

WHO IS A CASTEIST



AN ANALYSIS

By : AN OBSERVOR


PUBLICATION DIVISION

Who is a Casteist ?

—An Analysis

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Forward by Rabi Ray

Former Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare

THE KISAN TRUST DELHI

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Publication Division
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Publisher's Note

Founded in 1979, The Kisan Trust, Delhi began functioning with the publication of three weekly journals—in English, Hindi and Urdu. The aim of the Trust is to educate the rural masses into a greater social, economic and political awareness. It was in furtherance of these objects that Kisan Trust Delhi started a Publication Division some time back.

On an experimental basis we had published a small booklet analysing the infamous incident at Baghpat involving Mrs. Maya Tyagi on 18th June, 1980. Now after the Publication Division has come into its own, in terms of organisation, it is starting work by the publication of two books. The first is titled "Who is a Casteist? An Analysis" and the second is its Hindi translation.

The author has chosen a particularly debilitating social problem as his subject, one which has for centuries created deep imbalances and nurtured the most cruel injustices in our society. The tragedy here is that not only does this problem exist till today, but has become even more explosive in recent years. Taking the monstrosity of caste as his subject, the author has traced, since after independence, the history of the main political figures of the country and tried to identify the guilty ones in this regard. The author has based his work on several widely known sources while also presenting here for the first time vital unpublished material and documents.

We hope that this book helps in providing the reader some new light on the nature of this particular social problem. If it succeeds in doing this, then the Kisan Trust will have taken a large step towards fulfilling its aim and objects.

Ajay Singh
Managing Trustee
The Kisan Trust Delhi

Preface

I am glad that the Kisan Trust is publishing the book "Who Is A Casteist ? An Analysis". This is no mean achievement. The caste system and the hierarchical order based on birth are mainly responsible for our national decline. The division of Indian society into hundreds of castes explains why we have succumbed to foreign aggression in the past. It has been aptly said by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia that "The system of castes is a terrifying force of stability and against change, a force that stabilises all current meanness, dishonour and lie. An unholy fear prevails, lest, if some meanness or lie were to tumble, the whole structure might topple. Post-freedom India is but a strict continuance of British India in most essential ways. The Indian people continue to be disinherited. They are foreigners in their own lands. Their languages are suppressed and their bread is snatched away from them. All this is done for the alleged sake of certain high principle. And these principles tie up with system of caste, the great chasm between the few high castes and the four hundred million of the lower castes. These high castes must maintain their rule, both political and economic and, of course, religious. They cannot do it alone through the gun. They must instill a sense of inferiority into those whom they seek to govern and exploit. This they can best do by turning themselves into a select caste with speech, dress, manners and living of which the lower castes are incapable. The attitude of India's political parties is governed by this supreme consideration of having to instill a complex of inferiority among the mass of people. People's languages are undeveloped, their housing and general styles of living incapacitate them from good or great action and their mind is not worth considering. So must the high castes weave the net of illusion. Current political opinions in India, because they reflect the false and unnatural interests of the high caste, are not worthy of consideration".

It will be in fitness of things to quote from the appeal made by Ch. Charan Singh when he exhorted the Backward classes, Harijans

and Girijans at a joint rally that took place on 18th February, 1982. at the Boat Club, New Delhi.

"The founding fathers of our constitution have clearly provided that the socially and educationally backward castes in our society be given reservation in services so that they would be able to come on a par with other forward castes. But the ruling Congress (I) party during its thirtyone years rule instead of implementing the provisions of the constitution in relation to the backward castes has perpetuated the age-old domination of the so-called high castes over the backward castes. The recommendations of Kaka Kalelkar Commission regarding the backward classes which was submitted to the government in 1955 have not been implemented till date. It is as if here was a deepseated conspiracy hatched by the upper castes and capitalists to thwart the rightful urges and aspirations of the backward castes, Harijans and Girijans to have their rightful place in the Indian society. It is heartening to note that these depressed sections of the Indian community have now risen from their age-long slumber and are now prepared to fight for their rights. They are bound to be victorious as they constitute the majority of the Indian society".

"It was for the first time during the post-independence period that a political party, viz. the Janata Party in their election manifesto for Lok Sabha elections in 1977 pledged itself to implement the recommendations of Kaka Kalelkar Commission Report and the Janata Party's pledge was actualised in Bihar under the stewardship of Karpoori Thakur who was the Chief Minister at the time. The Janata Government appointed the Mandal Commission as per the provisions of the Constitution to review the situation and make appropriate recommendations for the welfare of the backward castes. The Cong. (I) Government at the centre has been in possession of the said report for the last one year but has not yet published it despite its repeated assurances in the Parliament to put on the table of the House. It seems the recommendations of the Mandal Commission would meet the same fate as the previous Kaka Kalelkar Commission Report unless the backward castes start a massive people's movement to compel the Government to implement them. Hence I make this fervent appeal to all the backward castes, Hari-

* The Report was published after the rally had been held on February 18, 1982 as scheduled.

jans and Girijans to join a massive rally on 18th February, 1982 at 12 Noon which is also the opening day of the Budget session of Parliament at the Boat Club near Parliament House in New Delhi. Let this rally be the precursor of a long-drawn-out battle of all the have-nots against the monopolists to assert their rightful place in the Indian society.

"The plight of the Harijans and the Girijans beggars description. The constitutional provisions for the reservation of the scheduled castes and the tribes have not been honestly implemented. The recentmost atrocities on the backward castes and Harijans and Girijans are an eye-opener to all the patriots, the social reformers, in fact, to all the public workers. I would like them to join the said rally in large numbers to build up a strong public opinion against such atrocities .

"The backward castes, Harijans and Girijans are no longer prepared to be treated as second class citizens in the presentday Indian society. They are restive. They can come into their own only if they are prepared to make necessary sacrifices for achievement of their rightful place in the society. No lover of this Mother-land of ours can entertain a nobler ambition in this life than to see that the backward castes, Harijans, Girijans and others who are down-trodden wrest social, political and economic power from those who constitute the parasites of our society. I make a special appeal to the young generation of backward and deprived sections of our society to wake up and organise themselves. The monopolists and the exploiters have nowhere in history shed themselves willingly of their power : it has always had to be snatched".

I commend this book to all those who want immediate restructuring of the Indian polity. The Trust will be happy if a systematic debate takes place on the need to destroy the caste system lock, stock and barrel.

Rabi Ray
Vice-Chairman
The Kisan Trust Delhi.

Who is a Casteist ?--An Analysis

Shri Charan Singh has been often upbraided by his political opponents for being a 'casteist'. Now, what are the facts ?

Leaving out the early period of five years after the attainment of Independence when Shri Charan Singh was inducted into the State Government of Uttar Pradesh in April, 1946 as a Parliamentary Secretary out of 13 and, despite his record being the best of them all, was the last to be promoted to Ministership, viz, in June, 1951 we come straight to December, 1960 when the then Chief Minister, Dr. Sampurnanand (who had succeeded Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant on his transfer to New Delhi in December, 1954) had to resign.

The choice of a successor lay between Shri C. B. Gupta and Charan Singh. It was not difficult to make : in fact as everybody in the State who was anybody, knew there was no comparison between the two. Shri Charan Singh's ability, integrity, efficiency and popularity were acknowledged on all hands. We cannot here, go into the policies he followed, the improvements he effected in the administration of the State and the public service he rendered in and through the agency of the various departments that were entrusted to him, but will draw the reader's attention only to certain facets of his personality as a public man and administrator that had emerged in a span of thirteen years (1946-1959)—the impressions that his work and character had imprinted on the public mind.

In him the people saw an untiring crusader against corruption that was rampant in public life and administration—a crusader whose own integrity in the widest sense of the term was beyond cavil. His private life was above reproach and an open book. Nor could anybody charge him with abuse of power in the interest of those who were near and dear to him. And when we say what we have said here, we pay a tribute to Shri Charan Singh's character which can be the envy of any public man, at least, in India.

In Shri Charan Singh the people also saw a painstaking man who did not know any respite. His absorption in his duties will be

apparent from the fact that, although his tours and visits to the districts and the countryside and, therefore, the number of public meetings he addressed, far outnumbered those of any other Minister, he was not able to spare time for seeing even important places like Badrinath in his own State.

Shri Charan Singh received approbation, if not encomiums from the Opposition in almost every session of Legislature, sometimes for this policy or achievement and sometimes for that—which has been the good fortune of few Ministers in the country, if any at all. Not only that : as proceedings of the Legislative Assembly will testify, there had been several occasions when leaders of the Opposition asked for extension of time of the sitting of House (and got it), while Shri Charan Singh was in the midst of a speech so that they might further profit by his knowledge and experience.

Shri Charan Singh had always insisted that Ministers shun ostentation and lead simple lives so that the gulf between them and the man in the street was as narrow as possible. It was at his initiative that the salaries of the Ministers were brought down to the level of Rs. 1000/- p. m., Ministers gave up the luxurious Chevrollets in favour of the small Ambassador, regular or continuous flaunting of the national flag on Ministers' cars and houses was discontinued and the practice of a PAC squad accompanying the Ministers on train journeys was given up. When these proposals were discussed at an informal meeting of the Cabinet in June, 1954, he had a row with a senior colleague and had to walk out in protest against his remarks.

Shri Charan Singh had always regarded Ministership as a means of public service rather than an end in itself, and always carried his resignation letter in his pocket. Since 1946, he actually resigned or offered to resign about a dozen times, that is, whenever he felt his self-respect or public interest so demanded it.

All these facts or qualities were grudgingly or ungrudgingly conceded even by his political opponents. As would appear from a book titled "Factional Politics in an Indian State : The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh" (Bombay : Oxford University Press, University of California Press, 1966) by Paul R. Brass, now Professor of Political Science in the University of Washington, their only charge against him was that Charan Singh was "proud by nature and uncompromising in his relations with others."

Extracts from this book, given below, would, perhaps help understand some facets of his personality still better :

“...Chowdhary Sahib, as he is reverentially called by his followers, has been an unusually successful factional leader in Uttar Pradesh politics. Inspired less by a desire for power than by an invincible belief in the rightness of his actions and policies, Charan Singh seeks neither friendship nor favour and gives no quarter to those who oppose him (p. 139).

“Charan Singh is not exactly an intellectual in politics but he is a well-read man, with an incisive intelligence which he has devoted to a continuing study of agricultural problems in Uttar Pradesh. Charan Singh is the leading ideologist in Uttar Pradesh 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 dominance of the **Zamindars** in the rural economy of the State and to make certain that landlordism may not raise its head again (pp. 139-140).

“Charan Singh has many of the qualities of the ideal Indian faction leader. He is known for his intellectual abilities and has a reputation for integrity. No one has ever charged him with a desire for material advantages for himself. The major criticisms levelled against Charan Singh as a Party leader are that he is proud by nature and uncompromising in his relations with others”.
(p. 141).

“Most faction leaders are accommodating politicians, easily accessible and quick to come to the aid of their followers and constituents. However, there are variations in this pattern. In Meerut district, Charan Singh—a highly successful faction leader—has developed the reputation of being relatively unaccommodating and uncompromising. It is not that Charan Singh will not listen to grievances or provide material benefits to his followers but he requires that requests for his intervention be reasonable and just. Charan Singh can be relatively unaccommodating in this sense because he is loyal to his followers and because he seeks nothing for himself

which he would not share with those who depend upon him." (p. 237).

Professor Brass goes on to say that, as somebody wrote to him, "Shri Charan Singh is not accommodating even to his own people to the extent he should be".

Professor Brass had also listed Charan Singh's personal character as one of the elements of his power and as a factor in his unusual success as a political leader.

Still, Shri C. B. Gupta was preferred in December, 1960 for presiding over the destinies of Uttar Pradesh although he had twice lost an election to the Assembly during the current term (1957-62) and, therefore, was not a member of the legislature at the time the choice was made. Nor did he enjoy any reputation for efficiency or possessed any other trait required of a Chief Minister—except that he was a good party manager. And, further, that Nehru had made it known to Congressmen on various occasions his displeasure with Shri Gupta for his connections with businessmen.

When Shri C.B. Gupta was found wanting and had to be eased out under the Kamaraj Plan in 1963, the Congress bosses of New Delhi thought of drafting a lady, Smt. Sucheta Kripalani, from outside the State who, though a good Congress worker, knew next to nothing of the people and problems of Uttar Pradesh and had no experience at all of administering public affairs.

When consequent upon General Elections in 1967, Congress lost its majority in the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh (the main reason being Smt. Sucheta Kripalani's maladministration of the State), the thoughts of Congress leadership again turned to Shri C.B. Gupta instead of Shri Charan Singh. It is at this stage that Charan Singh resigned from Congress and founded a new political party known as **Bharatiya Kranti Dal** (BKD) based, by and large, on the approach of Mahatma Gandhi to India's problems. The following letter which Charan Singh wrote to Smt. Indira Gandhi on Jan. 8, 1977, would help briefly explain the immediate reason that led to his resignation :

BHARATIYA LOK DAL

Charan Singh,
Chairman.

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 alongwith Shri C.B. Gupta.

You sent two prominent confidants of yours, viz., Sarvashri Umashankar 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 your two emissaries agreed to, in presence of several prominent Congressmen, was that, at least, two members of the then State Cabinet, out of many who in my opinion did not enjoy a good reputation, might be dropped and atleast, 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 co. tacted 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 consequence 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 is 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 been 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 Training 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-agricultural development was a condition precedent to improvement in our living standard, it could not be brought about without prior or atleast, 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 defections 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 MP 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, were 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 know 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 for 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 un-warranted. 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,
Sd/- Charan Singh,

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

The reactions of the people that followed the announcement of Shri C.B. Gupta's exit and Shri Charan Singh's election as leader of SVD (**Samyukta Vidhayak Dal**), constitute his second justification for the step that he took. There was wild enthusiasm both in towns and villages throughout the vast expanse of this State. People heaved a sigh of relief and felt as if a stone had been lifted away from their chest. They sang and danced with joy. Sweets were distributed. Rickshaw-wallās plied their vehicles free for a day. At some places, people indulged in Holi, at others they celebrated Diwali. There were illuminations even in temples and mosques. The rejoicings at the independence of the country were tempered by the sad thought that the country had been partitioned. This time it was an un-mixed joy—joy at the end of a period where corruption flourished and no decision was taken on merits whether it concerned man or matters.

The question, however, arises : what was it that lay behind or motivated such flagrant breach of faith on the part of Congress leadership at New Delhi.

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Besides his views on Cooperative Farming which drew Nehru's ire publicly on Shri Charan Singh there was another factor—and, perhaps, the most decisive one—which stood in the way of his recognition. This factor consisted in Shri Charan Singh's caste : he was a Jat—a rustic. That this conclusion is not incorrect, will be clear from the following two letters which were exchanged between Shri Charan Singh and Nehru in 1958:

Charan Singh to Nehru

Lucknow
October 6, 1958.

My dear Pandit Ji,

This is with reference to a remark that you were pleased to make when I saw you the other day in New Delhi. You said that you did not like the 'Jatpan' (Jatism) that I had exhibited in my handling of the Congress affairs of Meerut district.

I do not know what you had in mind. The facts, however, are that, owing to consistent-propaganda carried on against the caste system in Meerut by me, politically the most prominent Jat of the district, since I entered public life, sometimes against great odds and

at great risks, the Jat community votes on non-sectarian lines in far greater proportion than any other in Meerut. As, perhaps, you yourself will testify, Meerut district is the strongest bastion of Congress in the western parts of Uttar Pradesh and I should be pardoned if I claim some credit for it.

Although the Jats far outnumber any other castes (except, perhaps, the Chamars), they contributed only three members to the legislature of the State and the Union out of 22 from Meerut. And all these legislators were set up as Congress candidates at my suggestions. The **Vaishyas**, the **Tiagis** and the **Brahmins** have all received higher representation than their numerical strength warrants as compared with the Jats. I can say with confidence that there is not a single district in the State in which the most dominant community has got such low representation in the legislature as the Jats of Meerut. And there is not a single act in public life which can be laid at my door for my being a Jat. Yet, Pandit Ji ! in your eyes and in those of many others the fact of my having been born in a Jat peasant's home is so prominent. Why ?

The reason is not far to seek. When the charge of inefficiency, want of ability, sloth or lack of will to work hard, want of character in the widest possible term, or unpopularity, cannot be made against me, the best method of beating the dog is to give him a bad name which will stick, and stick without enquiry.

In the campaign of vilification Jats come out badly. For example, the propaganda that certain quarters carried on at the time of re-organisation of States in 1954-55 that the proposed Delhi State will be a 'Jatistan' went on uncontradicted, although it was a lie. They are uneducated, live in villages, have no pull in the public, economic or administrative life of the country, and yet would not reconcile themselves to an inferior position in the Society. So they would not put up with the taunt of being a 'Jat' that the term in influential urban circles has come to signify. With the result that 56 per cent of the Hindu Jats in the Punjab within a short period of 40 years (1891-1931) left their old faith to turn Sikhs or Muslim so that nobody could any longer treat them with contempt. This desertion or conversion contributed largely to the creation of Pakistan and is contributing largely to the demand for the Punjabee Sooba.

Our caste-system based on birth has been singly the most potent cause of our political subjugation for centuries and the parti-

tion of the country. But it would seem that we have not yet learnt any lessons from history. For, people holding important positions in public life all over the country are not able to rise above this weakness even today.

In April,* 1954 I wrote a long letter to you suggesting amendment of the Constitution to the effect that no young man in the future will be allowed to enter the ranks of a gazetted service in the States (or, in the Centre) unless he has married or intends to marry outside his caste (or, in a linguistic group other than his own). You did not agree.

I hope you will pardon me for writing in the strain I have done. I was greatly pained and had communicated my feelings to Pant Ji who, I believe, has already spoken to you in this regard.

With regards,

I am,
Yours
Sd/-
Charan Singh

Sh. Jawahar Lal Nehru,
Prime Minister, India,
New Delhi.

Nehru to Charan Singh

No. 2470-PMH/58

Prime Minister's House
New Delhi
October 10, 1958

Dear Charan Singh,

I have your letter of October 6.

When I used the word "Jatpan" in my talk with you, I was not thinking of caste or anything like it. What I had in mind was certain toughness on group lines. The group need not be Jat or any caste group.

*April' is a slip of memory. In fact, the letter was written on May 22.

As for Jats, I have always liked them very much and admired many qualities in them. There is no question of a taunt about the word in my mind.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Jawahar Lal Nehru

Shri Charan Singh,
Minister,
U.P. Government,
Lucknow

To give an example of the secular or non-sectarian attitude of the Jats in Meerut referred to in para 2 of Shri Charan Singh's letter addressed to Nehru. In 1952 General Elections, Shri Charan Singh, a candidate for Assembly from the Constituency of Chhaprauli was opposed by three candidates—one a Jat, another a Brahmin and the third a Harijan. Shri Khushi Ram Sharma, the Congress candidate for Lok Sabha from this segment of Chhaprauli had only one opponent viz., a retired Jat District Magistrate with a good reputation, Th. Hukam Singh. The election results showed that the latter received exactly the same number of votes which Shri Raghubir Singh Shastri, Shri Charan Singh's Jat opponent did whereas Shri Khushi Ram Sharma received all the votes that the other three candidates for the Assembly, viz., Shri Charan Singh and the Brahmin as also the Harijan candidates had collectively polled. Which means that not a single Brahmin who voted for Shri Khushi Ram Sharma, voted for Shri Charan Singh whereas all the Jats who voted for Shri Charan Singh, voted for Shri Ram Sharma also. And that has been the pattern ever since. Not a single Brahmin in his Constituency for the Assembly has voted for Shri Charan Singh—the **Shudra** or up-start of a Jat—although he was a Congress candidate in all the General Elections till 1967 and despite the fact that not a single instance of discrimination on his part in favour of Jats or against the Brahmins could be quoted against him.

That it is his caste which always tilted the scales against Shri Charan Singh, will be clear from the following editorial captioned **Game or Gamble ?** which Shri Challapaty Rao, the eminent editor of the main organ of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, viz., the **National Herald** of Lucknow who was the choice of Nehru himself, was impelled to write on December 25, 1966 :

"So politics is an uncertain game, a lousy, deadly, thankless game. It is natural that political fortunes should be fickle, that many should suffer. There are many illustrations. There is one noble illustration in the case of some of the Singhs of U.P. Mr. Charan Singh has enough qualities to be a Chief Minister, but no one thinks of him because he has not behind him the caste power of Brahmins, Baniyas, Kayasthas or Scheduled castes, the leading political castes of the State".

The above editorial was written in the context of the situation that prevailed in Uttar Pradesh at the time. Appreciation of this situation requires a narration of a few facts :

Shri Charan Singh was entrusted with the portfolio of LSG in February, 1969, perhaps, to compensate for Agriculture which was made over to Shri Genda Singh in the preceding month of June, 1965 (who had resigned from PSP and joined Congress a short time before), thus leaving Forest alone with Shri Charan Singh, so senior though he was.

Shri Charan Singh immediately set about solving problems of LSG which had been festering for years past. For example, the employees of local bodies had been clamouring for a raise in their salaries since mid-fifties and wanted an appointment of a Pay Commission to look into this demand of theirs. Shri Charan Singh solved this problem, however, without appointment of a Commission. He upgraded many an important local body which should have been done several years earlier. This brought great relief to their employees in the form of enhanced scales of pay whose burden largely fell on the Local Bodies themselves.

With the result that while, owing to State Employees' agitation, government work at the state and divisional head-quarters got

out of gear for full two months, viz., December, 1966 and January, 1967, local bodies continued to work regularly as islands of peace and stability amid a sea of turmoil and indiscipline.

Anybody who knows Charan Singh at all, can emphatically assert that there cannot be a greater lie than the accusation of casteism made against him. In his opinion publicly expressed a thousand times over during the last half a century, it is the social system of the Hindus based on birth that had led to the country's political subjugation for centuries and, only recently, to its partition. Therefore, he stands unequivocally for eradication of the caste system, root and branch. But the irony of the situation is that those who accuse Shri Charan Singh, are those very people who have it in their power to take concrete steps for abolishing the caste system, and yet would not raise their finger in this regard. The reason is simple enough : it is they who benefit most from this monstrosity.

Shri Charan Singh had brought a resolution before the Congress Legislature Party as long ago as in April, 1939, requiring that "no enquiries should be made into the caste of a Hindu candidate who seeks admission into an educational institution or any of the public services. The only inquiry, however, that may be made, should be whether the candidate belonged to a Scheduled Caste". Also, it was at his instance that a decision was taken by the U.P. Government in 1948 not to enter the caste of a tenure-holder in the land records of the Revenue Department in future.

As a moderate measure of meeting the scourge of caste at least, in part, Shri Charan Singh had said in two notes submitted to the Chief Minister, Pt. Pant in 1949 and 1953 that Government should take a decision not to make financial grants-in-aid to those educational institutions which were named after a particular caste. For, our sons and daughters reading in these institutions get gradually infected with the ideas of high and low based on the accident of birth. But Pandit Pant was unenthusiastic about the proposal and the Education Minister, Dr. Sampurnanand vehemently opposed it. A decision on this was, however, taken by Shri Charan Singh himself after he took over as a Chief Minister in April, 1967—a decision which was effectively implemented.

The above two notes addressed to Pt. Pant are being reproduced below :

H.P.*

It was sometime ago that I had raised the question of discontinuing grants-in-aid to these educational institutions which are named after a certain caste, e.g. Kayastha Pathshala (the one at Allahabad was, perhaps, the first caste institution to be brought into being), Vaish High School, Rajput or Kshatriya College, Jat School, etc., Similar action has to be taken against denominational institutions also like the DAV High Schools (they are already thinking of changing them into simple 'Dayanand'), Hindu or Islamic Colleges, etc; but this can wait. It is the caste which is the greatest stumbling-block in the way of national solidarity to-day. It narrows one's loyalty, and it was mainly owing to this narrow vision or limited loyalty, engendered by the Caste system, that our people during the last two thousand centuries fell such an easy prey to any adventurer from jungle lands who chose to try his luck here.

I am pained to find that this bitter lesson has not yet been learnt even by the best of our leaders or public workers, some of them occupying the top offices in the pre-eminent political organisation like the Congress. Only yesterday I came across a news-item saying that so and so—a personage occupying a high place in public life—will preside over a session of the All-India Agrawal Mahasabha to be held in Delhi on 1st, 2nd and 3rd October next. If we, the leading men of the province or the country, cannot resist such temptation or rise above the narrow grooves of caste and sub-caste, then very gloomy future, indeed, lies ahead.

I would urge that the very first step in this direction is to compel a change in the names of educational institutions where our generation is getting its schooling in its tender impressionable age. It is here that our boys, next to their homes, catch the inflection and, consciously or unconsciously, are led to think in terms of caste. It does not require any legislation; a mere directive from the Department will do the trick. Only if we make our intention clear to the

*H.P. means Honourable Premier as the Chief Minister was then known.

managements, they will change the names post haste; in my opinion intelligent public opinion is ready to welcome any concrete steps that government may choose to take against the citadel of caste.

I know H.P. is already seized of this demand; but he is so busy with his multifarious work that I thought it proper to press it on his attention once again in writing.

Sd/-
Charan Singh
30.9.49.

CM (through ME)*

Quite a good number of educational institutions in the State recognised by, and receiving financial aid from, Government bear the name of a caste, members whereof generally are running them. This name itself leads to the narrowing of the minds and hearts of their alumni. Young students are forcefully reminded daily that they belong to a particular caste—a caste which is higher than another one and superior to it in this characteristic or that. This warps their outlook for the rest of their life.

If our political slavery can be ascribed to one single cause, I think it is the rigid, hide-bound caste system based on birth. It even debarred certain castes and sub-castes from unsheathing the sword or fighting shoulder to shoulder with other countrymen of theirs in defence of their common Motherland. This had little to do with the pristine teachings of the Hindu faith. The caste feeling has so permeated our society that even Muslims and Christians, who are mostly drawn from the original Hindu stock, are not free from it. The virus is, one should be sorry to note, becoming more and more virulent since the attainment of independence and introduction of adult franchise. In the pre-1947 days those in whose hands the political and administrative power rested, had no castemen or blood-relations of their own in this country and the franchise was limited to an insignificant number of our people.

* CM (through ME) means Chief Minister through Minister of Education.

Caste based on birth, as it is practised, whatever purpose it may or may not have served in the past, is a narrow concept which should find no place in a democracy. The two are inconsistent : one of them alone would survive. It limits a man's sympathies and renders him unfit for service of the society as a whole. It creates an atmosphere in which one belonging to a different caste is rarely given credit for hard work or honesty by those belonging to another. Accusations and counteraccusations based on caste feelings, mostly untrue but sometimes not quite without basis, are flung about so that the whole environment gradually gets vitiated. In many a local body—and it cannot be said that the Legislatures are entirely free—casteism plays a prominent part and public interest is relegated to a secondary place. This feeling, I am afraid, has slowly begun to corrode even the State services.

With the foreign domination gone, our differences are coming to the fore. With no common enemy left to fight against, we are hunting for enemies in our own midst. (Besides linguism) caste is the greatest centrifugal force that threatens our solidarity. I even consider this caste based on birth as one of the major causes which led to the partition of the country. It is time, therefore we did some serious thinking about it.

I think at the governmental level there are two remedies open to us. Firstly, we can provide that only those persons shall be allowed to enter the legislature and gazetted services of the State or the Union who, if they marry or have married after a certain date, have done so outside their caste, or, if they are bachelors, propose to do so. We do not compel anybody, but simply ensure that those who enter the services and the legislature, have given proof of catholicity of their outlook and concrete evidence that they will not be governed by caste feelings in discharge of their duties. In my opinion youngmen and educated girls of today are quite prepared for this step. Our ancient history also provides examples of inter-caste marriages even in **pratiloma** form. But I know this is a far cry, indeed, and most of us may not be prepared to go so far. Also, it may require an amendment in the Constitution ; so no question of consideration of this proposal by Govt. arises today.

The next step, though a very moderate one, we may take, is to lay down a rule that no educational institution shall be recognised

which is named after a caste. I had raised that question some four years ago also, but certain legal difficulties were pointed out and the matter was shelved. I think it should be taken up again. Legal difficulties can and should be got over.

Sd/- Charan Singh
23.9.53

The following two letters that Charan Singh wrote to the Principal of the Rajput-National High School, Pilakhuwa, Meerut district, will show the attitude of educated Hindus who have refused to learn any lessons from history :

February 13, 1951

Dear Mr. Principal,

On 1st January last, in course of a reply to an address by the management of your school I made some general remarks against naming educational institutions after a particular caste. I understand much capital has been made of my views, and it has been made to appear that I am an enemy of the Rajput community, and so on. I took no notice of it till now, but I understand that I have come in for quite a good deal of criticism at the hands of several speakers in a conference held in the first week of February in Pilakhuwa under your presidentship.

You, perhaps, do not know that I have been expressing similar views since I entered public life, and expressing them more vehemently before audiences in predominantly Jat areas. Also you are an educated man and you should know that it is the caste spirit which was responsible for our political slavery and degradation for so many centuries. It is easy to fan the flames of narrow casteism, but this will do good to nobody. You are the head of an educational institution, and should know better.

You regard me as the enemy of Rajputs. People of your way of thinking amongst the Jats regard me as the enemy of Jats for the very same reason for which you do. If you would talk to leading members of my community connected with the Jat College of Baraut (Meerut) or Jat school of Saidpur (Bulandshahar), you will find that I am

the friend of every other community except the Jats. But you and all these people are mistaken. We must learn from history; if we still remain divided amongst castes and **gotras** we will pull in different directions and the country will go down again.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely
Sd/- Charan Singh

The Principal,
Rajpur National High School,
Pilakhuwa, (Meerut).

March 19, 1951

Dear Shri B.N. Singh,

I am in receipt of your letter dated nil.

I have not been misled by anybody. I have received my information from quarters more than one. Moreover, your admission that "quite a large number of Rajputs took to heart remarks made by me (sic)" itself proves that my information is not unfounded. It is not the simple peasantry that could have misunderstood me; it is the educated people who do it. Why should Rajputs have taken my remarks to heart? Did I single them out? Did I say Rajputs alone should not name an institution after their caste, while all others are entitled to do so? Did I say anything at all derogatory to their self-respect? Have I not aired and repeated these views and sentiments of mine from hundreds of platforms?

However, you need not bother about it at all. I would again urge upon you to think calmly, and to brood over the history of this unfortunate land of ours. We have lost in the field of religion and politics during all these centuries mainly owing to our division amongst a thousand castes based on birth. We have to rise above these narrow feelings of caste and **gotra** if the country is

to attain its rightful place in the comity of nations. The burden of leading the masses falls upon educated people like you and me.

Yours sincerely
Sd/- Charan Singh

Shri B.N. Singh,
M.A., B.Sc., B.T.,
Principal, Rajput National Higher
Secondary School,
Pilakhuwa,
Distt. Meerut.

On February 16, 1951 Charan Singh moved a resolution in a meeting of the Executive of the Pradesh Congress Committee to the effect that no 'active' (क्रियाशील) member of Congress should be allowed to associate himself with caste institutions or organisations. This resolution, though fought tooth & nail by three prominent Congress men, was carried through with a considerable majority. It is reproduced below :

Uttar Pradesh Provincial Congress Committee Lucknow

Dated 28.2.1951

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the Provincial Congress Committee (U.P.) was held on 16th February 1951 under the Presidentship of Acharya Jugal Kishore.

6. Regarding caste-organisations-

Ch. Charan Singh placed before the Executive Committee the following resolution which was drafted as per its decision dated 13-14 November. The Committee approved it after a brief exchange of views between the members.

"In the opinion of Executive Committee of the Pradesh Congress Committee (P.C.C.) of the Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) no Congress man shall either be a member or participate in the proceedings of an organisation whose membership is confined to a particular caste or castes or indulge in spreading hatred against other castes. In

case anybody does so his actions would be considered detrimental to the national ethos. The loyalty and sympathies of Congress-men are bound to be diluted by joining or becoming members of such organisations in the eyes of those who belong to other castes. In case they do it, then this would deflect them from doing real service to the people. The Committee, therefore, decides that such persons can neither be members of nor hold office in any Congress Committee .

“Further, in the opinion of this Committee no educational institution should be named after any caste and it calls upon the State Government not to give any financial assistance to such educational institutions.”

Dr. Sampurnanand who held the portfolio of Education of the State Government, and a zealous defender of the existing social system, was however, not present in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the P.C.C. at which the above resolution was adopted. He sought a re-discussion, but failed to carry his point of view in a meeting that was held for the purpose.

The above resolution, however, remained a dead letter: it was not observed even by important Congress leaders. Two examples are cited below :

The **National Herald** dated : 15-11-1954 carried the following news-item :

PURUSHOTTAM TANDON TO VISIT CAWNPORE

(From our Correspondent)

Cawnpore Sunday—Mr. Purushottam Das Tandon, former President of the Congress will be visiting Cawnpore on November 21. He will inaugurate the newly—built **Khatttri** Dharamshala at Birhana Road the same evening.

In 1972 Pt. Kamalapati Tripathi who was the Chief Minister at the time, attended a meeting at the head-quarters of Lakhimpur-Kheri district which was composed exclusively of Brahmins, and was welcomed as a **Brahmin-kul-shreshta** (ब्राह्मण-कुल-श्रेष्ठ) by way of a formal address.

Charan Singh's view in regard to Government's duty in this connection was almost revolutionary. He had written to Pt. Nehru himself on May 22, 1954 suggesting amendment in the Constitution or enactment of a law to the effect that only those youngmen who were prepared to marry outside their caste, will be recruited to gazetted services in the States (and those who married outside their linguistic group, to gazetted services in the Union), but Nehru would not agree. In Charan Singh's opinion unless Government was prepared to lend a helping hand, mere exhortations which our saints and teachers had been making since the days of Gautam Buddha, were going to be of little or no avail. Reproduced below is Shri Charan Singh's letter to Nehru and the latter's reply :

Charan Singh to Nehru

Lucknow,

May 22, 1954.

My Dear Pandit Ji,

It is after a long time and with great hesitation, indeed, that I write this letter to you.

As you have so often emphasised in your speeches, India fell a slave to foreign aggression solely due to our social weaknesses, rather than due to any superiority of the foreigner in numbers, resources, valour or culture. This is admitted even by an English historian in his book "Expansion of England". This truth may or may not be obvious to the people at large, but is brought home almost daily to those entrusted with public affairs. Of these weaknesses, viz., religious and linguistic differences and the caste system based on birth, I regard the last as the greatest single cause of our political subjugation for centuries. It is also largely responsible for the partition of the country. When caste Hindus could not accord equal treatment to their own co-religionists lower down in the social scale, Muslims rightly apprehended that, after the Britisher left, they will not get a fair deal from the Hindus who formed a vast majority in the country as a whole. All this is now a matter of past history.

The regret, however, is that we seem to have learnt no lessons. The caste feeling, instead of being on the decline, is on the increase

obviously owing to advent of democracy and the scramble for jobs. Not only has it invaded the highest reaches of our public life, but has affected the Services also. It leads to acts of discrimination and injustice, warps and narrows a man's mind and heart and creates a vicious circle of accusation and counter-accusation, distrust and suspicion in society. Lately, it has become a weapon of political vendetta.

The question remains: how to eradicate it. Attempts have been made by teachers and reformers since the times of Gautam Buddha, but to no avail:

I make hold to offer a suggestion, which I have been recommending in a feeble way in my own sphere for the last six years or so. In modern times caste comes in the life of an individual only at the time of marriage. So, if the evil has to be tackled successfully, steps have to be taken which will rob the caste of its relevance or significance in marriage. That is, the evil has to be tackled at the source. While laying down rules for recruitment to service, we prescribe all sorts of qualifications in order to ensure that a man fit and suitable for the job alone gets in. These qualifications have only his mind and body in view. But there is no test laid down to measure his heart—to find out how large his sympathies are, whether he will be able to act impartially, whether his heart is big enough to contain all those with whom he will have to deal in the course of his official duties, etc. In my opinion, in the conditions of our country this test will be fulfilled in a large measure if we require the candidates, at least, for gazetted jobs in the first instance, to marry **outside** the narrow circle of their own caste. By enacting such a **provision** we will not be compelling anybody to marry against his wish, just as we do not compel anybody to become a graduate to-day, which is the educational qualification required for many a Government job. It will not at all be difficult to secure such young men in adequate numbers. Today young boys and girls receiving education in our colleges are all prepared for this step. I would lay down the same qualification for legislators. Of course, this qualification of the marriage being an inter-caste will apply only to marriages that take place after a certain date, say, 1st January, 1955. An unmarried man will be free to enter the services or the Legislature, but if, later on, he marries inside his caste he will have to resign. Further, for services under the Union we may say that mar-

riage in a different linguistic group will entitle a candidate to a preferential claim. This will be all the more desirable inasmuch as linguistic States are now clearly in the offing. Such provisions should not offend the feelings even of orthodox people, for **anuloma** marriages have been sanctified by our Shastras also. In effect, we will be converting the present day caste into so many **gotras** and discouraging a man's marriage in the **gotra** of his father.

If an article to this intent is inserted in the Constitution, India's greatest social evil and, to use Rajaji's aphorism, India's Enemy No. 1, would have been laid to rest within a period of ten years. The country will never become strong unless caste is rooted out. And this consummation will never be accomplished, unless the State intervenes, and intervenes and strikes at the source. Otherwise, some day the fire of mutual suspicion and hatred which the caste system has kindled for centuries now, will have consumed the country to ashes as surely and imperceptibly as night follows days.

I hope my suggestion will not sound fantastic to you. Men like me know from experience what it means to be born in castes other than those which are regarded or regard themselves as privileged. The contemptuous treatment that is meted out, and the social discrimination that attaches by virtue of mere birth, to members of such castes has often led to mass desertions or conversions to other faiths, not only amongst those occupying the lowest rungs of the ladder, but also amongst others. For example, only in the Punjab during a period of forty years, viz., from 1891 to 1931, fifty-six per cent of Hindu Jats, finding, *inter-alia*, that they were looked down upon by their co-religionists, that is, for reasons other than spiritual, left the fold of their ancestors for good.

There will certainly be great opposition to the proposed amendment, but if you are determined to see it through, the opposition will melt away in no time. According to my reading of the situation the proposal will receive a greater welcome amongst the educated sections than certain provisions of the Hindu Code Bill.

Whatever be the obstacles, if an amendment of the Constitution on these lines can be secured, it will, according to my little mind, be a service to the country of equal import with the attain-

ment of **Swaraj**. Then alone, and not till then, will foundations of our stability have been truly laid !

With respects,

I am,

Yours

Sd/- Charan Singh

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru,
Prime Minister, India,
New Delhi.

Nehru to Charan Singh

CONFIDENTIAL

Camp : The Retreat
Mashobra Simla
May 27, 1954

My dear Charan Singh,

Thank you for your letter of May 22nd.

You know that I attach the greatest importance to the ending of the caste system. I think this is certainly the biggest weakening factor in our society. I also agree with you that finally caste will not go till inter-caste marriages are not unusual and are looked upon as something which is quite normal. I would go further and say that there will be no real unity in the country till our prejudice against marriages between people of different religions also does not go.

But to say, as you do, that we should try to compel people by constitutional provisions and rules to marry outside their castes seems to me to offend the basic principle of individual freedom. Marriage is very much a personal affair and we are trying to make it more personal and take it out of the old ruts of conventions and customs. What you suggest is definitely a retrograde step from that point of view, although it is meant to encourage a desirable tendency.

We have to create conditions otherwise. The special Marriage Bill is one such step. Other steps should also follow. Ultimately people marry those who more or less fit in with their way of think-

ing and living. Indeed any other marriage is a misfit and any imposition from above is likely to lead to disaster in so far as the married couple are concerned. I cannot bring myself to think of the choice of marriage being controlled by legislation or by inducements offered.

Yours sincerely
Sd/- Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Charan Singh,
Minister, U.P. Government,
Lucknow (U.P.)

Nehru's arguments were : 'controlling the choice of marriage by legislation and by inducements offered' will not make an appeal to any educated man who knows that there is no society or religion which has not laid down rules or laws for controlling the choice of marriage! Nor will the qualification of an inter-caste marriage being laid down for entry into the ranks of a gazetted service or membership of legislature in particular, be opposed by or repel any Hindu who knows that it is caste which lay behind the political subjugation of his motherland for centuries and, recently, behind its partition.

In 1967 when he headed the SVD Ministry in Uttar Pradesh, Shri Charan Singh wanted to enact a legislation on the above lines but his colleagues of the State Cabinet, particularly those who belonged to the Jan Sangh, over-ruled him.

That Charan Singh regarded this system as the greatest evil of the Hindu or Indian Society, will also be clear from the Election Manifestoes of the **Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD)**, a political party which Shri Charan Singh had founded in 1967. These manifestoes have consistently laid stress on the evils of our social system and advisability of its abolition. The relevant clause of this document's version published on December 1, 1973 runs as follows :

Thirty-one —Caste based on birth, one of our major inheritances, has resulted in a social system which has divided the people into water-tight compartments—divided them from one another into high and low, through endless centuries, thus giving rise to the problems

of untouchability and scheduled or backward classes which plagues our society so irretrievably.

This system has led to foreign conquest of our Motherland which left us weak and poor, and, inasmuch as Muslims, owing to the way Hindus behaved towards brethren of their own faith, apprehended that, after the departure of the British, they would not be just and fair to the Muslims also, is as much responsible for partition of the country that took place in 1947 as the activities of the Muslim League.

The system runs counter to the concept of dignity of labour and creates an environment where manual work is considered degrading.

Further, in the context of to-day, the caste system, based as it is on the principle of absolute inequality in social relations, militates against successful functioning of democracy, the first postulate of which is equality of one man with another, as also against freedom of economic opportunity without which no country can progress.

What is more, caste is immutable : one can change one's religion, but not one's caste.

BKD will, therefore, take all steps that will gradually lessen the hold of caste on our society till it disappears altogether. With this end in view BKD proposed, *inter alia*, to give preference in recruitment to gazetted services to those young men who have married or are prepared to marry outside their own caste.

So far as Charan Singh was personally concerned, he set an example as early as in 1921 when he had accepted food from the hands of the **Balmiki** sweeper of his hostel while he was a student of Agra College, Agra. It was a **Jatav** boy who worked as his cook, once for 7 years on end, viz., from 1932 till 1939 when he left Ghaziabad (where he was practising as a lawyer) for Meerut and, for the second time, for three years, 1943-46, in Meerut. In Lucknow also, he had a Harijan cook in 1973-74. In 1974, he employed a Christian as a cook who continued in his house-hold till he left Lucknow for Delhi in 1977. Further, one of his daughters and more than one

of his near relations have married outside the closed circle of caste with his consent or persuasion.

We can only leave it to the reader, therefore, to judge how far Nehru was right in accusing Shri Charan Singh of 'Jatpan' ("जाटपन") in the course of a talk which the latter had with him in New Delhi in early October, 1958. Howsoever one might try to explain it away, the remark made in the context it was, was a derogatory one. At best, it could mean 'the manners or the attitudes of a rustic or an uncultured person.' In view of Shri Charan Singh's reply to Nehru's remark, dated October 6, 1958, expression of regret by him was the only possible answer to Shri Charan Singh's letter. However, the fact of the matter was that whenever Pandit Nehru thought of Shri Charan Singh, his caste came upper-most to his mind (as also to the mind of many a Hindu public man born in a so-called high caste) and not his quality or disquality as a private person or a public worker. Strangely enough, in making the accusation against Shri Charan Singh that he did, Nehru forgot his own fondness or fascination for Kashmiri Pandits—fascination for relatives though chicken-hearted, even when defence and honour of the country were at stake—which was a subject of public comment all over the country during his own time. Thanks to his solicitude for them it was difficult to find a Kashmiri young man going unemployed during the days of Nehru ! It also never occurred to him that he should not participate in the proceedings of an organisation whose membership was confined to members of his own community of Kashmiri Pandits—which he often did. Whereas Shri Charan Singh never attended the sessions of a Jat Sabha if any existed : on the other hand, he refused to accept the headmastership of the Jat High School of Baraut (Meerut) and principalship of the Jat College of Lakhaoti (Bulandshahar) because these institutions were named after his caste.

So far as our present Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi is concerned, she suffers from a caste phobia even in greater degree than her illustrious father and yet does not hesitate in accusing Shri Charan Singh of being a 'casteist' even in the course of interviews with foreign correspondents.

The allegation of casteism hurled against Shri Charan Singh, or, for that matter, any body, comes with ill grace from one who, while occupying the highest political office in the country, bends all the energies and policies of the government towards processing of her

own son's succession, even though the heir-apparent may be lacking in all the qualities and experience required of a political leader who aspires to become a Prime Minister of his country. A person who is guilty of nepotism beyond measure, cannot, logically enough, rise above considerations of caste either.

Not content with misrepresenting Shri Charan Singh as an individual Smt. Indira Gandhi has gone to the extent of maligning his community as a whole. This will be clear from the following extract from an article published in the **Pioneer**, Lucknow dated 22-8-1980 in the context of the Moradabad holocaust which was perpetrated on August 13 and the following days :

Genesis of Communal Flare-ups; Planned Action to Spoil India's Image

—By Janardhan Jha

This is not for the first time that the police, particularly the Provincial Armed Constabulary of Uttar Pradesh has been accused of being communal and anti-Muslim. Even this time when a group of Opposition MPs met the Prime Minister she referred to the point of view according to which the PAC in U P. is packed with Jats whose communal bias is allegedly pronounced.

Now, coming from a Prime Minister as it does (and uncontradicted as it remains, no statement could be more irresponsible, rather mischievous than this. The hard fact of the matter is that, according to an enquiry made by a responsible Muslim M.P of the Lok Dal, the Rajputs and Brahmins combined constituted 67 p c. of the strength of the PAC contingent posted at Moradabad and the Jats, hardly 3 per cent. Also that two or three Jat police officers who happened to be posted in Moradabad perhaps, by mistake, were punished by immediate transfer to other places because they had the audacity to do the right thing by the Muslim victims of Hindu vandalism. The Jat police officers abided by the dictates of their conscience and their duty to the country despite the fact that it was a Jat officer, the Additional District Magistrate who was the first victim of the fury of the Muslim mob.

There are two to four communities in the entire country which, taken together, enjoy a monopoly of social, economic, political, administrative and educational power in the country. And Brahmins* as a community have a lion's share in this power—as if in the spoils, so to say. The following statistics would show, though in a very small part, indeed, the predominance of Brahmins in the higher reaches of services and in public life as compared with the rest of the people.

Table I

Political and Administrative Officers at the Highest level

Posts	Total No.	No. of Brahmins alone	%age of Col. 3 to Col. 2
Governor/Lt. Governor	27	13	50
Secretary to Governor/ Lt. Governor	24	13	54
Union Cabinet Ministers	19	10	53
Chief Secretaries to State Governments	26	14	54
Private Secretaries to Ministers (Cabinet, State & Deputy)	49	34	70
Secretary/Addl. Secretary Joint Secretary and their equivalents at Centre	500	310 (Approx)	62
Vice-Chancellors	98	50	51
Supreme Court Judges	16	9	56
High Court Judges & Additional High Court Judges	330	166	50
Ambassador/High Commissioner	140	58	41.5%

*The Brahmins numbered 155 lakhs out of a total population of 3505 lakhs in 1931, that is only 4.41 per cent of the entire people of the country. Taking into account the increase in the proportion of Hindus as a result of the country's partition in 1947 the percentage of the Brahmins would stand at 5.4 or so to-day.

Chief Executive of public
sector Undertakings (which form
units of the Standing Corpo-
ration of Public Enterprises
known as SCOPE)

a. Central	158	91	57
b. State	17	14	82

And the Home Secretary and the heads of all the eight important police organisations at the level of New Delhi excepting two as also almost all the Law-Officers, viz., Solicitor-General, Additional Solicitor-General, Solicitor to Govt. of India and the Attorney-General happen to be Brahmins. Also, out of 187 professors, associate professors, assistant professors, senior fellows, research associates and the registrar in the Jawahar Lal Nehru University established and maintained by Govt. of India, 95 or 51 p.c. belong only to one community, viz., that of Brahmins.

Making an allowance of 5 p.c. of the above figures as an error either way, the above table presents a disturbing scene—a group of a little more than 5 p.c. of the total population occupying some ten times their due share in the highest echelons of the civil administration of the country, and the rest 95 p.c., even less than one-half of their due share.

What is true of the Central Government is obviously true of most of the State Governments also. To take the example of the biggest State of the Union where Brahmins constitute 9.0 p.c. of the population :

Table II
Uttar Pradesh

Post	No. of Posts	Brahmins
Secretary/Additional Secretary/ Joint Seretary/Deputy Secretary and their equivalent posts	229	124 (54%)
Chairman/Commissioner/Directors/ Deputy Chairman/Additional Commissioner/Joint Commissioner/ Joint Directors/Deputy Commissioner/ Deputy Director.	202	116 (57%)
Director-General Police/Inspector— General Police/Additional Inspector — General Police/Deputy Inspector — General Police	53	30 (57%)
Administrative Officer/Chief Administrator/Chief Accountant General/Additional Account General	137	78 (57%)
District Magistrate/Collectors S.P. Police/S.P. (C.I.D.)/ District Medical Officer	256	148 (58%)

Today, in Uttar Pradesh, hardly one or two of the District Magistrates or Superintendents of Police out of a total of 114 come from the backward castes who constitute more than 50 per cent of the State's population (Hindus and Muslims included).

In contrast to the above facts the following table shows how the Jats who constitute 28 per cent of its population, fare in the State of Haryana :

HARYANA

Table I II

Posts	No. of Posts	Jat
Secretary/Joint Secretary/ Deputy Secretary/Under Secretary (Including those on deputation)	104	6 (6%)
Director/Addl. Director/Joint Director/Deputy Director/Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner/Chief Architect/Adviser/Conservator/Chief Engineer and their Equivalents	178	20 (11.3%)
I.G. Police/D.I.G. Police/A.D.I.G. Police/A.D.I.G. Police/S.P./D.S.P. (Including those on deputation.	26	3 (11.5%)

May be, in reply to the charge that Brahmins are represented in the government services far out of proportion to their strength in the population at the cost of the rest of 94 to 95 per cent of our people, the Congress (I) leadership may trot out the excuse that it has no hand in the matter of recruitment or promotion of government servants—which is not correct, but this excuse cannot be advanced as an argument in favour of a far higher proportion of Brahmins in the list of members or candidates (& their percentage) for the legislatures. The following table shows the number of Brahmin members and their percentage in the Parliament since 1952 till date :

TABLE IV
Percentage of Brahmins in Parliament

Lok Sabha	1952	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980		
%age of Brahmin to	173/499	230/490	210/510	192/523	178/523	136/542	190/530		
a. total population	35	47	41	37	34	25	36		
and									
b. Population									
excluding									
Scheduled Castes									
& Tribes	45	61	53	48	44	32	48		
Rajya Sabha	1952	1957	1960	1964	1968	1970	1974	1978	1980
%age of	70/216	108/232	115/236	102/238	104/230	113/238	112/240	84/244	89/244
Brahmins	27	47	49	43	45	50	47	34	36

It will be noticed that the percentage of Brahmins though very high in the very first Lok Sabha itself, elected in 1952, viz., 35, went up still higher to 47 and 41 in 1957 and 1962 when Jawahar Lal Nehru ruled the roost. It came down nearer to the original figure, viz., 37 and 34 in 1967 and 1971 only when non-congress parties and groups had come up in the country and secured representatives in the Lok Sabha.

The percentage came down steeply to 25 when the Congress was defeated for the first time by the Janata party in 1977. It roared up again to 36 with the return of the Congress Party in 1980. In the Rajya Sabha the percentage of Brahmins went up from 27 in 1952 to 50 in 1970, to come down to 34 during the Janata rule in 1978. It again picked up, though slightly in 1980 : the increase could not be high enough primarily because in the Rajya Sabha only one-third of its members are elected every two years.

What is more : inasmuch as 22.5 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha are reserved for scheduled castes & tribes and, thus, are closed to Brahmins (and others) the percentage of Brahmins in the rest of the entire society will rise by a multiple of 9/31. Which means that the percentage figures of Brahmins in the seven Lok Sabhas will rise to 45, 61, 53, 48, 44, 32, and 48 !

In General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh in May-June, 1980 Brahmins who form only 9 p.c. of the population of the State secured 120 tickets as compared with 26 tickets for all the Hindu Backward Classes who, put together, formed a proportion of 45 per cent of the population. **Which means that one Brahmin was equivalent to 23 backward persons.**

To adopt the phrase of Shri George Orwell, the author of Nineteen Eighty-four "all Indians are equal, but, some Indians, particularly the Brahmins are more equal than others" • Now, who is responsible for this equation ?

In view of the fact that 20 per cent of the Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh are reserved for Harijans, the percentage of Brahmin candidates to those belonging to backward classes given in the preceding paragraph will raise by 25 p.c., that is, one Brahmin will be found equal to 29 persons belonging to backward classes rather than 23 !!

Recently, the term of office of the President or Prashashak of the Primary Co-operative Societies in U.P. has come to a close. Instead of holding an election the State Government has decided on nomination. Out of a total number of 8247 Presidents 7100 have been nominated till date, that is, as this brochure goes to the press. Out of the 7100 nominees more than 50 per cent are reported to be Brahmins.

Who is a casteist, please ? Will Smt. Indira Gandhi make a reply ?

It will not be out of place to mention here that out of the four largest communities in Uttar Pradesh, viz., Brahmins (9 p.c.), Yadavas (8.4 p.c.), Rajput (7.2 p.c.) and Kurmis (3.5 p.c.), Yadavas and Kurmis found no place in Congress Governments since 1937 till 1967 (except for a Yadava deputy-minister since November, 1958 till March 1962). All the six governments that were formed during this period, were packed with Brahmins, Vaishyas & Rajputs. It was only in 1967, consequent upon Shri Charan Singh's revolt, that two Yadavas & one Kurmi were appointed Cabinet ministers and other backward communities also found a place in the government.

In 1971-73 the State Government presided by Pt. Kamalapati Tripathi consisted of 30 Ministers of Cabinet rank and Ministers of State out of whom 15, that is, 50 per cent belonged to the Brahmin community.

Statistics relating to administration, given above, indicate only a tip of the iceberg. No department or Government office throughout the country is free from the taint of caste. What is true of higher rungs of office, is still more than true of the lower rungs. The entire political and administrative structure of the country is affected by this social poison which leads to favouritism in favour of one

person and injustice against another on the basis of his birth, irrespective of his merits, justice or dictates of public interest.

The caste bias is reflected not only in recruitment but in postings, character roll entries, promotions and extensions. Below is given an example published in **Indian Express**, New Delhi, dated 10.11.1981, which is **only one out of a thousand that happen daily throughout the country.**

Extensions and Plum Posts for Brahmins

Express News Service

—By P.K. Krupakaran

PATNA, Nov. 9. Something unprecedented has happened in the Health Department in Bihar. On October 30, the Bihar Chief Minister, Mr. Jagannath Mishra, reportedly issued an order granting extension in service, "in anticipation of Cabinet's approval", to Dr. Chaube, Civil Surgeon of Ranchi.

This order indicates to what extent the normal rules of a department are set aside to satisfy the whims of men who wield power in this State.

This irregularity may not have come to life if the dissenting Harijan Minister of State for Health, Mr. Dil-keshwar Ram, had not stirred up the hornet's nest in a not-so-loyal section of the ministerial wing.

For some years now, the Health department has been strictly following the rule that no member of the Health Service should be given an extension mainly because this step blocked the promotion of people on the waiting list and, lower down, slowed down the process of recruitment of new doctors, many of whom have been idle for want of openings.

In the present case, the beneficiary would have been an **Adivasi** civil surgeon, Dr. Eileen Thakur, who had, in the last week of October, been officially instructed to take charge from Dr. Chaube who was retiring on October 31.

An official communication to Dr Chaube advised him to hand over charge to Mr. Eileen Thakur at the time of his retirement.

Dr. Chaube, however, rushed to Patna and did the spadework for his extension through men with easy access to the Chief Minister, according to informed sources. As a result, the Chief Minister allowed himself to be persuaded to order the extension "in anticipation of Cabinet approval".

This "happy" development was conveyed to Ranchi hospital, Dr. Chaube continues to function where he is but without the imprimature of a notification which can only be issued when the matter is cleared by the Cabinet.

If Dr. Eileen Thakur was side-tracked in the process, it is pointed out that she is not alone in this misfortune.

A few months ago, a list of **Adivasi** and Harijan doctors in important positions who were replaced by men of one caste viz., "the ruling tribe of Brahmins" was released by Mr. Jabir Hussain, former Health Minister who is at present president of the Bihar Unit of the Yuva Lok Dal.

To mention yet another example of the patronage that is being extended, or, the largesse that is being distributed to the Brahmins : According to a reply given by the Railway Minister, Shri Kedar Pandey, on the floor of the Lok Sabha in the last quarter of 1981, out of 616 persons nominated to the various Railway Advisory Committees by him 386 (63 p.c.) were Brahmins. These persons along with 'parties' which may include any number of persons, are entitled to first-class travelling facilities all over the country !! So that public property entrusted to charge of a Congress (I) minister changes into private property in his hands !!

Despite the facts enumerated above, it would seem that the leaders of the Brahmin community are not yet satisfied with their present position in the political and administrative power structure of the country. As will appear from the following report published in the Tribune, Chandigarh, dated January 12, 1982, perhaps, they will continue to nurse a feeling of grievance till they acquire a total or near total monopoly :

Brahmins urged to shun passivity

From Our Correspondent

GURGAON, Jan. 11—The need for the Brahmins to organise and take active part in politics was stressed yesterday at the annual function of the Pataudi Tehsil Brahmin Sabha held at Haily Mandi.

Mr. Chiranji Lal Sharma, M.P., presided over the function.

Mr. Sharma regretted that the role of Brahmins in the social, political and economic fields was gradually becoming weaker and job opportunities for them were sharply dwindling. So it was necessary for them to change their attitude of isolation and to start asserting themselves in various fields, including politics.

A number of speaker's addressed the need for removing social evils the community was suffering from.

The spirit of casteism and narrowness of mind which is evident from the annual function of the Pataudi Tehsil Brahmin Sabha is reflected in the following report published in the **Indian Express** New Delhi, dated April, 1, 1982.

Brahmin MLA's Lobby in M.P.

By N.K. Singh

Express News Service

BHOPAL, March 31.

For the first time in the history of the Madhya Pradesh, the Brahmin MLAs of the ruling Congress (I) party appear to have formed a lobby.

About 50 Brahmin legislators of the ruling party assembled together on Monday evening at the invitation of Mr. Radheshyam Shukla, a Congress (I) MLA and vice-chairman of the MP State Road Transport Corporation.

The ruling party already has a lobby of Adivasi-Harijan MLAs and they meet frequently. The Jains enjoy considerable influence in the State politics. The Rajput lobby, a recent development, has also emerged quite powerful and they had

a secret meeting sometime back, according to informed sources.

However, it is for the first time that Brahmins, who are probably feeling slighted after Mr. Arjun Singh took over the reigns of administration, have started "dinner politics" in the State.

Almost all the Brahmin members of the Arjun Singh Ministry and most of the Brahmin MLAs of the ruling party were there at Mr. Shukla's place.

Now, the question is who should be held responsible for this development in the public life of the country ? Obviously, the leader of Congress (I), Shrimati Indira Gandhi who has instead of discouraging it, fostered the evil of casteism in the Hindu society in pursuit of her political ends.

The following English version of a news-item or write-up which outlines a plan that the Congress (I) leadership has drawn up, published in a Hindi daily, **Nav Bharat Times**, New Delhi Thursday, June 17, 1982, provides a recent illustration of its thinking :

New Moves to bring Jats Closer to the Cong-I

By Special Correspondant

New Delhi, June 16, 1982—The Congress-I has prepared a many-faceted plan to bring the Kisans in general and the Jat Community, in particular, closer to itself.

The political monopoly shown by Lok Dal leader Ch. Charan Singh over the Jats in Haryana in the recent Assembly Elections, has created a scare in the upper circles of the Cong-I and the Cong-I has prepared a plan to create an emotional attachment within the Jat Community for itself.

The Cong-I is thinking of establishing some Jat leaders to fulfil this task. It is being thought that Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Balram Jakhar be made Union Agriculture Minister in order to try and win over this emotional attachment of the Jat Community for the Cong-I.

In this connection former High Commissioner Shri Bhagwan Singh and former Vice-Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Shri Ram Nivas Mirdha's names are also being mentioned.

Amongst the proposals thought of by the Cong-I is included the revival and reorganisation of the Jat Maha-Sabha. It is being planned to activate various forums in order to give an impetus to the social, cultural, economic and literary tendencies of the 1-1/2—2 crore Jats living in Delhi and the surrounding 500 kilometers.

One of the plans is to revitalise the Raja Surajmal Trust and to associate the maximum number of Jat leaders with it. There is also a plan to systematically re-write Jat history in the light of contemporary socio-economic views.

Priority has been allotted to the consolidation of two lakh Jats living in Delhi's rural areas along these lines. It is well known that the Delhi Municipal and Metropolitan Council elections have not been held for quite some time now and that they are to be held sooner or later.

In the various States, all the Jats who are Ministers and Zila Parishad Heads, will be organised for this purpose. It is also planned to keep a special look-out for bringing these people into important positions in the Government and party organisations.

It is known that for a long time the Jats in Rajasthan were unitedly with the Cong-I. However today they are divided between the Cong-I, Lok Dal and Cong-S because three influential Jat leaders Shri Ram Nivas Mirdha, Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha and Ch. Kumba Ram Arya, are dispersed among these three political parties.

After the emergency and the decline of Ch. Bansi Lal, the Congress (I) hold on the Jats in Haryana was broken and today the Lok Dal wields the major influence on them. Ever since 15 years ago when Ch. Charan Singh left the Cong.-I, he has been the only popular leader of

the Jats in U.P., and the Cong-I's influence on this community has been weakened.

In accordance with the plan of the late Sanjay Gandhi, the Cong-I developed its influence among the Rajputs in a pre-planned and systematic manner in U.P. and Rajasthan. But no alternative efforts were made in Haryana and Delhi.

Now again after the recent elections the Cong-I is planning to consolidate its social base by bringing the Jats into its fold and, on the social, cultural and economic basis, create a political affiliation and a viable caste leadership of its own.

Smt. Indira Gandhi and her advisers are mistaken in their belief that Lok Dal's hold in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh or other parts of the country is confined to Shri Charan Singh's community alone. In Uttar Pradesh Jats constitute only 1.5% of the State's population and are found only in 9 districts out of 57 : In 1974 Lok Dal's predecessor known as BKD (Bharatiya Kranti Dal) at the time, secured a larger number of votes in eastern than in western parts of this biggest State of the Union. The reason lies in the fact that the Lok Dal represents the urges and aspirations of not less than 85% of the people over whose problems and misery Congress (I) leadership has never had a pang of conscience-expenditure of Rs. 1000/- crores in Asian Games instead of the Rajasthan Canal and other means of irrigation being a recent telling example. Its social and economic philosophy is based, by and large, on the Gandian approach to our problems—an approach which alone can eliminate unemployment (and thus eliminate poverty), prevent concentration of economic power in a few hands and narrow down income disparities. Further, it also stands for out-right abolitions of our present social system based on birth which is responsible for our political subjugation for centuries and partition of the country. Smt. Gandhi has tried—and tried very successfully till date—to sow discord amongst the Indian masses by diverting their thoughts from the cause of their misery towards their caste, religious and linguistic differences and thus to perpetuate the rule of her dynasty. But in the ultimate analysis, she will not be able to fool all people for all time.

CHAPTER II

SHRI CHARAN SINGH'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS HARIJANS

Besides being a friend of kulaks there is yet another accusation that has often been levelled against Charan Singh usually by Congress (I) leadership particularly since he left the Congress fold in 1967, viz., that, being a friend of the rich farmers as he is, Charan Singh is an enemy of the poor sections of our society, particularly the Harijans ! This charge which has been systematically propagated through various media for a decade and a half now, has gone unrefuted for want of publicity resources at the disposal of Shri Charan Singh or the Lok Dal. With the result that many an unwary person all over the country has come to believe in the truth of this falsehood.

Broadly speaking, exploitation has taken two forms, viz., social and economic. As it happens, the under-dog is usually the same person who suffers both from social and economic disabilities. So that when one kind of disquality or exploitation is ended, the other also makes haste to quit or makes preparations to quit. So far as the social disability is concerned it is the caste system of the Hindus that lies at the root of this evil—the evil of untouchability and the notions of high and low. The reader must have already noted the steps that Shri Charan Singh took or recommended with a view to counter-act this basic sin of the Indian society. Perhaps, nobody else could do more in this connection than what he did.

To come to the economic aspect : Harijan in India acquires some respectability when he becomes the owner of the patch of land on which he was working as a labourer or tenant at will till yesterday. On the other hand, a Hindu landlord born in a high caste loses in respectability when all his tenants are upgraded to ownership and he himself has to toil with his hands for a living. Though, in our circumstances, the inferiority complex of the former and the superiority complex of the latter, born of caste, may linger for a long while yet. And, as the forthcoming book on the Land Reforms in U.P.—published by the Kisan Trust—will show, while the land reform measures that were undertaken in Uttar Pradesh at Shri Charan Singh's initiative, have benefited all those who eke out their living by working on land, they have benefited the suppressed sections of our society—the Harijans—still more. Perhaps, no other State in the country can make even a semblance of a similar claim in this regard. So that any talk about Shri Charan

Singh's hostility to the Harijans in any quarter is an attempt at misrepresentation dictated by political considerations.

To briefly reiterate here the benefits that the Harijans came to enjoy as a consequence of the agrarian legislation of Uttar Pradesh : Under the **Zamindari** Abolition and Land Reform Act of Uttar Pradesh, permanent rights of cultivation were confirmed by Shri Charan Singh in the teeth of bitter opposition from several colleagues, on comparatively small and poor farmer also who were entered as sub-tenants, tenants-at-will or tenants of **Sir** or tresspassers in revenue records or who were not entered at all but were found to be in actual possession of land as cultivators by the Sub-Divisional Officer after an enquiry made on the spot as provided by the Land Reforms (Supplementary) Act, 1952. Table 395, included in para 12 of the Census of India, 1951, Vol. 2, Part I (A), Report of Uttar Pradesh (pages 425-425) will show that eighty-four members of the Scheduled Castes out of every one thousand, were entered as cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned and their dependents, whereas this number for the general population stood only at 51. Thus the proportion of Harijan cultivators in this class, calculated at the rate of 20.0 per cent of Harijans for the total population, come to 30.0 per cent or so. The names of persons falling under this category including those entered as a result of the proceedings taken under Land Reforms Supplementary Act, 1952 and land records correction drive, totalled more than five million in any case. However, in as much as most of these cultivators held more than one of these tiny holdings, their actual number was less than the above figure.

That the law relating to abolition of **Zamindari** and land reforms in Uttar Pradesh was actually implemented in the field, is not an idle boast, is borne out by the Report of the Ford Foundation team headed by an expert of international fame, Mr. W.A. Ladejinsky. The report goes on to say that "only in Uttar Pradesh, has a well-thoughtout comprehensive legislation been enacted and effectively implemented. There, millions of tenants and sub-tenants were made owners and hundreds of thousands who had been evicted, were restored in their rights" (vide a study entitled 'Tenurial Conditions in the Package Districts' submitted to the Planning Commission in 1963).

Section 198 of the U.P. **Zamindari** Abolition and Land Reforms Act provided that, next to a recognised educational insti-

tution imparting instruction in Agriculture, landless labour had the first right to be admitted to land which the Land Management Committee of the Village wanted to let out for cultivation under section 195 or section 197. It was also provided under the Rules that, whereas an agricultural labourer belonging to a caste other than scheduled caste was liable to pay to the Land Management Committee a rent for such land equivalent to **ten times** the amount calculated at the hereditary rates, no such rent or amount was payable by a person belonging to any of the scheduled castes (vide Rules No. 174-A and 175).

Under the **Zamindari** Abolition and Land Reforms Act, every resident of a village was made owner of his house including the site and appurtenant land, trees that he might have planted and walls that he might have constructed. This provision benefited the Harijans, in particular, because formerly they had no such rights at all and could be ejected from their house etc. at the will of the **Zamindar** (vide Section 9 of the UP ZALR ACT, 1951).

Under Rules 115 L and 115 M of the ZALR Act Rules, preference was to be given by LMC (Land Management Committee) to landless agricultural labourers in the allotment of **abadi** sites also.

Provision was made in the Consolidation of Holdings Act 1953 (vide Section 8 A) that, while preparing a Statement of Principles for consolidation of holdings, land will be set apart for Harijans and landless persons in the village for purposes of extension of their **abadi**. It is mostly this land which Congress (I) in Uttar Pradesh claimed that it is they who had provided land to the Harijans for construction of houses.

Shri Charan Singh was also instrumental in promoting sirdars—as the tenants-at will in Kumaon were called and who belonged overwhelmingly to the scheduled castes—to the status of sirdars in teeth of opposition from Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant, Shri Jagmohan Singh Negi (a Minister in U.P. from Pauri Garhwal) and Shri Narain Dutt Tewari (a Minister in Union Cabinet today). A **sirdar** in U.P. enjoys permanent rights of occupancy.

In March 1953, consequent upon resignation of old **Patwaris**, some 19,000 **Lekhpals** were to be recruited by the Revenue Department of Uttar Pradesh. Shri Charan Singh who held the Re-

venue portfolio, ordered that reservation of 18% be made for the Harijans. Actually, owing to lack of qualified candidates, only 5% could be taken. Formerly, the number of Harijans in the Cadre of **Patwaris** was nil. For the future, Shri Charan Singh issued an order in November, 1954 that 36 per cent of the vacancies will go to the Harijans in order to make up the leeway. This order was repeated two years later, viz., in July, 1956.

In the consolidation operations, thousands of ACOs (Assistant Consolidation Officers) were to be recruited. Whereas no caste Hindu or other candidates who had not secured a second division in his B.A. or B.Sc. examination was eligible, in the case of Harijans even a third divisioner was admitted.

While there was a general order issued by the Appointment Department about reservation of 18 per cent of the vacancies for the Harijans in all the services, Shri Charan Singh issued several G.Os, almost annually, asking the head of the deptt., viz, the Land Reforms Commissions to ensure that the Government policy in this regard was actually implemented in the field. Finding that previous orders had not been faithfully complied with, Charan Singh issued an order on December 28, 1963 that all vacancies in Class IV Services in the 3 departments then under his charge, viz., Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Forest shall be filled up by scheduled caste candidates till their quota reached 18 per cent. A few months later, the Appointment Department of Uttar Pradesh raised an objection, at the instance of the Central Govt. that the above order about cent per cent reservation was against the Constitution and that not more than 45 per cent of the vacancies could be reserved at the outside.

There was a long-standing demand of the Harijans that atleast one of the members of the State Public Service Commission should be taken from the Scheduled Castes. When Shri Charan Singh became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in April 1967, he hastened to meet this demand by the end of the year.

All the manifestoes and policy statements of the **Bhartiya Kranti Dal** (BKD) that Charan Singh had founded in 1967 and nurtured since (which later on in August, 1974 became the major foundation brick of the Bharatiya Lok Dal) contained a clause to the effect that BKD will pay special attention to the uplift of Harijans or Scheduled Castes and Tribes to whom justice had been denied for long. Its policy statement dated December 1, 1971 further

went on to say that 'as atrocities committed on' the Harijans during the post-Independence era have shown, mere enactment of legal and constitutional provision will not do. Positive steps will have to be taken to ensure that the law (which, if necessary, must be made more stringent) is actually implemented in the field.'

'So far as their economic welfare is concerned, while all cultivable land that is found surplus, as a result of imposition of ceilings on large holdings or surplus to the needs of the village community or the forest and other needs of the State, may be allotted to Harijans. But it must not be forgotten that the ultimate solution of their economic problem (as also of tens, rather hundreds of millions of other landless or unemployed and under-employed persons) will depend, by and large, on development of non-agricultural resources of the country, which will, in its turn, depend on increased agricultural production and a change in our mental attitudes or a transformation of our national psychology.

However, as an interim measure, BKD proposes that 20% of the unskilled jobs in all factories both in the public or private sector as also of the permits or licences in the gift of government which do not require any technical skill to exploit, shall be reserved for members belonging to these suppressed sections of our society.'

'As laid down in a previous article, BKD stands for abolition of caste. This step will help restore to them their rightful status in society, deprivation of which has rankled so bitterly, and rightly, in their hearts for centuries'.

The reader will be interested to know that the above idea about reservation of jobs for Harijans in the private sector was borrowed by the Congress Government of Uttar Pradesh in 1976. This will be clear from the following news-item that appeared in the *Times of India*, New Delhi, dated October 4, 1976 :

U.P. Order for Private Sector Jobs for Harijans

Lucknow, October 3, (Samachar) : The U.P. Govt. has taken a revolutionary step to ensure by law, that members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes get representation in jobs in the private sector.

The Chief Minister Mr. Narayan Dutt Tewari, said yesterday that an ordinance had been drafted in this respect and was being sent for the President's assent.

Under the ordinance, it would be compulsory for the private sector to reserve a certain percentage of posts for persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes.

It had been the consistent endeavour of the BKD that as many Harijans as possible should be set up as candidates in elections to the legislatures. The proportion of Harijans candidates who succeeded on BKD tickets to successful candidates from General Constituencies was higher than that of candidates who were put up by other political parties. Not only that : there are three examples when Harijan candidates sponsored by BKD in Uttar Pradesh were returned by the electorate from General Constituencies.

Despite such being the facts a mendacious propaganda has been carried on by Congress against Shri Charan Singh particularly since 1967 when he left the Congress, that his community, viz., the Jats in the western district of Uttar Pradesh are great oppressors of the Harijans, treat them even more contemptuously than high caste Hindus do and inflict various kinds of indignities on them. Now, there cannot be a greater lie than this. If anything, Jats as a community suffer the least from the taint of superiority complex born of birth and are not swayed by notions of high and low to the extent as other communities like Brahmins, Rajputs and Vaishyas or Khattries are.

In reply to this campaign Shri Charan Singh had, on two occasions, viz., one on August 2 and 3, 1972, during the Chief Ministership of Shri Kamalapati Tripathi and, on the other, viz.,

March 18, 1974 during the Chief Ministership of Shri .H.N Bahuguna, offered, on the floor of the U.P. Legislative Assembly to accept the findings of an enquiry made by any two Congress legislators who belonged to Scheduled Castes and came from eastern districts of U.P., chosen by the Chief Minister himself, into the social conditions of the Harijans in the western districts (preferably, Shri Charan Singh's own district or constituency as they pleased) and eastern districts of the State. The offer was not accepted.

The principle of reservation for Harijans and Adivasis in legislatures and services has served a useful purpose. It has given them a stake in the new democratic system and their traditional feeling of alienation and exclusion from the society at last to-day is somewhat muted. But the very success of this experiment has created a backlash of resentment in the rest of the society. Their

argument is that the principle of recruitment and promotion on the basis of caste militates against the claims of merit & demands of efficiency. Says the Hindustan Times, New Delhi, in its editorial dated March 8, 1982 in this connection :

Clearly we can only work and plan for tomorrow if we understand the past. Those who ask "how long ?" think in economic and political terms, but the roots of the problem are cultural, moral and historical. For example, can a Harijan doctor, perhaps earning much above the average, rent a house for his family in an upper caste colony ? No, and that is why the need for reservation in housing. The contention that economic status and not caste affiliation should be the basis of governmental favours and protections is at best a facetious one. Surely there has developed a Scheduled Caste and Tribes elite that appears to have gained most and even cornered most of the benefits of the reservation system. But to condemn a whole segment of the population to its historical disadvantages because of a few is to miss the wood for the trees. The facts actually tell a different story. In the last decade, less than 5 per cent of the Class I reserved seats—ranging between 8.6 per cent in Rajasthan and 0.93 per cent in Madhya Pradesh—were actually filled by Harijans and Adivasis; in the Class II, recruitment ranged between 12.3 in Punjab and 1.97 in Madhya Pradesh, but still averaged out to less than 5 per cent for the whole of India. Even the Class IV only 24 percent of the reserved seats were filled by the Harijans and the Adivasis.

Equality before the law is a laudable principle; but absolute adherence in a traditional setting merely reduces this principle into an instrument of inequality. The rationale for the reservation system was spelled out by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly : "On the 26th of January, 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. We must remove the contradiction at the earliest possible moment, or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has

so laboriously built up." And that rationale remains as valid today as it was in 1950.



CHAPTER III

PROBLEM OF BACKWARD CASTES

May be, in accusing Shri Charan Singh of casteism his political opponents have his espousal of the cause of the backward classes in view. Here also they are not on a very firm ground. True, he had every sympathy with those who were being denied their due share in administration owing to no fault of theirs, but at the same time he was in two minds about the wisdom of extending the principle of reservation to backward castes. Since the formation of Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) in 1967 his colleagues had pressed Shri Charan Singh to organise a non-Brahmin movement, in other words, unfurl the banner of anti-Brahminism—which he firmly refused to do. He was torn between two considerations. On the one hand, in his opinion, the policy of reservation tends to disintegrate our society and detract from its impartiality which is the soul of efficiency : On the other, the ruling castes or classes have continued to discriminate against the backward classes in all walks of public life and administration and there is little or no hope that they will ever see reason and national interest or listen to dictates of fairness. Hard facts of public life and administration of our country gradually helped evaporate his hesitation in going whole-hog in favour of reservation for backward classes. The caste bias in public life and administration of this unfortunate land was a sad reality from which even Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers were not free.

During his tenure as Chief Minister, Shri C.B. Gupta was opposed to relaxation in the age of backward classes' candidates by 3 or 4 years which the State Government had granted in the days of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant so far as recruitment to Police was concerned, and wanted Shri Charan Singh who was Home Minister at the time, to do away with this concession in the Home Department. Shri Charan Singh refused to do so, but Shri Gupta abolished the concession when this department was taken away from Charan Singh in March, 1962. Shri Gupta was, in fact, opposed to any concessions at all to this unfortunate section of our society. A private member's resolution in regard to extension of the above concession in regard to age, to other departments, had secured a place in the ballot. Shri C.B. Gupta decided that the member should be asked to withdraw it, failing which it should be opposed.

Shri Charan Singh wrote a note to him in this connection on August, 9, 1961 pointing out the inequity from which the backward classes had suffered, but to no avail. This note is being reproduced below :

Mukhya Mantri

I would like to bring certain facts to your notice :

- (1) Muslims and other religious minorities in our State constitute not more than 14.5 per cent of the population. Out of the 85.0 per cent who are all Hindus, scheduled castes claim 18.5 per cent. Of the remaining 67.0 per cent, high caste Hindus do not number more than 21 per cent. The balance of 46 per cent is constituted of backward classes, amongst Hindus. But of the 14 per cent Muslims also, the backward classes, according to my estimates, constitute not less than half of their total strength. So that of our total population $(46+7)=53.0\%$, or, at least, more than half in any case, consists of backward classes.
- (2) According to a reply given by Government in 1955, there were, in 1946-47, 35 gazetted officers belonging to the backward classes out of a total of 3,250 or so. In 1954-55, the number of gazetted officers went up by 2,000, i.e. to the number of 5,250, whereas the number of gazetted officers belonging to the backward classes came down from 35 to 25.
- (3) The Congress Party captured two-thirds of seats in the Legislative Assembly and one-third were captured by the Opposition parties. But out of the two-thirds, only 22 members came from the backward classes, and out of the one-third members belonging to the Opposition, 33 came from the backward classes. So that, the Opposition parties, as compared with Congress, were able to capture the votes of the backward classes in a proportion of 3 : 1.
- (4) All the Southern States have reserved percentages for recruitment of the backward classes in their services. The Backward Classes Commission also made a recommendation to this effect.
- (5) As Home Secretary's note says, grant of any concessions to the backward classes in the matter of recruitment to

government services will be entirely in accord with the Constitution.

- (6) The backward classes have been enjoying the concession relaxation in age granted by the Home Department several years ago. This concession has not, in terms, been taken away by the decision of the Council of Ministers dated April 25, 1961. The decision simply says that the resolution will be opposed, i.e. the extension of the concession now given by the Home Deptt. will not be extended to other departments.
- (7) I have stated bare facts—simple and unvarnished, as they appear to me. I was not present in the meeting of the Council of Ministers on April 25. So that I had no opportunity of bringing forward these facts before my colleagues.
- (8) I am not at all in favour of reservation of seats in the services or the legislature. At the same time, I consider that opposition of the resolution by the Government will be politically inexpedient. I am dictating this note in a hurry. So, I am not making positive proposals; in fact, I have not thought out any, yet.

Sd/- Charan Singh
9.8.1961

G.M.*

Perhaps, Home Minister is not aware of the views of the Govt. of India in regard to this matter. Government of India has consistently opposed this demand on behalf of the backward classes and as such we cannot agree to the resolution. An attempt should be made to get the resolution withdrawn.

Sd/- C.B. Gupta
9.8.1961

The second Backward Classes Commission appointed by the Janata Government in 1979 'to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India' which submitted its report in 1980 has to say as follows in regards to representation of backward class under the Government of India.

A questionnaire for collecting information regarding the representation of all categories of Backward Class employees under the Government of India was circulated to all the ministries, departments etc. on March 19th, 1979. As no list of OBCs* is maintained by the Central Government, nor their particulars are separately compiled in government offices, a rough and ready criteria for identifying OBC employees for both Hindu and non-Hindu communities was also furnished to the concerned organisations. Particulars of the criteria have been furnished in part 4 of Annexure 7, volume II.

Replies to the above questionnaire was furnished by 30 Central Ministries/Department, 31 attached and subordinate offices, and public sector undertakings under the administrative control of 14 Ministries. Break up of the information furnished by all these agencies is given in Annexure 8, volume-II. The following table gives a summary of the over-all employment position in this behalf :

Category of Employees	Total No. of Employees	% of SC/ST	% of OBCs
Class I	1,74,043	5.68	4.69
Class II	9,12,786	18.18	10.63
Class III & IV	4,84,646	24.40	24.40
All Classes	15,71,475	18.71	12.55

Two things become clear from the above table. First, the percentage of SC/ST employees and, much more so, that of other Backward classes is much below the percentage of their total population in the country. Whereas the aggregate employment for SC/ST comes to 18.71% against their total population of 22.5, the employment of OBCs works out to 12.55% against their estimated population of 52%.

Secondly, the representation of SC/ST and OBC employees in Class I services is much smaller even when compared to the overall employment percentage of these classes. For instance, for Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribe employees, this figure comes to 5.68% and for OBCs it is 4.69% only. In

* OBC stands for other Backward Classes

other words, the representation of OBC employees in Class I services of the Government of India is not even 1/10th of the proportion to the total population.

According to Government replies given on the floor of the U.P. legislature the percentage of gazetted officers belonging to the backward castes to those belonging to the advanced castes in 1946, 1955 and 1960 stood at 0.80, 0.47 and 0.70 respectively. Which means that the advent of political independence for the country not only did not serve to better the lot of backward classes, but, if anything, worsened it,—so far at least, as their representation in the government services of the biggest State of the Union was concerned. And this, despite one of the articles or directives in our Constitution expressing concern for the backward classes !

Finding no other way out Shri Charan Singh agreed to reservation of jobs for Backward castes in 1971 much against his own inner urge. A brochure published by the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) entitled Aims and Principles of Bharatiya Kranti Dal, which served as BKD Election Manifesto for General Elections to the Legislative Assembly in Uttar Pradesh in 1974, contained the following clause :

While the socially and educationally backward classes, other than scheduled tribes and castes, both Hindu and Muslim, constituted more than half of our people, they have little or no place in the political and administrative map of the country. This state of affairs creates social and political tensions and, thanks to the partisan spirit of those entrenched in power today, it shows little sign of abatement. If anything, the position has worsened as compared with the days of British rule. While, therefore, BKD regards any kind of reservation as a vicious principle, it has, at long last, come to the conclusion that there is no way out but that a share in Government jobs, say, 25 per cent, be reserved for youngmen coming from these classes, as recommended by the Backward Classes Commission appointed in 1954 under the presidentship of Kaka Kalelkar by the Union Government itself, under Article 340 of the Constitution.

The reader will note that while the Commission had recommended reservation of 25 per cent in class A, 33.3 per cent in class

B and 40 per cent in class C and D services. Shri Charan Singh stopped short at 25 per cent for all services.

In voicing this wrong done to the majority of our people Shri Charan Singh finds himself in very good company, however. Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation as far back as on 12th June 1947, during the course of his prayers at Delhi gave expression to an apprehension of his, viz., of the majority of the country's population being continuously divorced from the scene of administration.

Further, although Pt. Nehru himself could not rise above the average Hindu's weakness for his caste, he had also sounded a note of warning at a public meeting in the following words: "The administration of the country is being dominated by a handful of classes and if this state of affairs goes on unchecked, its consequences would be disastrous."

It is a misfortune that the warnings voiced by the Father of the Nation and his 'heir' have been thrown to the winds resulting in the continuance of centuries-old exploitation of teeming millions of the land by their own people.

As has already been said earlier, there are only two to four communities or so who enjoy a monopoly of administrative and other power almost all over the country. There is a department or two in Bihar where more than 80 per cent of the government jobs are held by members of one caste alone. That this is unjust and pinches those who have thus been deprived, will also be admitted by all fair-minded persons. The writer does not want to blame the officers or officials who belong to these fortunate communities or those who recruited them, in any manner at all. The question simply is: shall the youth belonging to other communities be treated as outlaws or second-grade citizens? If so, why?

The argument of the advanced castes that reservation in favour of backward classes on the basis of birth rather than on that of economic status, will only serve to further intensify and strengthen the institution of the caste system which is undoubtedly an evil, is met, and rightly met by the latter with the retort that the physician should first heal himself before sermonizing to others. The Backward Classes, for example, would like to know whether it is not a fact that inequalities in our society hitherto, that is, throughout the centuries till to-day have been based on birth in particular

castes, and not on economic conditions. Further, whether is it not a fact that a comparatively better-off Harijan is usually not accorded an equal status or consideration with a poor Brahmin even to day ?

As the High Court of Mysore remarked in a case, D.G. Vishwanath v.s. Chief Minister, State of Mysore (A.I.R. 1964—Mysore, 132 B.I.C.-35), 'the vicious circle can be broken only if the members of the communities who have been benefited by the existing social order, will shed their own communal thinking'.

Further, if Shri Charan Singh pleads for a share in government services to the youth of the Backward Castes in States where they have been denied it, then he is simply following in the footsteps of Congress leadership itself which had adopted this very course relating to the State services of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh during the days of Jawahar Lal Nehru's stewardship of the country. How is it that what was virtuous during his time, has become sinful to-day?

It is 'sinful' in the eyes of the rulers and the exploiters because it hurts the monopoly of power of all kinds they enjoy to-day. Logic, justice, compassion for the poor or the deprived and the dictates of religion, etc. make no appeal to the heart of a man where his self-interest is threatened. And a claim by the backward classes (scheduled caste or other) for their due share both in political power and government services, at the State as also the Central level, obviously hurts or threatens the interest of those who expropriate the just rights of the claimants. No holds are barred where a man's own interest or the interest of his class is concerned.

Hindu political leadership of the country has been dithering on the question of the caste system all along. Unless it is abolished root and branch there can be no redemption for Hindus or the country, and acts of injustice will continue to be committed and social peace will continue to elude the country. A caste is but a group of persons who inter-marry amongst themselves. So that marriage is the origin or at the root of the problem. Unless we strike at the root the problem cannot be solved. We need not make inter-caste marriage a legal obligation for everybody but only for those who choose to serve the country as gazetted officers or as law-makers of the country. Young educated persons to-day have little or

no inhibitions in this regard. Only the necessary political will is required to enact a legislation.

The writer is convinced that a formula can be hammered out (a) which will not only not release forces that tend to disintegrate our society but will integrate it further and (b) which will not impair the efficiency of our administration and yet make an allowance for the cultural lag from which the Scheduled Castes and Tribes have been suffering for centuries past—a formula that will serve to provide an equal opportunity to the sons and daughters of all those who are living below the poverty line (and number more than half of the total population of the country to-day) and, further, curb the monopoly of administrative power which vests in the hands of hardly one-eighth to one-seventh of our people—and thus serve to foster a society that will be pervaded by a sense of fairness and efficiency instead of a sense of deprivation, frustration and consequent bitterness which mark most of its members to-day.

Till such a formula emerges, the present system of reservation will have to continue.

The End

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