner in which the State Governments implement the recommendations made by the Commissioner for Schedule Castes and tribes, in his report which is considered to be a valuable sociological document on this problem.

It has got to be remembered in this connection that not all Scheduled Castes nor Tribes belong to the group of untouchables. Some may be backward classes, whose lot might be ameliorated speedily by welfare schemes sincerely undertaken by the Government. It is reported that forty percent of the funds-allocated for this

purpose, is spent on education. This may well be so, since education is rightly considered to be the remedy for the upliftment of the backward classes and tribes. There is no doubt that by and by, the lot of these people will surely improve under the impact of new and social political forces arising in our democracy. Social justice and equality are guaranteed by the Indian Constitution and one could be justified in hoping that the question of backward classes would be solved satisfactorily in the near future as the welfare schemes come to be increasingly implemented and put into operation.

But the question of untouchability will still remain to be solved. This evil has the sanction of Hindu custom and religion both of which are rooted in a mediaeval religious mode of thought and behaviour prevailing still among all Hindu castes including the untouchable castes. Unless the upper classes shed off their religionism and their irrational thought and behaviour and imbibe the scientific spirit of the age, instead of merely donning modernism in dress and outward appearance, this blot on Hinduism will never disappear. Marriage and food taboos are the hall marks of the Hindu castes and therefore free inter-marriage and interdining first among all higher castes should be encouraged. If this task be accomplished, untouchability which thrives on these two taboos, will have no ground to stand upon.

Besides implementing the welfare schemes for these untouchable backward classes, the Government, must address itself to the task of blasting the very foundation of untouchability, namely Hindu caste. It may employ its political pressure

to promote inter-caste marriages and inter-caste dining not only in the cities and towns but also in the farflung villages where caste and untouchability in fact shows their deadly fangs. As Dr. Lohia suggested, inter-caste marriage might be considered to be an additional qualification for an applicant seeking a governmental job or post and some special allowance or promotion be granted to such a person by way of encouragement of and incentive to such marriages.

The caste system which harbours untouchability, is too deep-rooted to be eradicated only by political exhortations and harangues. Rapid urbanisation of rural areas will surely weaken the rigours of the caste system and untouchability. Spread of rational thought and conduct through at least educational institutions run by the Governments will help the process.

More than the Government schemes and programmes it is essential that the leaders of public opinion should exemplify in their personal life their sense of social justice and equality about which they are never tired of speaking in the public. An Ambedkar, a Jag Jivan Ram, a Sanjeevayya must first prove that he looks upon all untouchables as equals irrespective of their caste and never observes caste rules with the down-trodden masses.

It therefore goes without saying that the Parliamentary members who will be sitting on the committee to be appointed for the purpose, must also be themselves imbued with the spirit of rationalism or more properly speaking or Renaissance, which in Europe ushered in, the era of modern civilised life.

D. M. K.

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