

**THE ESSENCE  
OF  
DEMOCRACY**

MINOO MASANI

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HAROLD LASKI INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
AHMEDABAD [INDIA]

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## THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

By

**Minoo Masani**

Eminent Author and Parliamentarian



“शास्त्रप्रयोजनं तन्वदर्थतम्” ।

[Realization of Truth is the aim of Science]

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This publication comprises the G. V. Mavalankar Birth Centenary Lecture by Mr. Minoo Masani.

In the unavoidable absence, due to health reasons, of Mr. Masani, this *Lecture* was read out by Professor P. G. Mavalankar, Director of the Laski Institute, on March 11, 1989 in the Socrates Hall of the Institute.

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## THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

In a Parliamentary Democracy, the role of a Speaker is crucial. A good start to a young Democracy on the achievement of Independence was given by Mr. G. V. Mavalankar, who was an excellent Speaker of the Lok Sabha, and set a good example of independence from all political parties by his fair play and keeping the Prime Minister of the day in his place.

Unfortunately, there has been a continuing fall in the behaviour of those occupying the Speaker's office since then, since the prevailing sycophancy has engulfed even the Speaker's office, with a corresponding lack of respect for the Chair shown by the Members of Parliament.

Many years ago, Mr. E. F. M. Durbin, a junior member in a Labour Government in Britain, published a book entitled *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*. In one of his chapters Mr. Durbin, after rejecting various tests of a real democracy, came to the conclusion that where there was no effective opposition there was no democracy. According to him, the right to dissent is useless unless it is actually allowed to be exercised.

### MAJORITY RULE

Some people would reply that democracy means majority rule. How wrong they are! Stalin and Hitler, after coming to power, repeatedly won elections by huge majorities which were presumably bogus, and then carried

on a ruthlessly oppressive and tyrannical regime. The dictators of the Black African countries, who are often ferocious autocrats, also claim to have been elected by a majority. As the anthropologist, Elspeth Huxley, has put it: "One man one vote, once".

Mr. R. Venkataraman, President of our Republic, mentioned this in his Inaugural Address as President on July 25, 1987 that 'most of the newly independent countries which adopted a democratic form of government have lapsed into dictatorships'. There are countries covered by Mr. Venkataraman's statement in Asia and Latin America which also qualify along with Africa.

The concept of majority rule is a particularly pernicious one in countries which are not of a homogenous nature ethnically, linguistically or by religion. Examples of such countries are the Union of South Africa, Fiji, Sri Lanka, and, of course, our own country. In these countries there is a built-in permanent majority based on race, language or religion. Majority rule in such cases would mean the tyranny of the majority community over the minority community or communities. In South Africa the result of "one man one vote" majority rule would be the domination of the Blacks over the Whites and the coloured peoples including Indians who are all minorities. In Fiji it would mean the domination of the Indian immigrants over the original inhabitants there. In Sri Lanka it would mean the domination of Sinhalese over Tamils and in India it would mean the domination of the Hindus over the Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and other minorities. It is quite obvious, therefore, that majority rule is not democracy and can often be undemocratic.

Having disposed of this myth, let us now turn to the various factors that make a real democracy.

### LIMITED GOVERNMENT

It is quite clear that a government which is not limited to essential purposes but dominates economic, educational, literary and artistic life of the country cannot be a democratic one. Where this happens, an effective opposition ceases to be possible, and Mr. Durbin's test cannot be fulfilled.

This has been proved by the case of the Soviet Union, Communist China and others in our time.

Italian theorist Benedetto Croce was able to foresee this when he wrote in the last quarter of the 19th century that where the Government or the State tends to become the only employer and the only landlord, that society ceases to be democratic, because there would be no one left to oppose except at great peril. That is why he argued that in a free society there have to be "autonomous social forces" such as the farmer owning his land, the industrialist owning his factory or business, the shopkeeper owning his shop and the professional man like the lawyer or doctor or consultant who works for himself. Later developments have proved how right Croce was.

In my opinion, India is in the border line between a limited government and a total one because of excessive controls, destruction of the balance of the mixed economy, control of the dominating heights of the economy, as Jawaharlal Nehru grandiloquently

described it, through giant industrial units, the control of the State over universities, the absence of economic freedom, the institution of *Sahitya Academies* and other government institutions which have undermined the independence of writers, artists and other members of the intelligentsia. Writing on 5th January 1969 in the *Times of India*, Mr. Nirad Choudhary asked :

“Where do contemporary Indian writers stand in the light of these ideals ? I cannot say they are not involved in current affairs. On the contrary, I would assert they are only too much involved in them, which means that they are wrongly involved. Most of them are doing their best to have a share of the loot of public money that has become the vocation of the upper middle class since Independence. All of them are enlisting or trying to enlist in the horde of *Pindaris* that the present ruling order of India is. The writers in this army will not indeed be *Amir Khans* or *Chittus* but they aspire to become quite prosperous *thugs*.”

There have been repeated attempts to destroy the freedom of the press. All these have brought India to the position where it is possible to say that the so-called ‘socialist pattern’ and democracy cannot co-exist for long. This already happened for a brief period of two years after 1975, and could easily happen again for a longer duration. Therefore it is that the liberal insists that unless Government is limited and kept in its proper boundaries, it cannot be called a democratic one. Mahatma Gandhi said : “That Government is best which governs the least.”

## SHARING OF POWER

Democracy has been defined as government of the people, for the people, and by the people, the last of these being the most important of the three. The sharing of power has to be both horizontal and vertical. It should be horizontal in the sense that minority groups have a right to participate in the government of the day along with the majority. It is not enough for members of the minority to be condescendingly included in the cabinet as are Muslims, Sikhs and others in India, and, Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka, at the ‘*meherbari*’ of the majority or of the White ‘Uncle Toms’ whom the Communist-dominated African National Congress would perhaps include in their new government, if ever they are allowed to come to power. What is necessary is for the Tamils and Muslims in Sri Lanka to be represented by those chosen by them. That Muslims and Sikhs in India should similarly have the right to choose their own members of the cabinet and that the Whites in a Black dominated country should have ministers of their own choice. This has been ensured only by the Swiss Constitution to which I shall refer later.

Vertical participation is equally important. The infrastructure of a democracy lies with grassroots vigilance and initiative which keeps political parties and governments on the straight and narrow path. Where such grassroots vigilance and initiative are weak as in India today, political parties float on top without any infrastructure, without internal democracy, and with “*Kangaroo courts*” which ‘expel’ members without even asking them to show cause.

The element of grassroots vigilance is not one that can be created by law. It is primarily one that is dependent on home and school education and training of the young in the right to think for themselves, training in the right to stand up to authority—whether domestic, industrial or political, when the conscience demands it. Gandhiji defined a real *satyagrahi* as one who defies a law which he thinks is immoral even if he is in a minority of one, provided he is prepared to pay the price for his act. In other words, democracy is contingent on the existence of independent, aware and courageous citizens who are prepared to speak up for their rights and do not always count the cost. As the poet said :

“They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three”.

The main enemies of such initiative are the cult of personality, misguided loyalty to party “high command”, sycophancy which abounds in the capital and other parts of India and the presence of a controlled economy where the permit-licence or quota is a pre-condition to economic survival.

Here we are on very weak ground. The concept of good and active citizenship is not well understood in India. The result is “too much politics, too little citizenship”. We need much more grassroots vigilance and action. It is not periodic five-year elections that determine the quality of democracy but the day-to-day intervention of the ordinary citizen in the affairs of the State. Here we are very weak, and unless the quality and activity of our citizenship improves and becomes much more demo-

cratic, our political parties will continue to float on top and be utterly irresponsible as they are today. It is important that the people of India be educated on this subject. The Leslie Sawhny Programme, with which I am associated, and the Harold Laski Institute of Political Science in Ahmedabad, are both examples of the kind of activity that may result in making India a real democracy.

### RESERVATION

There remains the problem of ensuring participation and sharing in power by the backward classes in society who are unable to pull their full weight along with the rest of society. Such are the Scheduled Castes (*Harijans*), the Scheduled Tribes (*Adivasis*) and the backward classes. As a remedy, but not to last more than ten years, our Constitution provided for reservation of seats in legislatures and jobs in government service for these classes. Unfortunately, this device has become a habit, like a pair of crutches. Every ten years Parliament prolongs its life because by now the spokesmen of the poorest classes have become a vested interest. Also, it provides one of the main points of corruption in our public life. The politicians, therefore, go along with this easy way of professing to provide social justice.

This matter is dealt with in detail by an excellent report of a Seminar on Reservations organised in Bombay in May 1985 by the Indian Liberal Group and the Freedom First Foundation.\* I believe that time has come for Reservations to be terminated, and if that is not feasible, at least to be phased out expeditiously.

\* See Appendix, page 14.

Both the U.S. Supreme Court in Bakke's case, and the Supreme Court in our country in the case of the State of Kerala *vs* Thomas, have arrived at rather similar judgments taking the line that affirmative action in favour of these classes has to be both temporary and moderate. Any discrimination that is permanent or excessive should be struck down as *ultra vires* of the Constitution.

### PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

A much more civilised way by which minorities including the backward elements of society can be ensured fair representation in these legislatures is some form of Proportional Representation. The only democratic countries in which the rule of the race course, *viz.* "First past the post" is practised, are the U.K. and the U.S.A. The recent re-election of Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, however welcome it might be on political grounds, illustrates the archaic nature of this system, since she obtained only a minority of votes cast but a big majority in Parliament as a result of gross under-representation of the Alliance of Social Democrats and Liberals, who polled a large proportion of the votes cast but succeeded in getting only a miserable number of seats in Parliament.

The Anglo-Saxon system involves a waste of millions of votes which remain unrepresented in Parliament. Votes cast in the country do not carry the same weight, since the votes cast for some party carry more weight than those cast for other parties. Even the principle of "one man one vote" is thus violated, since one man does not get one vote. Some get more than a vote, and yet others have no effective vote at all.

In India, which has followed the archaic British system since Independence, not once has the Congress Party secured majority of the votes cast. Yet in every Parliament including the present, the Congress Party has been a huge majority which is entirely bogus and does not reflect the will of the people.

If, therefore, justice has to be done to the voter and particularly to minorities, the acceptance of some form of proportional representation is a must. With an illiterate electorate like ours, the Single Transferable Vote is not feasible. Some form of the List System such as is prevalent in West Germany, Israel and other countries is worth considering.

### SEPARATION OF POWERS

Where power is allowed to be centralised in a few hands, democracy shrinks. That is why, in all written democratic constitutions, there is a provision for a division of power or functions.

The separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution between the President or the Administration, Congress and the Supreme Court is a good example of three independent authorities functioning side by side and often clashing with one another. Even where there is a Parliamentary form of Government, as in France after De Gaulle amended the Constitution and in Sri Lanka after Mr. Jayewardene amended it, though there is a Prime Minister responsible to Parliament, there is also a President who acts as a check on the Prime Minister and the

Cabinet. It is not, therefore, true that in every Parliamentary Democracy the Prime Minister and Cabinet can overrule the President. Quite the contrary. The Constitution of the Republic of India as it emerged from the Constituent Assembly, of which I was proud to be a member, did precisely this by curbing the powers of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of the day through:

- (a) The President
  - (b) The Supreme Court
  - (c) The Civil Service
  - (d) The States
- and (e) The Fundamental Rights of the citizen.

Unfortunately, most of these checks have been eroded by those in office in Delhi through their lust for centralising power in their own hands. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was able, with the bogus majority in Parliament that she enjoyed, even to amend the Constitution and truncate the Prerogatives of the President and the Fundamental Rights of the citizen.

## THE RULE OF LAW

An essential precondition of democracy is what is called in Britain the Rule of Law and in the USA 'due process of law'. This protects the citizen from arbitrary action on the part of the government of the day and gives him the protection of the courts in case the law is violated. Obviously, when the courts are not independent and there is no Rule of Law, rule by parliamentary majority can be highly tyrannical and undemocratic.

## INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

"The State is made for the individual and not the individual for the State". This is a basic principle of liberal democracy. The rights of the individual, therefore, become the supreme consideration. As Lord Acton has put it, liberty is the supreme good. Hence, freedom must come first. In countries like the USA, India and several others, the Fundamental Rights of the citizen are guaranteed under a Written Constitution or what is often called 'A Bill of Rights'. Britain is one of the few real democracies which have no Written Constitution or Bill of Rights, and technically Parliament is sovereign and can pass any law it likes. However, as Dicey points out, if the House of Commons were to pass a law that all blue-eyed babies should be put to death, the people will throw Parliament out the following day! This is what he calls the 'external check' which exists in Britain which has no Written Constitution.

Another old saying which draws attention to this priority is the Biblical one which says: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's". In our context, the individual's conscience is his God.

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

What applies to the individual's right to dissent applies with even greater force to the Press. Freedom of the Press is, of course, an essential part of a free society,



## POLYGLOT SOCIETIES

In the case of multi-lingual, multi-ethnic or multi-religious societies, the importance of these safeguards becomes more marked.

Majority rule can have no meaning where there is a permanent majority of those bound together by a common race, common religion or common language. It is not democratic for such a majority to impose its will on minorities. Thus, for instance, in Sri Lanka the nomination by Sinhalese of Tamil and Muslim Ministries is not democratic. In India the nomination by Hindus of Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and others is not democratic, and in South Africa, the nomination by Blacks of Whites would be undemocratic.

It is not enough in such cases that members of minorities are included in governments or cabinets. In Sri Lanka and India as of today, such minority membership is only at the behest or '*meherbani*' of the majority. It is important for ministers belonging to minorities to be elected by their own kind through proportional representation.

The only country where this is being practised is Switzerland owing to the existence of three groups — German Swiss, French Swiss and Italian Swiss, and of cantons which are jealous of their independence. The Government of Switzerland is run by a Council which is elected by proportional representation by Members of Parliament who, in turn, are themselves elected to Parliament by proportional representation. This means a

National Government or a permanent coalition of sizable linguistic groups and political parties.

The Swiss Constitution goes further and provides that the position of the Chairman of the Executive or the Prime Minister shall rotate among the members. It also provides for maximum autonomy to the cantons which are almost sovereign and have minimum government.

Switzerland is among the least but the best administered countries of the world. Politics counts for little. Production counts for a lot. It is customary for a Swiss Cabinet Minister to call at the office of a Bank President, and not *vice-versa*.

I have only briefly outlined my views on what constitutes the essence of democracy.



## Appendix

### Seminar on Reservation

#### *Background*

The Indian Liberal Group, which is affiliated to the Liberal International, London and Freedom First Foundation Bombay, a public charitable trust, organised a Seminar to discuss the subject of reservation. The Seminar was held in Bombay on Saturday, 18th May, 1960. It had the benefit of the experience of Mr. Minoo Masani who presided. Mr. Masani was a member of the Constituent Assembly and is a Patron of the Indian Liberal Group and Chairman of Freedom First Foundation.

#### *Conclusions of the Seminar*

There is no disputing the fact that Reservation has caused numerous problems of a serious nature affecting not only the target areas for Reservation, namely the public services and education, but society in general. In Gujarat, it has led to an almost total breakdown of law and order over a prolonged period with widespread destruction of property and loss of over two hundred lives. Disorder and violence persist despite the resignation of one chief minister and the installation of another.

Notwithstanding their gravity, these developments alone are not conclusive in establishing the merits or the demerits of Reservation, because any reform which seeks to bring about major changes in a social order which has been entrenched for centuries must necessarily cause disruption. It was in the very nature of Reservation to disrupt the existing social order. Those at whose expense Reservation has been or is being carried out would naturally be unhappy with the policy and would resist the intended change.

What is more relevant in evaluating its success is that even those for whose benefit Reservation was being carried out are dissatisfied with the policy and unhappy with the manner of its implementation.

The Seminar, therefore, feels that the only criterion available to it by which the policy and the practice of Reservation can be judged is their effectiveness in achieving the objectives which the Founding Fathers of the Constitution and the successive Parliaments had in mind within the constraints laid down by the Constitution and the Supreme Court.

In the opinion of the Seminar the objective, in brief, was to uplift the Scheduled Castes and Tribes socially to the level of the remaining population so that they had equal access to opportunities for jobs and education and acquired ability comparable to the others to take advantage of these opportunities. Reservation was to be carried out within the constraint laid down by the Constitution, namely, that in the sphere of administration, its efficiency should not suffer. The Supreme Court had prescribed that Reservation in educational institutions should not exceed fifty per cent of the available seats. It was also a generally accepted principle, to use Mr. H. M. Seervai's words, that an exception should not swallow the rule, the rule being equality and the absence of discrimination.

The Seminar is of the view that Reservation has been a failure at the primary stage in the sense that the Scheduled Castes and Tribes have not been able to fill the jobs in the services and the seats in educational institutions reserved for them. Simultaneously, in the course of its implementation, Reservation has violated both the rule laid down by the Constitution as well as the prescription of the Supreme Court. This has taken place largely because of the manner in which the concept of Other Backward Classes has been introduced.

into the policy and the arbitrary and indiscriminate definitions given to the term.

Political parties have unashamedly exploited the situation. As Mr. Masani said at the Seminar, the policy of Reservation was "the most corrupting influence in our public life".

In short, by carrying out Reservation of more than fifty percent of the jobs and seats available and by expanding the scope of Reservation to cover a larger and larger number of people under the classification of Other Backward Classes, the exception has in fact swallowed the rule and the efficiency of both the administration and the educational system have been severely damaged, while, at the same time, many jobs and many seats in educational institutions have remained unfilled. This has resulted in the Scheduled Castes and Tribes remaining as backward as before, while eroding the standards of the remaining classes and downgrading the quality of life of society in general. By far the most serious consequence of Reservation has been that it has divided society. In states such as Gujarat, opposing camps, seething with bitterness and hatred, are embarked on violent confrontation. This spells mutual destruction with repercussions too frightening to contemplate.

Thus, the policy of Reservation has not only failed to achieve the purpose for which it was meant but has in fact caused more damage to society than any benefit it may have incidentally conferred on it. It is, therefore, a matter of the highest priority that the policy should be drastically reformed or completely replaced by an alternative which would better fulfil the intended objectives without detriment to society as a whole and to the efficiency of the administration or the educational system.

### *Recommendations for Reform*

As far as reform is concerned, the following steps are recommended :—

- (a) There should be a national policy, and state level deviations should be strictly prohibited.
- (b) The term "Backward Classes" should be defined unambiguously, based on criteria which are just and fair to the nation as a whole.
- (c) Reservation was intended to compensate for the social oppression inflicted on persons belonging to the lower castes amongst Hindus. Therefore, followers of other religions should be excluded from the benefits of Reservation.
- (d) Not more than fifty percent of the seats in educational institutions or jobs in any cadre of the administration should be covered by Reservation.
- (e) Reservation should be restricted to entrance into an educational institution or to the securing of a job, not to the subsequent progress in the educational institution or promotion in service.
- (f) There should be an income ceiling for eligibility for Reservation.
- (g) To prevent a cumulative effect, there should be a time limit up to which vacancies of jobs and seats in educational institutions should be kept open for reserved categories each year. Thereafter, they should be filled by persons on the basis of merit, without regard to class or caste.
- (h) There should be an overall time limit beyond which Reservation will be discontinued for all purposes : seats in Parliament and the Legislatures, and job vacancies and seats in educational institutions. This time limit should be fixed well in advance and all preparations for the change-over should be made so as

to forestall any subsequent pressure for postponement or relaxation.

#### *Recommendations for Alternatives*

In view of the many failings of Reservation, the Seminar examined a number of possible alternatives. In doing so, it had to keep in mind the fact that the objective was to uplift the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, whereas this objective has almost been forgotten in practice and Reservation has come to be thought of as an end in itself.

The alternatives would become apparent if it was realised that Reservation itself came up as a method of advancement because employment opportunities were severely limited and there was a shortage of educational institutions. It was believed that members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes would never be successful in the fierce competition for these scarce jobs and seats in educational institutions. In the case of jobs, it was also a fact that all the pressure was concentrated on the government and public sector jobs and Reservation could not cover the remaining 85% of the jobs in the private sector, the agricultural sector, the unorganised sector and the self-employed sector. The obvious alternative, therefore, was the fundamental one of increasing the total number of jobs in all sectors and the number of educational institutions without detriment to the interests of the country, *i.e.* without over-manning the services or lowering the standard of education.

The increase in jobs in totality is the ultimate objective, but there is one segment where a qualitative change is possible which could widen the potential for employment. This is the area of self-employment.

If education and training were orientated towards training people in trades, vocations, handicrafts and other such occupations, it would have the two-fold effect of reducing the pressure on jobs and simultaneously the pressure on seats in colleges and universities. This is because a person who is

equipped for and intent on self-employment is less interested than otherwise in college education and jobs.

Our recommendations are inspired by these considerations. At the same time, we are conscious of the fact that Reservation itself has become an emotive issue and has become embedded in the nation's psyche. It would be unrealistic to expect any government in India, however well intentioned, to be able to dislodge Reservation completely, certainly in the short term. We would, therefore emphasise that a reform of the existing system of Reservation and the steps that we recommend below should not be regarded as mutually exclusive. In many cases, they will run parallel to each other. In other cases, the reforms would be dovetailed to the phasing out of Reservation that we have recommended.

It is in this spirit that we recommend the following measures :-

- (a) Side by side with the speeding up of the implementation of the policy of free, universal and compulsory education, the families of Scheduled Castes and Tribes should be provided with financial aid and incentives to enable them to send and to retain their children in schools.
- (b) To reduce the pressure on jobs (now mainly in the government services and the public sector) by increasing the capacity for self-employment, and simultaneously minimising the clamour for seats in colleges and universities. It is essential that the educational system should be urgently revamped to guarantee concentrated vocational education and practical training for trades and vocations, to be imparted from a cut-off level of education, at which point, on the basis of performance and aptitude, the students concerned decide

to opt out of college/university education. An indispensable prerequisite to this is that, while preparing the specifications for various categories of jobs, the emphasis on university degrees is ruthlessly removed, to make recruitment compatible with the newly oriented system of education proposed by us.

- (c) Financial institutions and banks should be directed to provide special financial assistance and incentives, guidance and encouragement to persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes for setting up trades, businesses and industries.
- (d) A national man-power plan should be formulated and constantly reviewed and updated, setting out targets for the supply of persons for those key categories of man-power whose availability is of critical importance to the nation. Action should thereafter be taken to ensure that these targets are met by the education and training of persons of the right calibre. It is obvious that in doing so it will have to be accepted that merit alone should be the criterion, but the plan should provide for special facilities for more intensive training to a specified number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.
- (e) Assuming that our recommendation for phasing out Reservation is accepted and implemented, the entire thrust of favoured treatment should be swung towards those who are economically backward, irrespective of caste or community. Material assistance in the shape of books campus residential accommodation, mid-day meals, uniforms and other necessary assistance should be provided. Inevitably, those who are economically backward even beyond the stage when Reservation is phased out will preponderantly belong to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. To that extent, they

ought to be the major beneficiaries of the favoured treatment. Again, persons of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, should be provided with special training and facilities in general, with extramural coaching classes and institutions, for upgrading their intake-capacity for education. For this measure to be successful, it is essential that the term "economic backwardness" is defined with meticulous care on the basis of objective criteria.

#### *Recommendations for Implementation*

For the purpose of investing the entire problem and for making recommendations towards a reform of the system of Reservation and the implementation of the alternatives recommended above, or any other that may be considered suitable, the Government of India should set up a national commission.

The composition of the commission is important and we recommend that it should comprise three persons: a retired judge of the Supreme Court, an educationist and an incumbent or retired chairman of the Backward Classes Commission.

The commission will have a strict mandate to complete its study and make its recommendations within specified time.

The Government should act swiftly on the recommendations of the commission and should mount a professionally managed national campaign through the media, from public platforms and throughout the country about the commission's recommendations and to orientate public opinion towards acceptance and active co-operation. This task would be made easier if the Government were to succeed in winning the support of most, if not all, political parties.



## MR. MINOO MASANI

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The Institute has so far brought out 146 publications. All available publications are supplied free to Patrons, Donors, Life Members and Associate Life Members; and, Associate Annual Members receive free such publications as are brought out in the year of their membership. Annual and Student Members (from Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar districts, and belonging to all categories) can purchase the Institute's publications at a special 25 percent discount.

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—G. V. Mavalankar

[ From the Visitor's Book of  
the Institute, 15 August 1954 ]

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"IN THE YEARS THAT LIE AHEAD WE SHALL SEEK ADDITIONS TO KNOWLEDGE AS WORTHY AS WE CAN MAKE THEM OF THE TRUST THAT HAS BEEN CONFIDED TO US. WE SHALL DO THAT, NOT WITH THE THOUGHT OR HOPE OF IMPRESSING UPON OUR STUDENTS ANY SPECIAL DOCTRINES OR CONVICTIONS, BUT, AS WE DESIRE, WITH THE POWER TO LIVE THEIR LIVES MORE FULLY BY REASON OF THE FERMENT CREATED IN THEM. IT IS OUR AMBITION TO INSPIRE IN THEM A SILENT DEVOTION TO THE GREAT SUBJECT WE SERVE. WE ARE STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT THE SERVICE OF THOUGHT IS THE NOBLEST CALLING TO WHICH A MAN CAN DEVOTE HIMSELF. WE ASK TO BE JUDGED BY THE MEASURE OF OUR EFFORT TO MAKE OTHERS THINK LIKEWISE."

—Harold J. Laski

[ From the Inaugural Lecture at the  
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