

army is poised beyond the Niti and Mana passes for an attack at a moment's notice.

Till now we were told that the logistics of the Himalayan terrain was all in our favour. Now discovery is being made that it is the other way round : the terrain favours the Chinese.

From
Charan Singh

Vidhan Bhawan,
Lucknow.

Dated November 2, 1965.

My dear, Shastriji,

I understand from press reports that you have accepted the request of the Tirupathi Temple Management to be weighed in gold that the Management wants to loan to the National Defence Fund. Even at the risk of being misunderstood, I would advise you kindly to reject this request. Functions like this remind one of a feudal era whereas we are living in an age of democracy. Pt. Jawahar Lal

Nehru had once accepted such a request, but, on reconsideration, gave up the idea later.

Yours sincerely,
Charan Singh.

From
Lal Bahadur Shastri

Prime Minister's House,
New Delhi.
November 10, 1965.

My dear Chaudhari Charan Singhji,

Many Thanks for your letter of November 2, 1965. I am inclined to agree with you.

Yours Sincerely,
Lal Bahadur

Chaudhary Charan Singh,
Forest Minister, Uttar Pradesh,
Lucknow.

"Rural India is the backbone of our economy. Yet, our villages suffered due to misplaced priorities and lacked even the basic amenities. The Janta Government is now keen on rebuilding and revitalising the agricultural sector, which is the primary source of the country's wealth. Towards achieving this, we have to educate and enlighten the farming community of the latest developments in research in agriculture through agricultural fairs and exhibitions, so that the benefits of modern technology could percolate down to the countryside."

—Charan Singh

Indira Gandhi Rebuffed

From
Charan Singh

Camp :
U. P. Niwas,
New Delhi
Dated 8-1-1977.

My dear Indira Ji,

This letter was written on December 30, but is being sent to you as late as on January 8, because I was uncertain whether it would serve any useful purpose.

A *Samachar* report of the speech you made on December 23 in a training camp organised by the National Institute of Social Studies and Research, set up by the AICC, carried the following two paragraphs :

There had been other divisions in the Congress, some of them due to autocratic methods of 'Congress bosses'. Almost every state had a party boss.

However, in some states parties were formed for no idealistic reason but because of personal rivalry. She cited the example of Mr. Charan Singh in U.P. who had formed the BKD on a 'very personal matter' that he should be the Chief Minister.

Now, this is not being exactly correct, and I feel you were less than fair to me. In fact, on an

earlier occasion, during the course of an interview to a foreign correspondent (I have not got the exact reference with me just now), you had been pleased to say that I, as also Ajoy Mukherji of West Bengal, otherwise good men and true, had to leave the Congress because we were not allowed to work by those who held the State Congress Leadership in their hands. While one does not know which version of your own statements you consider to be really correct, a bare recital of events will reveal that I did not leave the Congress because I wanted to be the Chief Minister, but because a breach of faith had been committed.

In the general elections to the U.P. Assembly in 1967, Congress had gained only 198 seats as compared to 227 of the Opposition parties put together. Unable to agree amongst themselves on the choice of a leader, the Opposition parties urged upon me more than once to shoulder the responsibility. With my support at the time, the strength of the Opposition would have swollen to 275 or so, but I refused, and said I had no intention of leaving the Congress.

When a few days later, a meeting for election of leader of the Congress Legislature Party was convened, I offered myself as a candidate along with Shri C. B. Gupta.

You sent two prominent confidants of yours, viz., Sarvashri Umashanker Dikshit and Dinesh Singh to Lucknow with a view to persuade me to

step down in favour of Shri C. B. Gupta so that the latter might be elected unopposed, for reasons which were obvious.

After much persuasion I agreed not only to retire from the contest, but also proposed Shri Gupta's name, instead. The only condition I had attached, and which your two emissaries agreed to, in presence of several prominent Congressmen, was that, atleast, two members of the then state Cabinet, out of many who in my opinion did not enjoy a good reputation, might be dropped and at least, two new persons included. Instead, Shri C. B. Gupta was elected unopposed on March 8. As Chief Minister designate of Uttar Pradesh which contributed the largest contingent of MP's, he was able to bring about a compromise between you and Shri Morarji Desai on March 11 or 12. Your cabinet was sworn in, on March 13. Shri Gupta sent up the names of his team to the Governor the next day. The list included my name, but I refused to join, because none had been included or excluded as had been agreed upon between Sarvashri Umashanker Dikshit and Dinesh Singh, on one hand, and me, on the other, only a week earlier. Shri Gupta argued that he was not a party to the agreement.

Shri Dikshit saw me again in Lucknow on March 17, and said he would talk things over with Shri Gupta and let me know. But he never turned up. Shri Dinesh Singh told me on telephone that he will be reaching Lucknow on March 31 to ensure that their word was honoured. I told him that he should not fail because the Assembly which was in session, was scheduled to disperse on April 1. Like Shri Dikshit, however, Shri Singh also failed to turn up.

When contacted on phone at about 11.30 p.m. in the night, he said he did not reach Lucknow because the other party did not welcome his intercession and that I was free to do as I pleased. It

was upon this that I decided to leave the Congress, and so declared it the next day on the floor of the Assembly.

When you or your confidants realized the consequences of my leaving the party, a gentleman on the staff of the National Herald, Lucknow, which was being managed by Shri Dikshit, and a prominent Congressman of Pratapgarh which was the home district of Shri Dinesh Singh, saw me, one after the other, at my residence the same evening. They suggested I return to Congress as its Chief Minister. I replied that, in view of all that had happened, I could not possibly accept the offer.

If truth has not fled the human habitations completely, Shri Uma Shanker Dikshit and Shri Dinesh Singh will bear testimony to what I have said about their role in the affair.

While the failure to carry out an assurance, so solemnly given, proved the last straw on the camel's back, certain ideological differences between me and the Congress leadership had already begun developing, particularly, since the Congress session of Nagpur held in January, 1959. I had strongly opposed the official resolution regarding introduction of Cooperative Farming and State Trading in Foodgrains. Pandit Nehru was greatly displeased which led to certain decisions in the politics of Uttar Pradesh that would have, otherwise, not been taken.

To confine myself to ideology : I wrote a book containing my views on the economic problems of the country which was published in 1960. A revised edition appeared in 1962 under a different title. I had sent a copy to you (the then President of AICC) and to Panditji also. I had pleaded that it was not an economy of huge joint farms but of small independent farms, inter-linked by service cooperatives, that suited our conditions; that, while non-agri-

cultural development was a condition precedent to improvement in our living standard, it could not be brought about without prior or, at least, simultaneous development of agriculture; that, as amongst industries, subject to certain exceptions, cottage and small-scale enterprises should get the pride of place; that all our efforts aimed at economic improvement will fail unless growth of population was checked; that, our country will make no progress unless there is a transformation in our social and economic attitudes, etc.—views, policies or programmes inspired by Gandhi Ji's approach to our economic problems which are all incorporated in BKD's manifestoes of 1969, 1971 and 1974.

I feel flattered by the fact that many an idea contained in our manifestoes, has now been borrowed by other parties and political leaders.

It will not be out of place to mention here that, right since 1947, I had been expressing my concern over the failure of Congress leadership to contain corruption, both political and administrative. There are various notes and letters which will testify to this concern of mine. My efforts met with little success. That is why eradication of corruption and the need of a clean administration occupied the first place in all our manifestoes and policy statements.

Do not the above mentioned facts reveal that BKD came into existence not 'because of personal rivalry' or 'a very personal matter' of mine, but 'for idealistic reasons'? If I left or was prepared to leave the Congress merely in order to become a Chief Minister, I could have done so a month earlier, far before the Congress could form its own government and when I and my supporters ran little or no risks.

Had my steps not been guided by public interest and/or had BKD not been sustained by an ideology, it would not have survived, resourceless as it was, particularly, in view of the means and methods of fighting elections and securing defec-

tions which Congress has been employing in an organised manner since 1970.

The assessment of my conduct as a public man which you want to convey to the people, would be incomplete unless yet another relevant factor was simultaneously borne in mind. You will remember that you were scheduled to preside over the annual session of the Indian Science Congress in Varanasi on January 3, 1968. The local unit of the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) which was a powerful organisation at the time, decided to take you in custody and produce you before a people's court for trial. They announced their intentions through a public meeting as also press statements. Though SSP was a constituent unit of my government and had a strength of 45 members in the Assembly and though I was the head of a non-Congress government I took personal interest in the arrangements made for your visit and accompanied you to Varanasi. Under my orders Shri Raj Narain M. P. and other prominent workers and legislators of SSP were put behind the bars and a massive demonstration against you trying to reach the Pandal where you were addressing the Science Congress, was broken up by the police. Whereas, on the other hand, the President of the U. P. Pradesh Congress Committee who belonged to Varanasi, and is now a member of your government, had not the moral courage to denounce the SSP whether by way of a press statement or a public meeting.

The SSP was furious. I knew the consequences of my conduct from the start, and resigned on February 17—a day before the Assembly was scheduled to meet. I did what I thought was right, that is, to uphold the dignity of the institution of the Prime Minister in democratic India.

While I had to resign from the Congress at the time I did, owing to a failure on your part to do the right thing or get the right thing done, I had to resign from the office of Chief Minister for doing the right thing by you.

Had I rated the office of Chief Minister so high that it could lure me into resigning from Congress, in whose embrace or service I had spent a

life time, I would not have staked it so recklessly as actually I did. On the contrary, I would have clung to it by all possible devices. Nor would I have offered to resign as twice before I did, viz., in August 1967 and December, 1967 when I thought the attitude of my colleagues militated against public interest. Those who consider a high political office not as a means but as an end in itself, or rate it above every other consideration, are seen and known to behave differently.

To conclude : the two paragraphs of which I complain, have received wide publicity in the press. They amount to 'character assassination' of the kind you speak of in your letter to Shri Ashok Mehta, dated December 23 last. People ignorant of facts are likely to run away with opinions which are unwarranted. But I know I have no remedy left, for, the press is not likely to publish anything in refutation of your statements. I write to you only for record.

With regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Charan Singh.

Smt. Indira Gandhi,
Prime Minister,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

From
Charan Singh

Vidhan Bhavan,
Lucknow.
17th February, 1968.

My dear Dr. Reddi,

I hereby tender my resignation from the office of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

The reasons for my resignations, I believe, are already broadly known to you. In any case, it

does not appear necessary to mention any reasons in this letter.

It is obvious that it will be necessary to have another Chief Minister and a Council of Ministers. Inasmuch as the Samyukt Vidhayak Dal enjoys a majority in the Legislative Assembly, you might, perhaps, like to send for its new leader with a view to forming the Government. In case you do not consider it advisable to do so or the Dal fails to elect a Leader, then, the Congress Party having earlier gone out of power on its failure to command the confidence of the Legislative Assembly, I would advise that you may be pleased to exercise your power mentioned in Article 174 (2) (b) of the Constitution of India, that is, to dissolve the Legislative Assembly and hold a mid-term election in order to ascertain the wishes of the people in regard to the political party or parties which they would, in the circumstances, like to run a stable Government for them.

With regards,

I am,
Yours

Charan Singh

Dr. B. Gopala Reddi,
Rajyapal, U. P.,
Lucknow.

Press Statements

I have submitted my resignation to the Governor today. More than a fortnight ago, I had raised certain questions which, according to my lights, are vital to efficient functioning of any Government, particularly a democratic Government. There is little likelihood that a satisfactory answer to these questions will be forthcoming. On the contrary, developments that have taken place since then, have further confirmed me in my belief. While

some of the constituent units of the SVD are making preparations for, or have already launched upon, a mass agitation for seizure of public lands in utter violation of law, others are engaged in publicly condemning the administration. If necessary, I will make a detailed statement later.

In resigning from my office I blame no one. A coalition of so many desperate elements necessarily involves an adjustment with principles. But adjustment or compromise implies a limit also. In my case, this limit has been reached, that is, a stage has arrived when I can no further compromise with

the future and interest of the people as I see it.

May be, there are certain friends in the SVD who do not like a mid-term poll. If there are any such, there is still an opportunity for them to elect a new leader in my place and avoid the poll. The SVD enjoys a clear majority vis-a-vis the Congress Opposition.

CHARAN SINGH
Chief Minister, U. P.

Lucknow :
17th February, 1968.

"It is sad to find that corruption, which has been holding our society in an octopus-like grip, is now sought to be rationalised and belittled as a lesser crime, as something that calls for low-key and neutral action. I think corruption cannot be eradicated from this country unless it is dealt a mortal blow at the top echelons both of the Government and the bureaucracy."

—Charan Singh

Time For Fighting Emergency

From
Charan Singh
Chairman
Bhartiya Lok Dal.

Camp
U. P. Niwas,
New Delhi.
26-6-76.

Dear Indira Ji,

One full year has passed since 'internal emergency' was imposed and thousands of leaders and workers of Opposition parties were arrested in a mid-night swoop and detained under MISA, pre-censorship was clamped on the press and fundamental rights of the people suspended. The reasons given by the spokesmen of the government from time to time for these unprecedented steps have yet to stand the scrutiny of time and history. Mixing up of personal and political considerations and pride and prejudices of the personalities involved, and limitations on freedom existing today stand in the way of an objective assessment of the situation and factors that led to the unfortunate developments preceding and following 25th June, 1975.

It is not my purpose in writing this letter to go into those reasons or apportion blame.

As a lover of my country and democracy it is a matter of satisfaction for me that in spite of grave provocation and fears expressed by interested quarters, our people, by and large, have braved this

situation creditably. According to government's own admission there has been no internal disorder or violence, and peace and tranquillity have prevailed throughout the country during the last twelve months. No less a man than the Union Home Minister, Shri Brahmanand Reddy, has conceded at his recent press conference at Madras that the main objectives for which emergency was imposed which, according to him, were "to save the nation from internal disorder and economic chaos", have been achieved to a good extent because inflation has been curbed and communal and regional forces contained. Therefore, there is no rational and objective justification for continuing the emergency and limitations on people's freedom.

The 20-point economic programme and other steps taken during this period to ameliorate the lot of the poor, check smuggling and restore discipline in factories and offices have much to commend them. Bharatiya Lok Dal to which I have the honour to belong, had been advocating most of these steps from its very inception. They should have been taken long ago. It would be wrong and dishonest to link them with emergency and cite them as justification for its continuation. Dependence on the emergency provisions in the constitution for enforcing discipline and performing normal func-

tions of a civilised state in normal times is against the spirit of the constitution and is bound to be counter-productive.

There are certain imperatives of successful functioning of a democracy—economic freedom, political education and sense of discipline in a democracy had to be self-imposed. Democratic rights are sustained by continued vigilance and a sense of duty and dedication in the people towards the wider interests of the country and the nation. That is why a strong sense of nationalism is an essential pre-requisite for the success of democracy. It is a matter of regret that Indian political leadership failed to do its duty in this regard during the last 29 years of freedom. The share of responsibility of the ruling party which has been in power all these years is naturally greater but Opposition also cannot shirk responsibility in the matter.

To make the Opposition parties and leaders, some of whom were leaders of the ruling party till yesterday, scapegoats for this national failure, is neither just nor fair. This is a task which demands a united national effort in a spirit of dedication and subordination of personal and partisan interests to the wider interests of the nation.

The present situation in which thousands of patriots have been detained without communicating to them even the reasons for depriving them of their basic human rights and wherein all outlets for the expression of people's views and feelings have been stifled, cannot be called normal or healthy by any stretch of imagination. The atmosphere of fear and terror that has engulfed the nation can only breed violence, deceit and duplicity and destroy character and moral values which sustain a nation in the ultimate analysis.

What is worse, its prolongation is creating vested interests in its perpetuation among corrupt bureaucrats and such politicians as want to stick to power by fair means or foul. They are the only real beneficiaries of the present unfortunate situations. If history is any guide, concentration of power in

such hands in the name or under the shelter of a potential dictator or even of a democratically elected leader may spell disorder for peace, freedom and unity of our country.

It is a matter of satisfaction that you too are conscious of these dangers inherent in the present situation as is clear from your exhortation about unity and declaration about putting Indian democracy back on the rails. Your successful efforts at settling the Naga problem and normalisation of relations with sworn enemies of India like Pakistan and China prove your earnestness for resolving internal and external conflicts and problem through peaceful negotiations.

The contrary attitude you have adopted towards your compatriots belonging to the Opposition parties looks all the more unfortunate and inexplicable in this context. In a democracy, the government and the opposition are partners whose roles can be reversed, and not enemies. To strive for change of government, its leadership and policies in a peaceful and constitutional way is the legitimate function of a democratic opposition. The opposition too has the mandate of the people. But for its fragmentations, the opposition share of the popular vote in different elections is consistently more, and not less than that of the ruling party.

The difference in our approach to some of the problems is neither unnatural nor undesirable. Existence and acceptance of dissent is part of a democratic way of life as also of our national ethos and culture, 'वादे - वादे जायते तत्त्व बोधः' is the accepted and ancient truth in this regard in India. To say that there has been no change of mind and heart in the opposition leaders who have been put in jail is to betray woeful ignorance of history and human nature. Has repression and detention ever brought about change of heart anywhere in the world? Daughter of Pt. Nehru who bears the name Gandhi and swears by Gandhian values, should have known this better than anybody else.

What is needed in the present situation, is not a regimented uniformity and imposed unity but a meeting of minds to evolve a broad consensus regarding the norms and conventions which should govern political behaviour of the ruling party and opposition alike. This can be achieved by talking to the opposition leaders across a table and not by shouting at them through controlled mass media. You yourself have been insisting that democracy has only been derailed and not destroyed in India. A derailment cannot, and should not be allowed to block the democratic life indefinitely.

As Prime Minister of the country and leader of the ruling party, the initiative for effecting reconciliation within the country and for creating conditions for restoration of democracy and civil liberties as also for evolving a code of conduct binding on all, must come from you. This requires that :

1. All political detainees should be released. Those against whom the government have specific charges of violence, subversion etc. should be tried according to the law. It does not redound to the credit and credibility of the government that the solemn assurance given in the parliament that MISA would not be used against political opponents, has not been honoured. But it is never too late to mend, Mistakes must be amended by both sides in a spirit of forgive and forget.
2. Censorship on the press should be lifted and presidential notification regarding suspension of fundamental rights withdrawn. This is essential to create an atmosphere of confidence and trust in the country.
3. A joint meeting of the leaders of the ruling party and the opposition should be held as soon as possible to evolve a code of conduct and a charter of fundamental duties as a complement to the fundamental rights.
4. A firm date for elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies should be announced and an all-party committee should be appointed to go into the question of conduct of elections to ensure that they are free and fair.

5. A semi judicial Tribunal should be set up to go into the evidence against the parties and organisations that have been banned without proper legal process.

I have penned all this as a part of my patriotic duty towards my country and my people. Having learnt first lessons in politics from Gandhi Ji who always stressed the importance of right means for the right ends and never allowed his judgement to be clouded by bitterness caused by repeated incarcerations by the British rulers, I have tried to keep any feeling of rancour and bitterness away from my mind. Some times, suffering and imprisonment for a famous worthy cause as Lokmanya Tilak said after his trial, serves that cause better. My faith in non-violence and constitutional methods to safeguard democracy, freedom and unity of my country and my faith in the essential goodness of human nature remain unshaken.

I am confident that, sooner or later, good sense will prevail even with those whose judgement seems to have been clouded by fear or power complex. The one lesson of our history is that our people remember and honour only those who live and suffer for certain ideals. Your visit to Haldighati has borne this out. Akbar and Mansingh were all all-powerful in their own days, but the people remember Maharana Pratap only. Sticking to power, therefore, should not be considered as the be-all and end-all of life.

I hope that you would take this letter in the spirit in which I have written it and take early steps to end the present abnormal situation and bring do about national reconciliation, In any case I expect the courtesy of an early reply.

With regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Charan Singh.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi,
Prime Minister,
New Delhi.

“ Towards Gandhiji ”

□ Ch. Charan Singh

“The self-respect of the loin-cloth we have bartered away for sumptuous apartments and imposing embassies in foreign capitals. We are running after the discarded clothes of the West to hide our shame instead of relying upon our own resources.”

“When one takes a bird's eye-view of the national scene, one can only shudder at the state to which the country has been reduced. One is reminded of the anguish of Joseph Mazzini, the chief apostle of Italian resurgence in the nineteenth century when, on seeing his country develop under the leadership of Cavour along lines entirely different from what he had envisaged, he exclaimed :

“I want to see before dying, another Italy, the ideal of my soul and life. starting up from her three hundred years' grave. This is only the phantom, the mockery of Italy that I see passing before my eyes.”

Independent India inherited four problems: poverty, unemployment and under-employment, wide disparities in personal incomes, and attitudes militating against hard work—born out of a long tradition of foreign or minority rule. Attainment of independence has not helped solve any of these problems: on the contrary, the first three have assumed more serious proportions—the first in the sense that the proportion of these falling below the poverty line has increased latterly. A fifth has been added, viz., corruption of every possible form in the highest reaches, both political and administrative.

Following is the preface to the book, titled “ Towards Gandhiji ” written by Chaudhry Charan Singh, while he was undergoing imprisonment in Tihar Jail, during emergency.

Economic conditions lie at the very root of human welfare. There are certain goods and services without which a man can live or well make do; there are certain others without which he cannot exist at all, viz., those which serve to satisfy basic human wants—food, raiment, shelter and medical aid. Of these, to take food alone : According to a National Sample Survey in 1963-64, that is, after 17 years had passed since attainment of independence, 40 to 50 per cent of the people were not able to get bare food to the required number of calories. This proportion today has, if anything, gone higher. Such is situation despite the fact that we have been importing food every year at the average rate of more than 200 crores of rupees since 1947. Who is responsible ? A political leadership which has had no understanding of the real issues involved, which had no rapport with the mud-huts or the slums where the country lives, which wanted to apply copy-book maxims borrowed from foreign lands irrespective of our conditions, and which wanted to create a communistic economic set-up within the frame-work of a political democracy—is the clear answer.

India's present plight stems largely from a grievous choice made after Independence to go immediately 'industrial'. The Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi had sought to give first priority to agriculture accompanied by cottage industry or handicrafts, followed by light or small-scale industry and, then, heavy industry. But Gandhi's ideas were rejected by his heir who "adopted policies of prestige which did not in the least bit correspond to the internal situation". The Indian National Congress under the leadership of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru formally turned "socialist" overnight at its annual session held at Avadi in January, 1955. Whereafter big industrial units and expansion of the public sector have been the craze with public workers and regarded as a sign of progress in the country.

Gandhi had sought to build India from the bottom upward, that is, from the poorest and the weakest, and hence followed the centrality of the village: Nehru, exactly the reverse. He wanted to build India from the top downward, that is, from the industrialists, managers and technicians, and hence followed the centrality of the town. The latter lived to regret his decision, but it was at the fag end of his life when little time was left for him to reverse the gear even if he would.

The essential genius of Gandhiji was his down-to-earth, grass-root planning. India could be better and more expeditiously served by agriculture which provides food and clothing and small-scale technology which requires an increase, not a reduction in manual labour, uses the simplest machinery and is based on purely local materials. But instead of agriculture and labour-incentive and short-gestation period schemes, Nehru had a preference for huge, expensive, capital-incentive schemes which were not merely time-consuming, but also extravagant in the use of scarce resources such as steel, cement, sophisticated technical expertise and foreign exchange.

James Cameron who was a close friend of Jawahar Lal Nehru back in the critical, liberating days of 1947, writes in his book, *An Indian, Summer*, Mac Millan & Co., London & Delhi, 1974 :

"He (Nehru) was profoundly responsible for the achievement of India's independence and also even more responsible in time for its vitiating and decay. Jawahar Lal made India and lost it."

Agreeing with the above assessment, we would like to say that if a critical analysis is made it will be found that seeds not only of the economic crisis but of almost every other ill from which the country suffers today, were laid by Nehru. His distinguished daughter has only reared these seeds into mighty trees.

All moral values which we inherited from our ancestors and form part of our culture, all political values which our leaders since 1857 had inculcated, and all dreams of economic resurgence which our people entertained — have been violated and shattered.

Broadly speaking, the economic conditions of any country are an expression of the relation that its physical resources and the level of their exploitation bear to the size of its population and the rate of population growth. Although the quantity and quality of the physical resources are beyond human control, the level of their exploitation can vary and be raised. Similarly, although man can do nothing about the existing size of a country's population, at least its rate of growth can be checked. We have, therefore, to address ourselves to the tasks which alone are open to us, *viz.*, to better exploitation of our physical resources and to checking the growth of our human 'resources' which will improve our economic conditions. India has, however, not been able to achieve significant success in either.

Poverty means lack of goods and services that go to satisfy man's necessities, basic or non-basic. These goods and services are derived both from agricultural and non-agricultural resources. Although Agricultural development will get a fillip by non-agricultural development, the former does not depend upon the latter. Whereas non-agricultural resources cannot at all be developed unless agricultural resources have been first or are simultaneously developed, in other words, unless production of food and raw materials has increased, and,

consequently, unless men are released from agriculture for absorption in the non-agricultural sector. As the reader will find, however, a realization of this truth or, at least, of the fact that, in our circumstances, comparatively more attention and more financial resources needed, and need to be devoted to agricultural development, has been lacking on the part of our political leadership all along.

Increasing disparities in incomes and emergence of monopolies, on one hand, and increasing unemployment (which includes under-employment), on the other, are largely the results of increasing mechanisation and automation of manufacturing industry, construction and services—emphasis on capital-intensive projects and industries, on the one hand and, neglect of cottage industries and other labour-intensive enterprises, on the other.

Neither agricultural nor non-agricultural resources can be developed nor population controlled unless our people are prepared to change their old ways, old attitudes, customs or institutions and to put in harder, better and longer work than they have been doing. For example, we need to shed our fatalism, abolish the caste system, practise birth control and give a fresh look to the parliamentary democracy that we have given ourselves. But, alas ! there is no realization of any such need on the part either of our working force, the elite, or the leadership. Nor has any practical step been taken to haul up or even reform our educational system although everybody pays lip service to its need.

The reader will find in the succeeding pages of this book that the principal obstacle to economic growth in India lies in the fact that our political leadership, in fact, all our planners and economists have sprung from the urban elite and are fascinated with Marxian theories which are hopelessly out of time with the present day economic realities.

In common with Marxian economists, Jawahar Lal Nehru believed that inasmuch as the small economic units, whether in the field of manufacturing industry or agriculture are less efficient than large units and the poor do not save because they spend their money on consumer goods services and have, therefore, no resources left to improve their productivity, the fastest way to increase both GNP and employment, was to promote big factories in the urban areas and large farms in the rural areas, equipped with the latest machines. The economic truth that small farms and small industry are more labour-intensive than large farms and large industry was met with the argument that the additional employment was bought at the cost of economic growth. Nehru had no patience to listen to the argument that small units produced more goods also per unit of land or capital invested or to the argument that, apart from the orthodox model of growth, there was a Gandhian model also which suited our conditions eminently. In fact, he refused to believe his own eyes which evidently saw that every country which tried to go whole hog for the application of Marxian theories, had to experience famine and shortages.

His daughter and our present Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi has proved worse : She had a chance, rarely given to any national leader in our time, to change the face of her immense, tormented, poverty-stricken country, she muffed it.

Encouraged by Moscow, both father and daughter have adopted a policy of indiscriminate nationalization which has claimed a heavy toll. Not only in India but in all countries which set out as democracies, the adoption of the Marxist path of economic development has been accompanied by denigration of institutions like the judiciary, the parliament, the political parties and the press with consequences which are well-known. Recent events

In our own country also lend testimony to the above conclusion.

Referring to the economic conditions of India, in a paper on "The Human Dimensions of Economic Growth : Challenge of Stagnation in under-developed countries" presented by him at the One-Asia Assembly held in New Delhi in the first week of Feb., 1973, the world-famous economist and social scientist. Prof. Gunnar Myrdal had said as follows :

"Gandhi was certainly a planner, and a rationalistic planner, but his planning was ill-embracing and laid main stress on sanitation and health; the raising of nutritional levels by more intensive agriculture; a redirection and not only an expansion of education so that it became 'basic' and not merely literacy and 'academic', and a redistribution of land and wealth to create greater equality".

"It is only in the latest years that we have more generally come back to Gandhi's ideas. when even some economists have been moved to press for an 'integrated planning' which is the modern term for what Gandhi was all the time teaching. My Indian friends will not be offended when I say, that, if Indian planning has not been more successful than it has actually been, the main explanation is that they have not kept so close as they should, to the fundamentals of the teachings of the father of the Nation".

It is heartening to note that, as the national crisis has deepened, the alternative of a Gandhian solution has been advanced by various persons in the country, working in different walks of life—administrators, educators, scientists', scholars and politicians many of whom would not be regarded and, in fact, do not regard themselves as 'Gandhians'.

To India's misfortune ideologues have taken over its mansion of planning and made common-

sense vacate it. They would have been entitled to our pity rather than condemnation, had the fate of hundreds of millions of people not been involved.

These ideologues are not alone to blame, however, we have; as a people, been trying since independence to make peace with them. The entire nation is guilty of making a continuous attempt to bring about a mix of Gandhi and Nehru—to hypenate the two. Whereas like democracy and socialism, they are unmixable. They are two opposite poles; we can, therefore, have only one, not both. In the opinion of the writer, if the country has to be saved it will have to return to Gandhi in sack clothes and the ideologues made to quit the stage. They have occupied it too long for any good they have done to the country.

While economic development cannot be achieved unless right economic policies are pursued, it cannot be achieved on the strength of such policies alone. The country can make no progress unless, at the same time, it is blessed with a clean, efficient and impartial administration and, further, unless law is strictly enforced and order maintained. Both these requirements, in their turn, cannot be met unless there is an honest, clear-headed and firm political leadership at the top.

These questions, however, lie beyond the purview of this work. We are here concerned only with the economic aspects of the misfortune of our country.

The writer is not an economist but a public worker of the ordinary run, though having the good fortune of being born in the home of a small peasant farmer and some experience of administration in the biggest State of the Union, Uttar Pradesh, where 86 per cent of the people live in villages. Most of the views expressed here, are already incorporated in the writer's book 'India's Poverty and Its Solution' (Asla Publishing House, Bombay, 1962). He claims no originality and craves

the indulgence of the reader for any *faux pas* that he might have committed. Just as a bee collects the juice from so many plants and flowers and makes it into honey, so has he borrowed the ideas of other men without their authority and made them into an integrated whole.

The writer is grateful to Prof B. R. Shenoy, particularly for allowing the use of statistics on food given in his book PL—480 Aid and India's Food Problem, East-West Press, New Delhi, 1974. I also owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Times of India, New Delhi from whose leading and feature articles I have drawn profusely.

Perhaps, it is unnecessary to add that whatever has been said in this book, does not necessarily

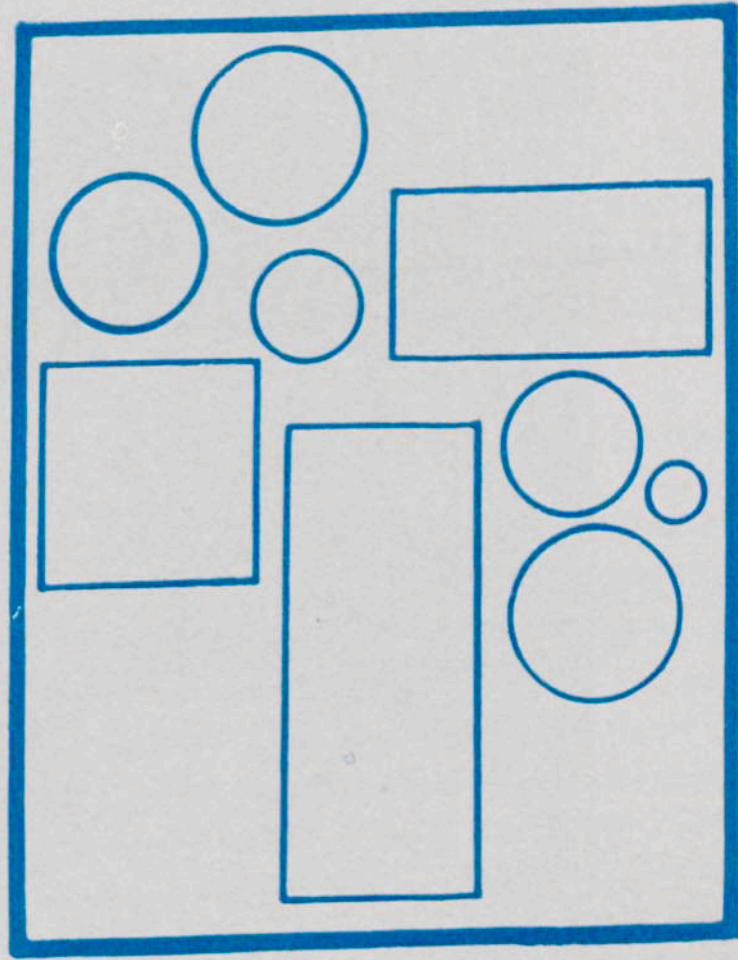
reflect the views of the political party to which the writer has the honour to belong, and that he will feel amply repaid if this labour of his serves to stimulate public interest, again in the teachings of the Father of Nation. Although a Gandhian solution of the economic problems that face the country, has been suggested in this book, the writer does not claim that it portrays a complete, or, perhaps, even a very faithful picture of what Gandhi dreamt or stood for: that is why it has been christened merely as Towards Gandhi.

Charan Singh

Tihar Central Jail,
New Delhi.
November 29, 1975.

“Heavy industry is certainly essential, but it is handi-crafts and small-scale industries that will form the base of our industrial structure. In our country where capital is scarce, labour is abundant and growing unemployed poverty is extreme, and demands for aspirations of the masses have been awakened by the democracy they have come to enjoy, it is low capital-intensive enterprises that are advantageous to the country as a whole, for they require less capital, provide more employment, yield larger product in the total, and bring early returns.”

—Ch. Charan Singh



VIEWS



३७२ : परंतप

Defections : What Is The Way Out ?

□ Charan Singh

I would like to say at the outset that desertion by legislators or others of the party on whose programme and strength they were elected is, generally speaking, not only ethically wrong, but constitutes a hindrance to the proper functioning of democracy. Before I dilate on it, I would like to explain briefly my own case of desertion. (I have advisedly used the word "desertion" to connote that where usually acceptable reasons and circumstances compel one to part company with his party, he cannot be dubbed as a "defector", according to the meaning attached to it. Such cases are exceptional.)

The Congress Party in U. P. lost the General Elections of 1967, returning with only 198 members out of the total membership of 425. The opposition possessing 227 seats (including 37 Independents) enjoyed not only a comfortable majority, but the verdict of the people as against the Congress. Now the Congress, with easy access to resources for temptations and with Mr. C. B. Gupta as its leader, set out on an adventure, the adventure of defection. About a score of Opposition Members were attracted to the Congress Party and Mr. Gupta formed his ministry. Having "won" the first round of the battle, Mr. Gupta restarted his usual game of establishing himself as a dictator in the Congress Party. Believing that some 80 per cent of Congress M. L. As were obliged and indebted to him, he wanted to put down those, who did not like political manoeuvrings. Some friends persuaded me to contest the election for the leadership of the Congress Legislature Party, if only to put the dissen-

ting voices on record. The Congress leadership at the Centre, having rightly or wrongly, evolved a way of 'unanimous' election, asked me not to disturb the convention. (This oral 'convention' was not backed by any resolution of the Party.)

My protest and that of my colleagues arose from factors, which were reducing the Congress to a miserable position. Ministers were largely responsible for it. I, therefore, desired that at least, one-half of the old team should be replaced by new faces, known for their ability and integrity. The two emissaries that the Prime Minister had sent to Lucknow, brought round Mr. Gupta to a compromise that the Leader should select his Cabinet colleagues in consultation with me. To cut the long story short, I reduced the quantum of my suggestion to the bone after repeated refusals by Mr. Gupta, but Mr. Gupta would not budge an inch. Eventually, the Prime Minister's emissaries found themselves helpless and advised me to do just as I pleased. The promise solemnly made to me was undone as if I could be treated shabbily with vengeance. It is discipline, integrity and mutual confidence that keep a Party in sound health. But the Central Leadership of the party appeared to have surrendered to Mr. Gupta. My desertion, if I may say so, was vindicated by unprecedented public rejoicings and the mid-term poll of 1969, which gave my infant, unorganised Party a strength of 98, many of our candidates lost only by a narrow margin.

If any evaluation of Indian policies, whether it pertains to diminution or advancement of demo-

cratic and ethical values, the Congress cannot be left out of consideration, because of its history and present position. With a glorious record, it appeared before the people for their vote in the first General Election of free India in 1952. It was rightly expected of the Congress that by appropriate behaviour in political life, it would set an example before newly born parties endeavouring to fill the vacuum in the Opposition. With a record of pre-independence popularity and with vast material resources at its command, the Congress, whether Congressmen were inclined to observe political ethics or not, could afford to abide by known democratic principles and conventions, because other parties were like pigmies before its giant figure. If I am allowed the audacity of indulging in a little self-praise, I may say that men like me nurtured a sense of injured conscience at the growing deterioration in different kinds of moralities, including political morality. The Congress, as an organisation of the Indian people fighting for independence and democracy, had grown under the inspiration of the British democratic framework with Party system as one of its important planks. That is the reason why it insisted on a Party Ministry in 1937 in U. P. as in other provinces, and incidentally gave rise to certain communal bickerings and manoeuvrings that eventually led to partition of the country. Since the inception of independence it has been conducting the Indian democratic machinery on Party lines. It is so evident a fact that no supporting material need be adduced. It is the Congress, which has framed the present Indian Constitution and established the superiority of conventions even over the written word of the Constitution. Had the unwritten British Convention not been invoked, the Indian Prime Minister would not have been all powerful despite the constitutional provisions making the President the main repository of all authority and power. The expression, "with the aid and advice of Ministers", is itself interpreted according to the convention. It is by convention that the British Crown is a big zero, and it is by convention that floor-crossing is an occurrence of the past. But in making defection obsolete, the British political parties have made their democracy a nearly faultless institution. What is the role of the Congress in this context ?

The year 1952, with which the Republic of India set out on its career, would be, it was commonly believed, the foundation-stone of a sound and healthy democracy, but unfortunately it turned out to be the beginning of a tendency ready to surrender principles to achieve narrow selfish ends. The beginning was made that year with successfully persuading Mr. T. Prakasam, returned to the Andhra Assembly on the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party ticket, to defect to the Congress. He was offered the Chief Ministership and the offer was tempting enough. Earlier, Acharya Narendra Dev and 13 others had set before the country a right example by resigning their Assembly seats after they had abandoned the Congress and formed a new Party. They went into wilderness only to observe a convention in letter and spirit. After the Prakasam incident, the Congress freely admitted legislators of other parties into its legislature wings. As if motivated by a desire to annihilate other parties, it raised defection to the position of a party question, if the so-called High Command of the Congress decided in favour of defection, it was considered as sanctified. After overcoming repeated attacks from the opposition and suppressing scruples of some of its own members, the Parliamentary Board of the Congress decided in 1967 to condone floor-crossing. It was formalisation of what Congressmen in power had been doing for the past fifteen years.

In its attitudinal vicissitudes, the Congress had, at one time, in 1963, expressed itself against defection, but made an exception in the case of those elected as independent candidates. (I have discussed 'independents' further on in this article.) The desire of the Congress to ensure permanence of rulership for itself has, year after year, been flaming to fierce passion, and since Mrs. Indira Gandhi assumed power, it has become reckless. Perhaps, no democratic country in the world has known so numerous defections in such a short span of time as have occurred, and been encouraged by a single party, in India. In U. P. for example, the Congress Party won 210 Assembly seats in the mid-term poll of 1969. After the split of the Congress and after the Lok Sabha elections

of 1971, which gave the two Congresses the validity of recognition, the ruling Congress along with a score of defectors from other parties, was left with a strength of 132 members in a house of 425. Unmindful of its minority, the Congress Party, under inspiration from the central leadership, made a resolve to swell its strength to a workable majority with all possible devices and questionable temptations. The will had its way, and defections continued not only until the Congress got a comfortable majority, but until the Bharatiya Kranti Dal and the Congress (0) were, by turn, reduced from Opposition Parties to Opposition Groups. Central Congress leaders and Ministers with their official lieutenants brought to bear, with personal visits and contacts, their influence on opposition members, and contributed their mite to the accomplishment of a dirty job.

How far the institution of Governors has been abused and vitiated by Congress rulers is a matter for judicial enquiry in the interest of democracy. As it is, in my view, a contributory factor in the encouragement of defection, I would like to examine the position of Governors. In democratic world, the second in size to India is the United States of America, where unlike Britain, autonomous states exist with governors as heads of the administration. We have apparently emulated the institution of USA governors, but for reasons best known to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and other framers of the constitution, the governors here are appointed by the President, and in actual practice, by the Prime Minister. No Prime Minister in the world enjoys such vast powers, and the Prime Minister, being essentially a party man, can hardly exercise a non-partisan attitude in the appointment of a governor, nor can the governors get over the sense of obligation that they owe to the Prime Minister especially in an atmosphere in which not only a high office, but even a membership of the Rajya Sabha or Vidhan Parishad comes from a display of complete loyalty, if flattery is not a decent word to use. A detailed account of how the U. P. Governor behaved in recommending suspension of the Legislative Assembly in 1970, and how he kept it in suspension until the Congress succeeded in

winning over defectors to build up a majority, will require a long space. It is adding insult to injury for the Congress to harp on its claim, which is not backed by any constitutional provision, that the governor is above party politics. The governor is to be appointed, according to the constitution by the President, and this provision should be interpreted in the light of the fact that since he is required to be above party politics, his appointment should be made by the President himself, and not on the unalterable recommendation of the party in the Union Government. As long as the present practice continues, the Congress Party or the ruling Party at the Centre will tamper with the impartiality of the Governor, and Opposition will be harbouring misapprehension, maybe, sometimes, misplaced. The past history has enough of examples where the Governors made their conduct questionable. In dissolving Legislative Assemblies at their arbitrary will, they have placed elected representatives in a subservient position. At times, they have to choose between defection and dissolution, a threat of which seems hanging over their heads. Contact an Assembly Member, thus terrorised, and he would say that it is better to go over to the Congress than to face re-election, which to a non-Congress candidate is a formidable task because he is again a pigmy compared to the Congress with its election fund of millions of Rupees. It amounts to securing defection with 'democratic' coercion.

A Party that demoralises itself by the kind of conduct the Congress has been indulging in, has its eyes fixed on the gains accruing from it, and does not realise how much harm it is doing to the cause of democracy. Repeated defections, and in an astonishing number, have driven the Opposition to disappointment, and the voters to a desparate state of mind. Many people are heard arguing that if Congress rule is to emerge by every manner of voting, whether for the Congress or against it, then the practical attitude should be to vote straight for the Congress. Opposition Party workers are directly confronted with this question : "We believe in the programme of your Party and in the administrative efficiency and honesty of your Leader, but what is the sense in the ultimate result, of voting for you,

when your members are likely to go over to the Congress. It will be outside the domain of practical politics to suggest that the main factor in defections is the Congress, which entices away your members with temptations." The obliging section of the press treats the defections with evenness of temper, nay, some paper hail them as an achievement. For example, when some Opposition members joined the Congress Party in 1967, the news was published with photographs on the front page, and when later in the same month or year some others deserted the Congress, they were dubbed as "traitors". The Congress itself has been giving the impression that the entry of defectors into the Congress is something virtuous, and exit a national evil.

In this background, it appears that a voice of reason—a plea for the observance of the democratic convention—may not be taken notice of seriously. Nevertheless, the reason must assert itself, whatever the consequence. The Party system envisages a kind of competition between different parties to go ahead of each other in doing good to the people. In Britain and some other countries, people of different shades of opinion, with different economic and social programmes, form themselves into different parties, and carry on a propaganda campaign to convince the people that their programme will ameliorate their economic condition and social life. It is expected that people join one party or another according to their convictions and believing that they fit in in the programme of that party, and of no other. The voters are to some extent influenced by the individuality of a candidate, but largely they vote for a party programme. In the case of India, it is a very complicated matter, and cannot be discussed here in detail. It would be enough to say that if members elected on the programme of one party go over, after their election, to another,

they betray their voters. Therefore, the ethics of the party system democracy decry defection. Only when a party radically deviates from its programme and departs from its principles, can a member claim the right to desert it. But it is a very delicate matter, and a wishful and unreasonably ambitious individual may justify his defection by an interpretation suiting his action. That is the reason why defections are, rather rigidly, forbidden in the party system. The rigidity is observed and, let it be noted, not enforced by law in the countries, where democracy is regarded as a reasonable success. There the party behaviour is different from that of the Congress, which encourages defections and talks of legal enactment simultaneously.

Parties are not taken notice of in the Constitution, and yet the President or the Governor takes notice of them, and invites the Leader of the majority party to form a Ministry. He abides by an established convention and observance of conventions is a solemn, tacit understanding between those playing different roles in a democratic set-up. So far as voters are concerned, the party system is more than a convention: it is a sacred contract between them and their representative. They vote for the political form in which the candidate appears before them. Collectively, the complexion of a legislature should remain, during the period of its term, the same as is given to it by the voters. In other words, the voters' verdict must be maintained. According to this thinking, even independents, who are proposed to be allowed in the provisions of an anti-defection law to join any party after the election, must maintain their independent character. Their deviation, from the form in which they appeared before the voters, will be a breach of faith. Having opposed every party in the contest and having been voted to success by the voters in preference to every party, how can an independent member betray the trust reposed in him?

How is the evil of defection to be checked ? A legal restraint is suggested, and amusingly enough, by those who are mainly responsible for defiling the democratic life. Usually in society unwritten conventions ensure much better obedience than written laws. Democratic machinery is a delicate mechanism; it stands on a network of thin fibres; it cannot bear the strain of defiance of conventions, these constitute its very basis. A law, subjected to different interpretations by different lawyers and judges, can be circumvented by designing people. Conceding that human society cannot be regulated without a body of laws, it can be

that in a sphere, where conventions are successful, laws do not come in to replace them. But if a convention fails or is made ineffective by those, who are charged with the duty of making laws, enactment of a law seems to be the only alternative. But, as the saying goes, it is never too late to mend. even now political parties of the countries can confer together and arrive at a mutual understanding. Such a move can succeed only if the Congress is a party to it and undertakes to abide by the decision earnestly and sincerely. If sincerity is lacking, even a law will not be able to restore propriety in our political life.

*"There is not a people but a
warner has gone among them
And every nation had a messenger,
And every nation had a guide,
And Certainly We raised in every
nation a messenger, saying
Serve Allah and shun the devil.
To every nation we appointed acts, of
devotion which they observe.
For every one of you did we
appoint a Law and a way."*

Holy Quran, xxxv, 25, xvi, 37

The Dayanand Ardha-Shatabdi at Ajmer

What is your duty ?

□ Charan Singh,
M. A. LL. B., Vakil,
Ghaziabad.

(1933)

Who has not heard of Dayanand ? He taught us to believe only in one formless God, who never enters birth and his slogan was "Back to the Vedas"—the true bedrock of Aryan culture upon which he based all his religious and social reforms. By acknowledging merit alone as the criterion of superiority or Brahminhood and not birth, he solved the problem of social inequality, which is eating into the very vitals of the Hindu policy, he championed the cause of women and granted her equal rights with man and in this respect went ahead of Budha and Shankar. Rishi Dayanand made herculean efforts in the direction of educational reform also. He proclaimed the principle of compulsory education and revived the long forgotten ideal of Gurukul, where the Children of high and low may prosecute their studies on an equal footing, away from the corrupting influences of town life and blessed by the living personal touch of the teacher. Brahmacharya, according to him, was giver of all good for a student. In Hindi he recognised, with the eye of a seer, the future lingua-franca of India.

Of the long line of saints, he was the first to throw the doors of Hinduism wide open for non-Hindus; days were when a Hindu felt ashamed of his religion and many sought solace in the embrace of Christianity, but today, thanks to the labour of

the Swami, a Hindu can walk with his head erect, conscious of the innate truth of his Vedic Dharma and always ready to prove his assertion. Swami Dayanand lodged a strong protest against the prevailing belief in Hindu Society that this world is an evil thing to be shunned, against the indifference of an average Hindu towards society, which lead him to seek salvation only for his own self. He pointed out that this passive attitude on life, this individualistic tendency, engendered by the teaching of Jainism and Buddhism, was the real cause of India's political degeneration. The Rishi was a worshipper of the hoary past of Bharatvarsha and passionately believed that all knowledge had followed to other parts of the world from the Indian fountainhead. He held up before the eyes of his countrymen the vision of last Aryan greatness and vehemently urged that the prospect of still greater glory was ahead, if we only stood up and got doing.

It will be a fruitless attempt on my part to narrate in the space of a newspaper article all the good work that the Swami did, but it goes without saying, that to such a man as he, our reverent homage is justly due. Full fifty years ago, he was wrested from our midst by cruel hand of death, The supreme executives of the Arya Samaj, which is still by far the best organised body in India, have decided to commemorate teacher's fiftieth death

anniversary on the approaching Deepavali at Ajmer. Now, what is the duty of the Arya Samajists in particular and others in general? There might have been differences of opinion about the necessity or opportuneness of the function, but once it has been decided upon, does it lie in the mouth of any of us to cavil? Shall we still go on arguing? All discussion should now cease, and every Samaj should vie with each other in contributing its mite. We should, by gathering in lakhs at the place hallowed by the Swami's death just as we gathered at the place where he sat at the feet of Virjanand, give proff of life that the Arya Samaj undoubtedly possesses.

Dayanand was humble in the extreme. Like most others he never claimed to be a prophet, a son of God or a Superhuman being in any other way, although he could very easily do on the contrary he declaimed vehemently against man-worship. He never professed to teach a new truth or religion, but only what the Rishis of yore had taught. He never laid claim to infallibility; on the other hand, he specifically gave liberty of thought to the Arya Samaj (vide sixth rule). Because Dayanand was humble, shall we, then for that reason, refuse to honour him? Because the Rishi was the embodiment of self-abnegation, It is all the more incumbent upon us to offer him wreath of devotion and, by our deeds, compel the doubting world, to recognise him among the great men of all time that he was.

Though humble, Dayanand was not hesitating and halting at his beliefs, but was sure of the words he uttered. He was born fighter and when it was a question of principles he never knew how to yield. He called a spade a spade, come what might. Expediency he did not cultivate, compromise he never would. In him there was no sycophancy or toadyism. His mighty voice and passionate eloquence raised thousands from lethargic indifference and stupor into active puritanism, ready to face like their Master all kinds of persecution even unto death. His lifelong zeal in the cause of Arya regeneration, his ardent love for the grand philosophy of our forefathers, his relentless enthusiasms in the work of

religious and social reforms threw a bombshell in the midst of stagnant masses of degenerated hinduism, and fired with love the hearts of all those who were drawn within the influence of his personal magnetism. He lit a fire which has inspired an army of religious, social and political workers throughout the length and breadth of the country and which, let us hope, will continue to inspire untold generations yet to come. We shall not forget him so soon and by collecting in our lakhs in Ajmer, we shall conclusively prove that the fire, that Dayanand kindled, is still burning.

Dayanand stood up in the midst of the whole hostile work like an oak that defied all tempests, like a rock, against kinds of shams, and superstitions and false beliefs. Luther had stood up against one evil system of catholicism, but Dayanand had to fight against multitudes of religions and social customs. To his lot did not fall the plaudits of the crowds; instead of earning hallelujahs of admiring masses, like political leaders, he had to wade through shoes, stones and poison to success. Dayanand would not relent till religion was completely rationalised; his denunciations and onslaughts fell equally hard on Islam or Christianity as on the Sanatan Dharma of the Day. Opponents felt the force of his incisive logic; they hastened to put their houses in order and as a result we find today attempts being made by all religions at rational interpretation of their scriptures. Can we honestly say that the work of the Swami in this direction has brought to completion by us? No false religion still holds the people under its thumb; priesthood, though slowly dying, is not dead. Let our learned men put their heads together at Ajmer and devise fresh ways and means of attacking the various forms, in which false religions still stalk this ancient land.

While the Master lived, we treated him with all possible scorn and contempt. He was pooh-poohed wherever he appeared; there was no stage that he addressed but was hooted. The assassin's dagger and the poison bowl were his fate while he walked this earth in his physical frame. In his last address to the Meerut Arya Samaj, he had declared

that he himself and the Arya Samaj will be hated and despised while he lived, but that after his death the day would arrive when the work of the Arya-Samaj would be hailed with a shower of flowers. The words were prophetic; with the passage of time increasing recognition has been extended to his work and, ere long, he will come into his own. The vedic principles that he preached are receiving increasing acceptance from the learned men of the world. There is not a movement convulsing India today but was initiated by Rishi Dayanand sixty years ago. The Swami gave to this vast country the gift of organisation. To Ajmer therefore we should have to offer our humble meed of praise, honour and shraddha to that redoubtable sanyasi whose clarion call first awakened us from the sleep of ages. To such Dayanand, mad with wine of Aryan culture, we shall pay our tribute of respect ungrudgingly and in full measure.

His renunciation was unique in the history of mankind. His passionate search for truth led him to forsake his hearth and home in early youth and to the last he lived a life of unexampled purity. His aditya brahmacharya, his learning, his firm resolution, his fearlessness, his living and unparalleled faith in God and the righteousness of his cause—well

these were things that made him an irresistible force. His dynamic personality compelled the admiration of the unbelieving; those who came to scoff remained to pray. He lived, wrought and died for us; how are we to discharge this indebtedness? Certainly by walking in the path that he trod, by doing the work that was dear to his heart, by propagating the Vedic Dharma for which he gave his life-blood and by becoming true Aryans that he loved us to see. For all this we require to be inspired by the example of the Rishi himself; we need to gather at Ajmer, that we may, in a body, draw fresh energy from that power-house. At Ajmer we shall take stock of our achievements and resources. Thereafter, God willing, launch an all comprehensive drive against the growing tide of atheism that threatens to engulf the young generation of Bharatvarsha.

What we can and ought to do at Ajmer I shall not stop to indicate in extension, that is for the elders to think out. My appeal is to the rank and file, the Aryan man and woman and the Aryan Kumar, to gird up their loins for the great pilgrimage to Ajmer and therefrom to bring fresh inspiration to continue with renewed vigour the work that our teacher left unfinished. Off to Ajmer, then Comrades.

"I want you to be certain of the truth of this one thing—that a good man comes to no harm in life or in death, for the gods watch carefully over his fortunes."

—Socrates.

Chaudhry Charan Singh : as I know him

□ Radha Krishna Hooda

At once a peasant ; at once a patriot. The new Union Home Minister, Chaudhry Charan Singh, is much more than a mere politician. He is one of the builders of Independent India. Cast in the mould of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Chaudhry first fought for the independence of the country and later to safeguard the same.

Those who know little about the background of the new leadership at the Centre should note that Chaudhry Charan Singh has not suddenly emerged, as if from nowhere, to be a great leader. The peasant in him as the Vice Chairman of the Janata Party straightway declared "I support Morarjibhai" at the helm. That is how the other contenders for the post of Prime Minister were pushed to the background and Mr. Desai emerged victorious.

Chaudhry Charan Singh, who is second in command in the Morarji Ministry, is an uncrowned king of the Indian peasantry. Though for long Uttar Pradesh remained the field of his political activity today the horizons of his field-work have widened and whole of the country demands his attention.

He was born in a poor peasant family in the village of Noorpur in Hapur tahsil of Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh on December 23, 1902. His father, Chaudhry Mir Singh, then lived in a hut (chhappar).

For his primary education Chaudhry Charan Singh was sent to school in a nearby village. Afterwards he moved to Meerut, where he passed his matriculation examination from the Government

High School. To move up in the academic ladder he had to shift to Agra, where he did his B. Sc. from the Agra College. It is here that he passed his M. A. in History. Finally, he qualified LL.M In 1925.

As he became a lawyer and began his practice in Ghaziabad he got married to Gayatri Devi, an educated Jat girl of Village Garhi in Rohtak district of Haryana.

Chaudhry Charan Singh went to jail four times. He first courted arrest in Salt Satyagrah in 1932. In 1940 he joined the "non-cooperation movement" and was arrested. In 1942 he was again jailed for joining the "Quit India Movement." Came the emergency of 1975 and he was detained under "MISA" by Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Government and was lodged in Tehar jail for about a year or so.

Chaudhry Charan Singh became twice Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, the largest state of India, first by revolting against the central leadership of the Congress party in 1967 and again in 1969 when he formed a Ministry of Bharatiya Kranti Dal, with the support of Mrs. Gandhi. He was elected to U. P. Legislative Assembly as early as 1937 from his home constituency Chhiprauli and since then he has been consistently contesting the same seat in every general election.

Paul Brass, an American author, wrote in his book, "Faction Politics in Indian States" that Chaudhry Charan Singh currently Agriculture Minister in U. P. Government has dominated the District Congress and district politics since the

early forties and successfully resisted serious challenges to his leadership during his long rule. "Chaudhry Sahib" as he is reverentially called by his followers, has been an unusually successful faction leader in U. P. politics. Inspired less by desire for power than by an invincible belief in the rightness of his actions and policies Charan Singh seeks neither friends nor favours and gives no quarter to those who oppose him. A look at the elements of Charan Singh's power will throw more light on the requirements for factional leadership and political influence in contemporary U. P. Politics.

"Charan Singh is not exactly an intellectual in politics, but he is well-read man with an incisive intelligence, which he has devoted to a continuing study of agricultural problems in U. P. Charan Singh is the leading ideologist in U. P. of the peasant-proprietor. As a prominent member of the U. P. Zamindari Abolition Committee, he worked hard to ensure that the Zamindari Abolition Act would contain no loopholes, which would permit the continued domination of Zamindars in the rural economy of the state and to make certain that landlordism may not raise its ugly head again. In his most recent publication 'Joint Farming X-Rayed' the problems and its solution, Charan Singh has opposed partly on technical grounds, but also because of his belief in the values of peasant-proprietorship — in the new Government policy of fostering Co-operative Farming".

Chaudhry Charan Singh is convinced that it is the peasants who are the sources of Indian industrial workers, it is the peasant who constitute the main market for Indian industry, it is the peasants who are the main source of Indian Army, so the peasantry is the biggest political force in India, but so far the Indian peasantry has been exploited a handpicked shrewd urban clique which has been by ruling India since Independence. Unless the farmers, who constitute 80 per cent of India's population come at the helm of affairs, India cannot progress".

Chaudhry Charan Singh assured the people of India in his election speeches that if Janata Party, of which he is the Vice Chairman, was voted

to power, it would give "an honest and efficient administration." It would take ruthless measures against all public servants found guilty of corruption, inefficiency or discrimination. He said "I would like public servants to be well paid and trusted."

As for as corruption among politicians, Mr. Charan Singh says, "like sacrifices, corruption also starts at the top and percolates down. It then corrupts the whole society. Unless there is high degree of personal integrity at the top in public life, corruption in administration cannot be stamped out. The party, therefore, will adopt special procedure and establish special agencies which will take automatic legal notice of complaints and institute inquiries into charges of corruption against all non-officials, who may be placed in positions of responsibility, particularly ministers and legislators".

Chaudhry Charan Singh is undoubtedly a man of iron-will and strong likes and dislikes. He promised through the manifesto of Janata Party that he would give bread, liberty and clean administration to the people of India; and the people in return reposed full faith in him by giving a thumping majority to Janata Party in the recent elections and routed the ruling Congress. Mr. Charan Singh seems impatient and is serious and sincere to root out corruption in the country.

The Janata Party and its leaders are on test and the people will closely watch the performance of the leaders of the newly formed Janata Party Government, which has been installed in New Delhi with great aspirations and hopes.

Chaudhry Charan Singh with his clean past and a clear vision is looking for the day, when India will be known as a clean society. He jocularly says, "My dream or aim is not marxist, nor maoist but Indian and therefore Gandhian.

Chaudhry Charan Singh is a man of action and his devotion to duty is bound to fulfil his dreams. I wish success to the Janata Party Government and its leaders who declared that they are servants and not masters. ●

The Message is the Man

□ Dr. L. M. Singhvi

I reckon Shri Charan Singh's Speech of 23rd March, 1976 in the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh as one of the truly great landmark speeches of all times in the annals of our parliamentary history. If there were a contemporary "time capsule" on our parliamentary institutions, that speech would qualify pre-eminently for the remembrance of the posterity.

In that historic speech of March 23, 1976, Shri Charan Singh articulated the agony of a stifled nation and gave forthright expression to the anguish and the sorrow of the people of India in a state of siege. He spoke courageously and with wisdom; he spoke with righteous indignation but without rancour or malice. He spoke as a sage and a warrior with a remarkable combination of vision and valour. He spoke not for this or that party or for this or that point of view in a transient debate. He spoke for the political system and its groundnorms, for the common people and their liberty and for democracy and rule of law.

To appreciate that heroic speech of Shri Charan Singh, we must recapitulate the perspective of India's modern political and constitutional history and remind ourselves of our national trust with democratic destiny.

With the advent of Independence in 1947 and with the proclamation of our republican Constitution in 1950, the concepts of freedom, liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and the dignity of man were enthroned in our national pantheon. In the long

night of India's struggle for Independence and in our dawn of Freedom, we had promised ourselves never to allow the enslavement of the human spirit. Our constitution and the basic values of our struggle for freedom had committed us deeply as a nation against all forms of arbitrary and authoritarian absolutism of power.

During the Emergency of 1975-76, freedom was in bondage. Freedom had lost its constitutional foothold. The power of the Courts, the influence of the elected representatives of the people, and the impact of the press, the academics, the professions and the public opinion were suddenly eclipsed. In March, 1976, the Emergency had, at least seemingly and for the time being for all practical purposes, succeeded in consolidating itself in legislative and administrative echelons. The skies of the Legislatures and the Courts were overcast with the darkest clouds. Shri Charan Singh's Speech of March 23, 1976, came as a veritable thunder and lightening, piercing and somewhat dispersing those clouds.

The most remarkable thing about that Speech was that in fact it came to be delivered on the floor of the Vidhan Sabha when the encircling and enveloping gloom was overwhelming and impenetrable. The press had been muzzled. Public opinion was voiceless. The ruling as well as the opposition parties were paralysed and atrophied. Electoral process was in abeyance. Courtiers abounded and flourished in the corridors of power; critics languished

either in jails or in wilderness. Civil servants were without any real options. Many of them had not only surrendered themselves but had enlisted themselves as mercenaries. Industrialists were afraid. Traders were apprehensive. Workers and peasants were baffled. The political leadership itself had lost its moorings. The promise of social justice and equity, and of discipline, tranquility and order on the one hand and the climate of fear, apprehension, vengeance and vendetta on the other brought about acquiescence and even enthusiastic support for authoritarianism. It was in that bleak situation that Shri Charan Singh spoke out firmly, clearly and courageously on March 23, 1976.

Members of legislatures have a constitutionally guaranteed privilege of freedom of speech within the House. That privilege is the foundation of democratic debate and of parliamentary institutions. Never was that privilege better employed in our country than when Shri Charan Singh resorted to the forum of the Assembly for uttering those elementary truths, which remain for ever relevant for all governments.

Shri Charan Singh started his Speech mildly, persuasively and courteously. He said :

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, today's debate in the House is of historic significance. We may or may not be able to do justice to the questions which confront us but there can be no two opinions that our country and its future is in the throes of an extra-ordinary and unprecedented crisis.

At the outset I wish to tell the Hon'ble Members who sit on the Treasury benches that I shall talk to them sincerely and candidly and that if at any time I am overcome by emotion and harsh words escape my lips, I ask for their forgiveness and indulgence."

It is clear that Shri Charan Singh was anxious to have an intimate heart-to-heart talk with the members. He was not out to score debating points. He spoke more in sorrow than in anger. Obviously he had in mind not only the members of a Assembly but the apex rulers in Delhi and the people of India at all levels. He wanted to appeal to reason and

conscience all around. We do not know precisely what effect Shri Charan Singh's speech had on the political processes but it is certain that the members of the Legislative Assembly were deeply touched and stirred. The speech was not only widely talked about among legislators, politicians, lawyers and other politically aware sections of the population but also helped to rekindle, re-assuring hopes of the continued existence of the spirit of freedom in our country.

Shri Charan Singh's speech will be remembered in our parliamentary history not merely because it contains cogent and coherent political criticism of the Government of the day, nor because it was the lengthiest and the most comprehensive parliamentary discourse delivered by any elected representative during the Emergency, but because it was a milestone of faith on the bedraggled path of embattled freedom. He had marshalled his facts carefully. Those facts had an inexorable logic of their own. His arguments and his appeal to the reason and conscience of the House were an integral part of the factual landscape itself. The facts were not fully known. There were only whispers, rumours and onesided reports. Shri Charan Singh's speech confirmed and authenticated those stark facts and asked the legislators, particularly those belonging to the ruling party, to search their hearts. The refrain of his song (and it seemed at that time to be the swansong of freedom) was : "Whither India? Whither Democracy and Rule of Law? Whither Human Dignity and Liberty?"

Shri Charan Singh told the House of the arbitrary and indiscriminate arrests and detentions, of rampant terror and of inhuman torture. He told the House that Emergency was being misused, that freedom of expression and dissent was being suppressed ruthlessly. He reminded the House of the heritage of India's freedom struggle and how it had been abandoned and departed from. He did not have the powers the apparatus and the paraphernalia of the Commissions of inquiry, but his Speech was in a sense "the grand inquest of the nation".

Shri Charan Singh took the House with him on a kind of "Bharat-Darshan" tour and at each

pause, he asked a basic question. The Speech was packed with factual material and he made the facts to speak for themselves. He spoke of the breakdown of the constitutional and the political system, of the suspension of fundamental and ordinary legal rights, of lawless and heartless laws and of the excesses of the administration and the police. He narrated at length the grim and gruesome details of unbelievable instances and techniques of torture. He spoke of the motivated supersession and transfer of judges and also of certain judgements which still provided a ray of hope. He spoke of the spate of constitutional amendments and the ineffectiveness of parliamentary institutions to check and prevent abuses of authority. He spoke of the destitution of public life and of public morality. He challenged the rulers of the day and defied them to hold the general elections, making an emphatic and unambiguous prophesy that the ruling party was bound to lose at the polls.

In the course of his speech, Shri Charan Singh touched upon a delicate point. He said that the charge against him and many of his colleagues that they were going to commit violence was without any foundation and was an instance of prevarication. He said that it was not possible for him to advocate violence but at the same time he reminded the House that Mahatma Gandhi preferred violence to slavery. He also said quite clearly and candidly though under the pressure of political despair prevailing at that time that six hundred million people will not remain in slavery for long and that there would be an explosion and the country will be in flames if normalcy was not restored. He emphasized that Gandhiji had opted for non-violence but not out of cowardice, and repeated what Gandhiji had said, that if nonviolence failed he would ask the people to use physical force to attain Swaraj. He said that violence could only beget violence and that in extreme situations of pervasive violence by the State and the political apparatus the people might be left with no option but to reply in the same coin. That part of Shri Charan Singh's statement provides a measure of the depressing depth of despair prevailing at the time.

Shri Charan Singh built up a formidable array of arguments against the continuance of the Emergency. Equally effectively he demolished the edifice of justifications for the suppressions of freedom. He quoted with telling effect to poignant passages from the speech of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru which he had delivered at the Session of All India Congress Committee in 1936. The first passage quoted by Shri Charan Singh from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's speech was :

"Comrades, being interested in psychology, I have watched the process of moral and intellectual decay and have realised even more than I did previously, how autocratic power corrupts, degrades and vulgarises".

The other passage quoted by Shri Charan Singh from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's speech was :

"A government that has to rely on the Criminal Law Amendment Act and similar laws, that suppresses the press and literature, that bans hundreds of organisations, that keeps people in prisons without trial is a Government that has ceased to have even a shadow of justification for its existence".

Concluding that marathon speech, Shri Charan Singh reminded the House of the strange predicament of Duryodhana in Mahabharatha and said that Duryodhana did know what was right and what was wrong, but he said that he found himself unable to do right and to resist wrong, because he was, as it were, under a spell. Shri Charan Singh said that it was no use finding fault with Shrimati Indira Gandhi and said that in fact the fault lay with the selfishness of politicians who were unable to put the nation above their selfishness. In unforgettable words, he said : "Friends, I ask you to think of the nation. Our lives are transient but the nation is immortal. Therefore, friends I ask you to search your hearts and think of the situation which the nation faces today impartially and without any blinkers. Let us think of undoing the grievous wrong which has been done to the nation".

Shri Charan Singh must have alternated between hope and despair when he made that Speech. Both elements are discernible in what he said and the way he said it. One sees in that Speech unclouded reason. In many ways, his Speech was a battle cry and a clarion call to wage a fearless battle against authoritarianism. In another sense, Shri Charan Singh's Speech represented the desperate effort of a political historian to leave a testament of truth for the posterity. He could not know at that time how and when the dawn of freedom would return to this nation. There was in his Speech a sense of sorrow and sadness but there was also a vow not to bend or to yield. He was prepared to fight as long as life permitted him to do so and then to leave the legacy to the people in whom he exuded boundless faith. In that moment of despair and dedication. Shri Charan Singh could have sung with Byron who said :

*"For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won."*

Of Shri Charan Singh and his memorable Speech it can be said with justification that the message is the man, for that Speech represents Shri Charan Singh better than any catalogue of biographical events or a compilation of what he has said and written on different occasions or a portrait of his physical likeness. In that Speech is to be found the quintessential man who epitomises some of the remarkable qualities of the soil of India. He is of the earth, earthy. His commonsense has a typical sturdiness, all its own. He has courage and strength. He is singularly straight forward and he is also stubborn and uncompromising. He has a rough exterior as also an inner softness and natural generosity. Above all, his patriotism has a spiritual quality. His Speech of 23rd March, 1976 represents him at his best That Speech, if success and high office are not to be the criteria, was the most effulgent zenith of Shri Charan Singh's distinguished public life.

Love and worship the ideal. The ideal is the word of God. High above every nation, high above humanity is the country of the spirit, the city of the soul, in which all are bretheren who believe in inviolability of thought and in the dignity of our immortal being.

—Mazzini.